

**The London School of Economics and Political
Science**

*Mixing and its challenges: an ethnography of race, kinship
and history in a village of Afro-indigenous descent in coastal
Peru*

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Anthropology of the London School of Economics for
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In Latin America, politics
is the water you swim in.
—Olivia Harris

To her memory

Abstract

This thesis, based on 16 months of ethnographic fieldwork, is about ordinary Peruvians of mixed African slave and indigenous descent. It shows that villagers in Yapatera, northern Peru, have responded to contradictory historical forces through everyday practices of ‘mixing’. Villagers live in a society that officially downplays the significance of race while it simultaneously discriminates against non-white ‘others’. The thesis finds that villagers reject the ethnic (‘Afro-Peruvian’) and racial (‘black’) labels cast upon them by outsiders, and instead illustrates how villagers are engaged in a variety of social practices and local narratives which stress the cultural, social, religious, political and economic integration of the community into the local region, and which seek to de-emphasise its potential ethnic distinctiveness. ‘Mixing’ permeates through villagers’ ideas and practices relating to human physiology, procreation, descent, marriage, personhood, historicity, religion, place-making, local politics, and relations with the state. However, mixing is ultimately a fragile project. ‘Race’, as a social divider, reappears often in the very practices or domains where mixing occurs. Mixing itself can be understood as an attempt to overcome thinly-veiled local racist discourses. It is also an attempt to negotiate oneself out of the very undesirable category of ‘black’, and as such it bears continuities with historical social practices. Mixing is not so much an outright resistance to racism, nor is it a straightforward appropriation of nationalist ideologies. Instead mixing is to be understood as an alternative form of knowledge: an autochthonous attempt to engage with these external forces. By bridging the gap between Andean anthropology and the study of Afro-descendants in a variety of disciplines, the thesis helps fill a gap on *mestizaje* as a form of lived experience. By highlighting the central role of kinship in ideas and practices of mixing, it also indicates the wider implications of mixing for anthropological theory.

Contents

Abstract.....	4
List of Figures.....	7
Acknowledgements.....	8
Note on Translations, Figures and Pseudonyms.....	10
Glossary.....	11
Introduction.....	14
A historic apology.....	14
No more dolphins!.....	16
Yapatera on camera, Yapatera off camera.....	18
<i>Negritud</i> vs. <i>negrura</i>	20
The village of Yapatera.....	24
The Hacienda Yapatera.....	27
Arriving in Yapatera and methods.....	30
Outline of the chapters.....	34
Chapter I. Mixing, race and ethnicity in historical and regional perspective.....	37
In the Lima mansion.....	37
Historical constructions of difference.....	39
Race and ethnicity in contemporary Latin America.....	44
Afro-indigenous relations, mixed people and others.....	48
Ethnic despecification.....	51
Heterogeneity and mixing in kinship and marriage.....	54
Mixing, race and ethnicity in Peru.....	56
Racism in Peru.....	62
Peruvian slavery and manumission.....	65
Afro-Peruvian ethnic mobilisation.....	70
A note on the absence of 'identity'.....	74
Chapter II. A folk theory of race: Mixing, categorisation and racial essentialism.....	78
Fernando's <i>cumanana</i>	78
Overview of racial/colour terms.....	80
Racism.....	84
A folk theory of race.....	90
Race and social categorisation.....	97
Despecification and mixing as a historical process.....	102
Essentialism and experimental tasks.....	105
Design of Custom Task 1.....	108
Design of Custom Task 2.....	110
Results of Custom Task 1.....	111
Results of Custom Task 2.....	112
Discussion of results.....	113
Conclusion.....	115

Chapter III. Carried in the heart: Surnames and bilaterality in kinship, marriage and personhood	118
Tumba, Urpi, Cazombon	118
Double surnames: natural, civilised and good to think with	120
Bilateral descent and marriage.....	129
Carried in the heart: bilateral ideology and logic	137
Bilateral personhood.....	142
‘Bilateral race’ in Yapatera.....	145
Conclusion	148
Chapter IV. Keeping their tombs warm: Remembrance practices, sociality and the saint-like dead	151
<i>Negros veletos</i> : fanciful blacks.....	151
Engaging with uncertainty.....	155
The work of remembering.....	159
Exchange and sociality	169
The saint-like dead.....	176
Conclusion	183
Chapter V. Sugar Ruins and Rotting Mangos: <i>Hacienda</i> , agrarian reform and becoming peasants	186
Historical ruptures	186
Sugar ruins and rotting mangos	189
The time of the <i>hacienda</i>	192
Abuse and defiance on the <i>hacienda</i>	195
Slavery and mixing.....	200
From peons to owners.....	202
Yapatera’s ‘ugly stories’	205
Freedom means drinking on Mondays	210
Beggars sitting on a bench of gold	214
Migration and mixing	217
Conclusion	218
Chapter VI. ‘Yapatera the future district’: The troublesome process of making one place out of two.....	222
A camp of Moors.....	222
Yapatera was a district before.....	225
The ‘future district’ proposal.....	231
Village consolidation.....	234
Like Samaria to Jerusalem.....	237
The water and sewage project.....	245
Conclusion	249
Conclusion: Mixing as a fragile project.....	251
Appendix.....	260
Significance test for Custom Task 1	260
Significance test for Custom Task 2.....	260
Bibliography	261

List of Figures

Figure 1. Map showing the principal areas of settlement of Peruvians of African descent.	12
Figure 2. Map of state of Piura	13
Figure 3. Satellite image of Yapatera	13
Figure 4. Participants in the Afro-Peruvian pottery project.....	23
Figure 5. Race pyramid.....	45
Figure 6. Three cousins.....	94
Figure 7. A ‘mixed’ family	95
Figure 8. Sample formulation of Custom Task 1.....	109
Figure 9. Sample formulation of Custom Task 2.....	111
Figure 10. Results of Custom Task 1.....	112
Figure 11. Results of custom task 2.....	113
Figure 12. Double surname transmission pattern	121
Figure 13. The ritual of Agua del Socorro.....	143
Figure 14. Father teaching his son how to <i>velar</i>	155
Figure 15. Man burning candles to remember his mother.....	162
Figure 16. <i>Recuerdos</i> on the wall, on a household altar and near a television	168
Figure 17. Woman and her children serving the food for the <i>compartir</i>	172
Figure 18. The <i>compartir</i> outside the house.....	173
Figure 19. Woman ‘crowning’ the grave of her grandson.....	174
Figure 20. <i>Velaciones</i> aided by electric light.....	175
Figure 21. Members of the religious fraternity carrying a Christ figure out of the church	178
Figure 22. Farmer bringing mangos home from the <i>chacra</i>	188
Figure 23. The old sugar factory.....	191
Figure 24. Twin chimneys of the factory.....	192
Figure 25. The old <i>casa hacienda</i>	194
Figure 26. The old motor powering Yapatera’s well.	195
Figure 27. Children rest on the <i>cepo</i> during a cultural event.....	200
Figure 28. Farmer with his organic mango trees	209
Figure 29. Men enjoying a <i>domingo chiquito</i>	211
Figure 30. <i>Campesino</i> shelling maize with the help of sons and nephews.....	213
Figure 31. Miss Mango Festival, Winner of the Silver Mango, Miss Morropón Province, and the Winner of the Silver Mango, 2011.	214
Figure 32. Welcome sign at the entrance to Yapatera	225
Figure 33. Map depicting the village of Yapatera as the capital of the ‘future district’.....	233
Figure 34. Detail from map of the Hacienda Yapatera, dated 1961.	243
Figure 35. Detail from map of ‘future district’	244
Figure 36. Satellite image of Yapatera.	245
Figure 37. Population growth in Yapatera 1940-2007	248
Figure 38. Statue of a <i>campesino</i> on Yapatera’s main square	252
Figure 39. The repainted statue.....	253

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Note on Translations, Figures and Pseudonyms

All translations, diagrams and photographs are my own, unless otherwise specified.

To protect my informants' anonymity I have used pseudonyms throughout.

I have not used a pseudonym for my research site. My discussions of local history and geography make the village easily identifiable as Yapatera.

Glossary

<i>Alto Piura (el valle del~)</i>	valley of the upper River Piura
<i>blanco/a</i>	white (skin colour or person)
<i>campesino/a</i>	peasant/farmer
<i>chacra</i>	small-scale family farm/gardens
<i>chicha</i>	fermented maize beer
<i>cholo/a</i>	of mixed indigenous descent/person with straight hair
<i>costeño/a</i>	person from the coast of Peru
<i>criollo/a</i>	creole/mixed
<i>cumanana</i>	genre of poetry from the Alto Piura valley
<i>forastero/a</i>	outsider/stranger/foreigner
<i>hacendado/patrón/amo</i>	plantation owner/boss/master
<i>hacienda</i>	plantation/estate
<i>Limeño/a</i>	person from Lima
<i>mestizaje</i>	racial miscegenation and national ideologies thereof
<i>mestizo/a</i>	person of mixed (indigenous-European) descent
<i>moreno/a</i>	brown (skin colour or person)
<i>negro/a</i>	black (skin colour or person)
<i>norteño/a</i>	person from the north of Peru
<i>piurano/a</i>	person from the state or city of Piura
<i>pueblo</i>	people/village
<i>serrano/a</i>	highlander/person from the highlands
<i>Yapaterano/a</i>	person from Yapatera
<i>zambo/a</i>	of mixed indigenous-black descent/person with curly hair



Figure 1. Map showing the principal areas of settlement of Peruvians of African descent. (World Bank 2000; reprinted with permission).

This map of the state of Piura has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

Figure 2. Map of state of Piura
(National Institute of Geography, IGN)

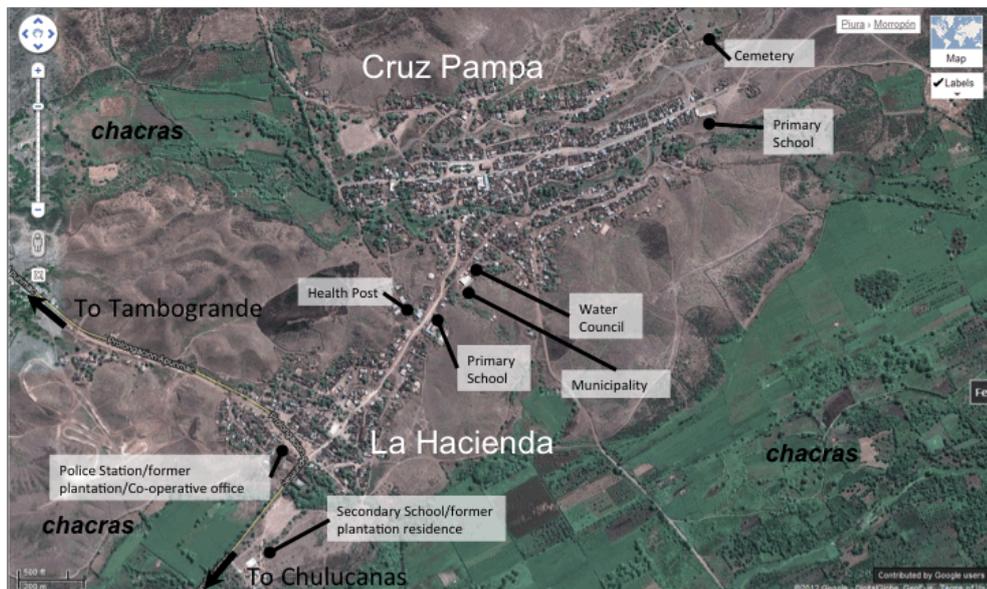


Figure 3. Satellite image of Yapatera
(Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe)

Introduction

A historic apology

On 27 November 2009, the Peruvian government issued a ‘Historic Apology’ (Resolución Suprema N° 010-2009-MIMDES) to the Afro-Peruvian *pueblo*, or people, for the ‘abuses, exclusion and discrimination committed in their offence’. The resolution, signed by the then president, Alan García, and by the Minister for Women and Development, went on to denounce racism, and to affirm that Peru was a ‘pluricultural’, ‘multiracial’ and ‘multi-ethnic’ country, stating that this was a ‘social and cultural advantage’. It also recognised the efforts of Afro-Peruvian people in affirming ‘[Peru’s] national identity, the diffusion of our values and the defence of our homeland’. The apology was an unprecedented recognition of the abuses suffered by African slaves and their descendants throughout Peruvian history.

While the issuing of the apology did not make the front-page headlines of any of the country’s newspapers, it was covered, nevertheless, in shorter news articles in the leading papers, and was welcomed by many public figures. At the same time, many commentators noted that Peru was relatively late, compared to other Latin American countries, in issuing such an apology and pointed out that it fell short of acknowledging the role of the state in legitimising slavery and benefiting economically from it. The Peruvian historian Carlos Aguirre pointed out that the resolution failed to mention the word ‘slavery’.¹ A handful of

¹ El Comercio 29/11/2009. *Canciller sobre el perdón a afroperuanos: ‘Debió haberse tomado hace años’*.

prominent Afro-Peruvians and human rights activists used blogs, press releases and informal get-togethers to criticise the resolution's failure to pledge material compensation for the abuses of the past or to offer any concrete ways of tackling the social exclusion faced by many Afro-Peruvians today. But problems with the apology aside, it seemed to herald a new phase in relations between the Peruvian state and Afro-Peruvians as an ethnic minority group, and to open a new public discussion about the problems of racism, social exclusion and an unresolved past.

It was understandable, therefore, that my good friend Sonia Arteaga, Director of the Afro-Peruvian Museum in Zaña, expressed surprise at my lack of knowledge about the apology when she telephoned me, ten days later, to hear my reaction to the positive developments. In Yapatera, a rural village in the northern state of Piura built around the remains of an old plantation, where I had begun my fieldwork just two months earlier, neither I nor my new neighbours had received the news. Yapatera is a sixteen-hour bus ride from Lima and has no access to the Internet, so news can be slow to arrive. The problem, however, lay not in a lack of information, but rather in the lack of interest in it. If the apology had been reported on the television news, villagers had still failed to raise it as a topic of everyday conversation. Also, none of the villagers' relatives living in Lima, a population of several thousand, had passed on the news, even if they had been aware of it.

Other symbolic milestones in Afro-Peruvian history were reached during, before and just after my sixteen months of fieldwork from October 2009 to February 2011. On 4 June 2009 the National Afro-Peruvian Museum in Lima opened its doors to the public—while not Peru's first Afro-Peruvian Museum, it is the only one to be publicly funded, forms part of the National Institute of Culture (INC) and is housed in a prime location, in a colonial mansion in Lima's historic centre. In late July 2011, just after I left Peru, President-elect Ollanta Humala, in preparation for taking office, announced the appointment of his Cabinet which included Susana Baca, a Grammy award-winning world music singer and self-identified Afro-Peruvian, as Minister of Culture. Finally, the United Nations General Assembly officially declared the year 2011 as the

‘International Year of People of African Descent’ (Resolution 64/169).² But all of these developments passed without any commotion or even conversational mention in Yapatera and if I had not left the village at regular intervals and maintained regular contact with academics and activists in Lima, I would not have heard about them. Why did no one in Yapatera take any interest in these events, given that the village was supposedly Afro-Peruvian?

No more dolphins!

About nine months into my fieldwork Baudilio, one of Yapatera’s tiny handful of self-proclaimed ‘Afro-Peruvian’ leaders, called me over to sit with him on the porch of his house and asked me, in a sincere tone, ‘Tamarita, how unique is this village?’ (‘¿Qué tan original es este pueblo?’). I hesitated and he explained that he wanted to know how ‘authentic’ it was. I proceeded to talk about the local rituals and practices, descriptions of which made up the bulk of my field notes, but Baudilio interrupted me to say that these were not specific to Yapatera and were practiced in neighbouring villages too. In the same visit, he informed me that he had applied for a substantial amount of funding from a large Ecuadorian NGO with a proposal for an ‘Afro-Peruvian Women’s Pottery Project’.

A few months later, he called me over again and showed me a black-and-white computer printout of an image he had come across on the Internet. It was a carved wooden figure with what he considered ‘African’ facial features, sporting a grass skirt, bare chest, a bone pierced through the nostrils and another through the hair, holding a machete in one hand, a drum in the other and wearing hoop earrings. This, Baudilio declared, was Changó,³ an African god; did I know of any such African gods being worshipped in Yapatera? When I told him I did not, he probed me further, asking whether witches (*brujas*) could be considered African gods, to which I replied, no. This time he shared with me the news that he had won the funding for the pottery project and that one of Peru’s primary Afro-Peruvian ethnic organisations, based in Lima and whose leaders were well

² Adopted 19 March 2010. Available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/169

³ A deity of the Yoruba religion, familiar in Cuban, Venezuelan and Brazilian spirit possession cults, but not found in Peru.

known to me, would help deliver the project together with professional potters and artists from Chulucanas, the neighbouring market town. Chulucanas, which is not regarded as Afro-Peruvian, is famous for its ceramic products, identifiable by a monochrome palette and limited set of recurring images; these are sold in tourist markets in Lima and the tourist circuit of the southern Andes.

Soon after, I found myself stuck elbow-deep in clay along with twenty or so other women, children, and a handful of youth and men, all of us novices, following the instructions given by the project leaders, activists and professional potters to the best of our abilities. All the leaders, except Baudilio, were outsiders to the village. A few sessions into the project, just as the participants were overcoming their inhibitions in handling the clay and creating increasingly more recognisable figures and forms that they deemed aesthetically and symbolically pleasing—the sort of thing one would want to hang on one’s living room wall—we were called together for a collective reprimand. The group was told that we were making too many clay flower bouquets; there were to be no more football team logos and above all, no more dolphins! Instead we were to produce objects representing ‘Afro-Peruvian culture’. Flower bouquets, football logos and dolphins, it was made abundantly clear by the project leaders, did not constitute Afro-Peruvian culture. None of my fellow villagers objected, since to do so would have been rude and would have signalled our lack of appreciation for this welcome break in the monotony of rural village life. In any case, none of the village participants, who had been designated as Afro-Peruvian by the project itself, knew what Afro-Peruvian pottery was or should be. It became the mission of the project to teach us what this was. Soon after, it was decided that the remainder of the project would be spent producing a limited set of predefined figures, which would not be freely sculpted, but cast using moulds produced by the project leaders, and then painted by the village participants. The decision as to what was ‘Afro-Peruvian’ was deemed far too important to be left to so-called Afro-Peruvians themselves.

Yapatera on camera, Yapatera off camera

A jeep, laden high with audio-visual equipment, pulled up in front of Rodolfo's house, which sits in a prime location on Yapatera's main square. A small handful of city-dwellers from Piura, the state capital, spilled out. They had come to make a seven-minute documentary on the village for the channel América Televisión and its Sunday entertainment programme, 'Piura: land of paradise'. They wanted to interview Rodolfo, a *cumananero*, or poet, lay historian and self-identified Afro-Peruvian leader, one of only a few in the village. Rodolfo shook off his irritation at having waited for over three hours for the guests and launched into his repertoire of *cumananas* beginning, as always, with the tamer and more educational rhymes and ending, to the great delight of his audience, with the most sexually explicit and entertaining ones. As the television presenter interviewed Rodolfo, he gave a summary of his idiosyncratic take on Yapatera's history. After a couple of takes, in which Rodolfo managed to re-tell his stories almost word for word, the cameras were switched off and he boasted to the visitors that he was the only *cumananero* left in the village, indeed in the entire province, and the only expert on culture and history in Yapatera. He proceeded to detail his long list of decorations, public speaking engagements and important personal contacts in the worlds of culture and politics. The director of the television programme then decided that he would like to record some *festejo*, or Afro-Peruvian dance;⁴ in a matter of minutes a little girl, no older than four years of age, appeared in her scant costume consisting of a ruffled halter top and skirt, and was asked to dance in front of the camera. Since no players of *cajón*, the percussion instrument most associated with Afro-Peruvian music, were to be found in the village the crew relied on recorded music that they had brought along for the purpose. The director explained to me that the television programme was promoting local tourism and that, 'Our goal is to create identity! To achieve the goal of making Piuranos feel proud of what we have!' After an hour or so, the crew packed up the jeep and drove back to the village entrance to

⁴ *Festejo* is not only danced by those classed as Afro-Peruvians, but is frequently performed alongside other folkloric dances (*bailes típicos*), especially in schools along the coast.

interview Baudilio about his pottery project, before departing hurriedly for the ninety-minute drive back to Piura.

The television crew were only one group in the long list of visitors who come to Yapatera to discover, document or draw inspiration from the ‘black village’ on Peru’s rural northern coast.⁵ This is a list that includes groups of university students on field trips, journalists, NGO workers and writers, the most famous of which is Nobel Prize winner Mario Vargas Llosa.⁶ But these visitors never make it far beyond the homes of Rodolfo and Baudilio, and they make little attempt to hear other voices from Yapatera. Therefore, the stories that emerge from Yapatera are self-selected. They present the picture of a mythical, magical, authentic ‘black’ village, stuck in a distant pre-modern past and existing almost outside of the rest of the country: happy children play barefoot in the dirt, and the wrinkled, sorrowful-looking faces of the elders are juxtaposed with Rodolfo’s stories of chattel slavery which appears to have been abolished only a generation or two ago. Cameras shy away from the faces which are not easily classed as black and which readers or viewers could perceive as belonging to Peruvians of any other rural coastal village. Even when interested visitors do approach ordinary villagers to ask about things ‘African’, ‘black’ or ‘Afro-Peruvian’, the latter are quick to defer to the expertise of Rodolfo and Baudilio.

Villagers, perhaps, have a sense that the stories they are more inclined to tell amongst themselves and which do not feature racial or ethnic labels are not what is sought out by outsiders. More importantly, villagers resent being categorised together with the ‘real blacks’ that are said to live in Lima and the southern region of Chincha. These are referred to as ‘fat, thickly featured, ugly *negros* [blacks] with protruding eyes and hanging lips’. Villagers are quick to point out that they themselves are of ‘mixed’ *raza* (race), and those villagers who

⁵ Academics include: Rodríguez Pastor (2008) and Velásquez Benites (2003); local writers include: Alzamora Arévalo (2008; 2009), Barranzuela Zevallos (2007), Cornejo (2007), Espinoza León (1994) and folklorist Zúñiga de Riofrío (2007).

⁶ Vargas Llosa reports on his visit in his article ‘*La desaparición de los “piajenos”*’ in the Spanish newspaper *El País* 11/03/12 (http://elpais.com/elpais/2012/03/09/opinion/1331286311_586628.html). In his book ‘*El Pez en el Agua*’ he has also recounted his childhood memories of learning how to ride a horse and to drink 5 o’clock tea on the Hacienda Yapatera as a family friend of the last plantation owners (Vargas Llosa 1993: 14). The birthplace of the protagonist in his latest novel is Yapatera (Vargas Llosa 2013).

are darker skinned are said to be ‘tall, noble, fine *morenos* [brown people]’. Most villagers also regard any historical links to Africa via the transatlantic slave trade as hearsay at best, and insult at worst. But these views are reserved for conversations off camera and off record. Even one of the small handful of local activists, ferociously proud and vocal about his ‘blackness’ when on stage, voiced a different view to me in private on the day of the television documentary filming. Just minutes prior to the crew’s arrival, we were talking casually about elopement, the principle marriage practice in the village. He told me of his imminent plans to send the adolescent granddaughters he was raising to Lima in order to ensure ‘that they get themselves any old *cholo* [person of mixed indigenous descent] for a husband, so that they don’t run off with one of these lazy, drunken blacks that we have here!’ Also off camera, the mother of the little *festejo* performer later complained to me that the crew benefited from her daughter’s performance but offered little by way of compensation, not even a cold drink or a few Peruvian *soles*⁷ towards the costume. From the point of view of her mother, the little girl had provided a service, one which she, unlike her peers, was specially qualified to perform, and for which she had special equipment (her costume). Arguably, this reveals that for this mother ‘Afro-Peruvianness’ is not a general way of life accessible to all, but something that was rehearsed and staged for entertainment purposes, and thus eligible for payment. This raises questions which are central to this thesis, including what lies behind villagers’ rejection of ‘Afro-Peruvian’ and ‘black’ labels and how ‘race’ is understood in everyday life.

Negritud vs. negrura

Despite the interest of a small group of outsiders in Yapatera, on the whole most Peruvians are not aware of the existence of villages in northern Peru that have populations of partial African descent. Instead they assume that such communities are to be found only in the south, particularly the state of Ica, and in Lima. These assumptions are held by academics as well as ordinary Peruvians,

⁷ At the time of my fieldwork, 1 Peruvian Nuevo Sol (S./) was roughly equivalent to 0.24 British Pounds (£) or 0.35 US Dollars (\$).

and when I introduced the subject of my study in Peru I often heard reactions such as ‘But there aren’t any blacks in Piura anymore!’ or ‘Why don’t you study Chincha instead?!’ The latter comment was also motivated by the fact that during the time of my research no full-length ethnographic monograph had been published, either in English or Spanish, on a community of African descent in Peru and it was felt that a better-known community would be the natural choice for a first study of this kind.⁸ A Lima-based academic, who had published on Afro-Peruvian culture together with activists, poked fun both at me and at my subject of study by exclaiming: ‘*¡En Yapatera no vas a encontrar negritud, solo negrura!*’ (‘In Yapatera you won’t find blackness, you’ll only find black!’) His joke, intended as friendly banter, differentiated between *negritud*, a term which echoes the francophone literary and revivalist Négritude movement and which invoked the notion of a shared African Diaspora culture, and *negrura*, the plain and simple word for black colour.⁹ By his measure, I would not find anything worth calling black culture in Yapatera, merely a prevalence of black skin. The next time I saw him in a social setting, he introduced me to another academic as ‘Tamara, *la negróloga*’ or the ‘black-ologist’. This thesis seeks to counteract the historical processes and narratives of difference which cast places such as Yapatera as lacking in ‘culture’ and which assume that they have nothing to offer anthropology.

These vignettes illustrate some of the central contradictions in researching ‘race’ in Peru and in studying a village of mixed Afro-indigenous descent. While Yapatera is constructed as an ‘Afro-Peruvian’ or black village by some outsiders, including ethnic activists, this research shows how villagers distance themselves from such labels and analyses what alternative forms of belonging, difference and classification they create and sustain through everyday practices. By uncovering the alternative ways of enacting sameness and difference, continuity and rupture that ordinary people are involved in, it shows to what degree race matters, if at all, and how ideas about race come to play

⁸ After my return from the field Golash-Boza published ‘*Yo Soy Negro: Blackness in Peru*’ (2012).

⁹ For examples of *negritud* in Peru, see Rodríguez Pastor (2008); and the edited volume by N’Gom (2008).

within such everyday practices. An account of the lived experience of racial and cultural mixing contributes to the theoretical and historical literature about race and ethnicity in Peru and Latin America and to the broader discipline of anthropology.

Before I introduce Yapatera, I would like to clarify how I use the term 'race' in this thesis. In chapter I, in particular, I use the term as it is commonly understood within the contemporary social science literature. That is, as a culturally constructed means of creating difference between groups or individuals and of classifying them on the basis of superficial, visible characteristics – in particular phenotype – that are assumed to be hereditary, innate, or otherwise natural. This definition is a recent one. Wade provides a discussion of the history of the concept of race in intellectual thought and of the changing meaning of race since its first appearance in to European languages in the fourteenth century (2002; 1997: 9-21; see also Banton 1987). In this thesis I shall not make the analytical distinction between race and ethnicity. Following other authors I agree that a sharp analytical distinction between the two is not useful (e.g. Brubaker 2009: 25-26). This is because race is often used to infer, explain, legitimate or delineate other differences based on behavioural or psychological traits, and cultural differences (Wade 1997: 76) and because the construction of shared cultural traits usually seen as central to ethnicity (such as religion, language, and customs) often involves ideas about underlying racial differences (Erikson 1993: 5). As Wade argues, attempts to sharply distinguish race and ethnicity in recent academic debates are often built on implicit assumptions about the opposition between nature and culture (1993b; 2002). Following Brubaker's critique of common analytical uses of ethnicity (2004: 7-27), I seek to avoid what he calls 'groupism', that is the 'tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis' (2004: 8). It is one of the objectives of this thesis to ask how ordinary people understand race and ethnicity, how they use the terms in everyday life, to what degree such terms inform local perspectives of the world, and how ordinary people classify and categorise the social world. This, then, is a second and different way in which I

shall use the term race, as I explore, especially in chapter II, how *raza* is understood locally by ordinary villagers.



Figure 4. Participants in the Afro-Peruvian pottery project

The village of Yapatera

Yapatera, or more accurately, the ‘large population centre of Cruz-Pampa-Yapatera’, is a village of almost 3,000 inhabitants in the district of Chulucanas, province of Morropón, state (*región*, ‘region’) of Piura (see figures 1, 2 and 3). Because of its proximity to Chulucanas, the market town that is both the capital of the district and province, Yapatera is considered a jurisdictional annex to the town of Chulucanas. This means that while Yapatera elects its own mayor, and has a municipal building where some basic civil registry services are provided, it does not receive its own budget and depends for administrative decisions on Chulucanas. Yapatera, which has a dry, subtropical climate, sits in the valley of the River Yapatera which irrigates the agricultural land via man-made ditches. The River Yapatera flows into the River Piura, and the entire province is also known as the Alto, or upper, Piura valley. Yapatera itself is a good three-hour bus journey from the coast and is nestled into the foothills of the northern Andes; from Yapatera it is a quick ascent and day’s hike into the lower mountain communities.¹⁰ Culturally, however, Yapatera and the Alto Piura valley are considered part of the Peruvian coast.

The village is named after and settled around the former plantation, the Hacienda Yapatera, which functioned continuously from the sixteenth century to the 1970s. Today most households own on average one or two, and occasionally up to five hectares of land, which they refer to as *chacras*¹¹ or *parcelas*, from which they earn a living through agriculture. Mangos and limes are the main export products, but other crops include rice, corn, papaya, bananas, cacao and soya beans. The produce is sold to merchants who bring it to the market in Chulucanas, Piura, Chiclayo and Lima; the mangos are exported internationally. Villagers shop for basic groceries in Chulucanas, the market town. Household incomes are often supplemented by remittances from migrant children in cities and many women sell prepared food or fresh produce, as well as basic necessities from their front rooms. Some villagers have access to wage labour as teachers or motorcycle taxi drivers and through odd jobs, including seasonal agricultural

¹⁰ In terms proposed by Pulgar Vidal, the village of Yapatera lies on the boundary between the coastal *chala* region and the higher altitude *yunga* region (Pulgar Vidal 1972).

¹¹ From Quechua, small farm or horticultural garden.

work, in Chulucanas and beyond. Some former workers from the *hacienda* are able to claim small state pensions and most villagers qualify for coverage for basic health care.

The village itself is comprised of two sections that were considered administratively separate from each other until 1990, from which point on the village was colloquially known as Yapatera (see figure 3).¹² ‘La Hacienda’ is the name often given to the upper part of the village, because of its proximity to the former *hacienda* offices and residence; it is closer to the asphalted road that leads to Chulucanas. This part is inhabited primarily by the former salaried employees of the *hacienda* and their descendants. The lower part of the village, closer to the foothills of the mountains, is known as ‘Cruz Pampa’ and it is inhabited primarily by people who used to work as casual labourers for the *hacienda*, and by their descendants. The formerly separate parts of the village are today joined together administratively, jurisdictionally, and physically by houses that flank the dirt road which connects them. This growing together reflects the increased intermarriage between people from both parts of the village in the last three decades.¹³ People from both parts of the village acknowledge that most of those from La Hacienda are descended from migrants who came to work on the *hacienda* from other parts of Piura, in particular the Bajo (lower) Piura valley, Chulucanas, the Piuran highlands and neighbouring states. They are marked by surnames that are considered non-autochthonous and many are described as *cholos*, meaning they have straight hair, insinuating a mixed indigenous ancestry. By contrast, people from Cruz Pampa, are considered more ‘native’ to the village; they are also considered to have darker skin and other features such as curly hair. Many of them are described as *zambos* (curly-haired) or *morenos* (brown) by contrast with those from La Hacienda.

¹² Throughout this thesis, to avoid confusion, I have opted to reserve the name Yapatera for the unified village and have referred to its constituent parts as La Hacienda and Cruz Pampa, in keeping with popular usage in Cruz Pampa. By contrast, villagers in La Hacienda usually refer to their part of the village as Yapatera. National censuses before 1993, by contrast, generally mean only the settlement of La Hacienda when they refer to Yapatera and Cruz Pampa is listed separately (see chapter VI).

¹³ Unfortunately, the civil registrar does not record where spouses were born; therefore I do not have statistical data on intermarriage.

While there may have been socio-economic differences between the two parts of the village, before Agrarian Reform, with *hacienda* employees enjoying a more regular income and higher social status within the labour system than *hacienda* workers, I found no evidence of significant material differences between the two parts now. Looking at the census data from 1993 (INEI), the last in which the two parts were considered separate settlements, La Hacienda and Cruz Pampa had almost identical figures in potential indices of social disadvantage, including illiteracy rates, educational attainment, number of children per mother, rates of houses with only one room, house construction materials and rates of households whose primary source of income was agriculture.

The village has a church and a chapel, a cemetery, a municipal building, one secondary school, two primary schools and a nursery. A local health post is stationed in the village but frequent strikes, lack of supplies and very reduced opening hours make for inadequate provision of medical care. Most villagers qualify for free health services through the national agency Essalud but the majority supplement this rudimentary coverage with the use of private medical services, paid out of pocket. Banks, doctors, higher education, vocational academies and public services are accessed either in Chulucanas or Piura. Chulucanas and Piura also provide links via long-distance buses to Lima, the rest of the country and abroad.

The average household size is five and it is not uncommon for children to live with their parents even after marrying, often until the birth of a second child. Yapaterra experienced a rapid growth in the years for which census material exists, almost doubling its population from just under 1,400 to almost 3,300 between 1940 and 1997 (see figure 37). However, declining birth rates together with intensified out-migration have resulted in a population decline since 1997.

Houses are made either of cane packed with mud, adobe, or brick, the first being the least desirable, the second the most common, and the last the most desirable. Traditional tile roofs are often replaced with corrugated iron; floors are either dirt or concrete. Most houses are supplied with electricity, a system that was installed about ten years ago, and therefore have televisions and radios. A

few households have access to satellite phones and increasingly mobile phones; as of late 2011 there was no Internet connection and I knew of only one household with a computer. Untreated running water is supplied from a well via a petrol-powered pump, for two hours every other day, alternating between Cruz Pampa and La Hacienda. Water is collected in large containers and dispensed sparingly for cooking and bathing. Outhouses are located in the corral, behind houses.

The Hacienda Yapatera

Some key characteristics of regional economic history (for more references, see Klarén 2000: 461) are worth highlighting as they relate to Yapatera's contemporary inhabitants. The *hacienda* Yapatera was founded in the sixteenth century as an *estancia ganadera*, or cattle farm, with large parts leased to *arrendatarios*, or tenants. It first appears in the archives in 1595 (Schlupmann 1994: 137). *Trapiches*, or primitive sugar mills have been listed since the earliest surviving wills of Yapatera's owners, as have black slaves and Schlupmann suggests that black slaves were the largest capital asset of the Hacienda Yapatera (1994). *Hacienda* owners in Piura formed part of a network of elite families tracing their roots to Spaniards and the earliest settlers, often via Quito, Loja and Cuenca, cities in what today is Ecuador. Property and inheritance were jealously guarded, through race- and class-endogamous, alliance-building marriages among the leading families. Piura's economy, in particular that surrounding sugar cane and propelled by these provincial elites, was somewhat separate from that of Lima in the south; and while southern industries catered for the local market, Piura has been able to export in a proto-capitalist manner since early colonial times (Aldana 1989). Sugar boomed and was replaced by cotton, tobacco, rice and others. Complex land and labour relations characterised Peru's plantations with slaves, share-croppers, tenants and indentured labourers working side by side (Peloso 1999), a complexity which signified, by extension, racial or 'ethnic' diversity, where blacks and free coloured people, non-tribute paying indigenous people, *mestizos* and other people of mixed descent co-existed. This complexity was even more pronounced in the north and on the coast (Deere

1990). The use of slaves in Peruvian agriculture is strongly associated with the sugar and cotton industry (on the latter see Peloso 1999).¹⁴

In Piura, Spaniards had taken over the Incan system of *yanaconaje*, turning formerly mobile, non-tribute paying Indians into serfs (*yanaconas*) who were bound to particular *haciendas* (Collin-Delavaud 1984: 139). *Yanaconas*, also known as *colonos*, paid a fixed rent or part of their harvest, and sold their harvest through the *hacienda* owner and bought seeds and tools using high-interest loans. After the abolition of slavery, former slaves had gained a legal status as free, but their conditions of work were little improved. The resulting scarcity of labour was solved by the import of Chinese coolies, though few made it to Piura (Schlupmann 1994). The coerced nature of share-cropping in Latin American *haciendas*, such as on Peru's coast, inspired the categorisation of these relations of production as 'feudal' in Laclau's contribution to World Systems theory (1971). Stern has pointed out, however, that these modes of production and labour relations featured both feudal and capitalist elements (Stern 1988: 841). Slaves in particular, according to Mintz, were 'proto-peasants' (Mintz 1974; Stern 1988: 864). *Yanaconaje* continued in Piura, although was in decline until agrarian reforms in the 1960s.

By the 1950s large *haciendas* such as Yapatera only allowed their *yanaconas* to water their plots on Saturdays and Sundays, which resulted in declining rent payments (Collin-Delavaud 1984: 139). Plantations were inhabited by a permanent skilled work force including mechanics, drivers and irrigators, while the manual agricultural workers were employed on a seasonal and temporary basis, especially during harvest season (Collin-Delavaud 1984: 287). The former were salaried, while the latter were paid by the day, week or by the task. Many of these field hands came from the population who had once been *yanaconas* or *colonos* (1984: 287) and, in places such as Yapatera, included former slaves or those of slave descent. In addition, migrants from the Piuran

¹⁴ So much so, that one member of the Piuran elite informed me in 2010, apparently oblivious to the coerced and exploitative nature of this work, that 'el negro likes to work where there are sweets!' Blacks in Peru are also closely associated with the making of sweet treats and desserts, from the female colonial vendors who sold their produce in coastal urban squares, to their representations which grace the packages of supermarket instant desserts and today's *morenas* who form part of Peru's gastronomic revolution. This link to sugar undoubtedly feeds into stereotypes of blacks as 'happy' and childlike.

highlands came to work as field hands on the *hacienda*, settling and mingling with those already established there. By the 1950s many properties, including the Hacienda Yapatera, had been turned into corporations, with the numerous heirs as shareholders (1984: 287). Many *haciendas* were now managed by administrators including by the owners' sons-in-law, many of them foreign-born traders and merchants (Collin-Delavaud 1984: 287), and this was the case of Yapatera. By the 1940s, the plantation owning family had already sold off large parts of the hacienda to *arrendatarios*, larger fixed-rate tenants who formed the emerging elite of Chulucanas, the market town and current provincial capital. Collin-Delavaud argues that this was throughout the northern coast at exorbitant prices (1976: 154). During the regime of President Belaúnde, who had enforced softer agricultural reform laws, the owners split up the family firm, which had jointly owned Yapatera and other haciendas in the valley, into smaller, individually owned portions, with the hope of escaping expropriation, a strategy employed by many owners of northern coastal haciendas (see Collin-Delavaud 1984: 287). By the time of the agrarian reforms the Hacienda Yapatera had sold 964 hectares out of a total of 1,500, to 460 *yanaconas* (Collin-Delavaud 1984: 139). Velasco's agrarian reform reached the state of Piura relatively late compared to other parts of Peru, and one of the plantation owners even attempted to negotiate with the villagers to let him stay and operate a much reduced hacienda; but the vast majority of villagers rejected the deal. In Yapatera, previously characterised by absentee landlordism, the owners saw themselves forced to take up a rural lifestyle in order to legitimise their stakes in the *hacienda*. Agricultural production in Piura was already on the decline, plagued by a long drought (Collin-Delavaud 1984: 289) and eventually the entire *hacienda* was rented out to better-off large-scale farmers, or *arrendatarios*.

Agrarian reforms in the late 1960s and 1970s under General Velasco expropriated plantations throughout Peru and turned *haciendas* over to state-formed co-operatives run by their former employees and workers. In Yapatera the *hacienda* was expropriated in 1974 and the Co-operativa Agrícola de Producción (CAP) Sinforoso Benites was established. Co-operatives often perpetuated the social hierarchies of the *hacienda* and were ultimately plagued

by mismanagement and a lack of access to credit (see chapter V; Mayer 2009; Seligmann 1995). Many co-operatives suffered land invasions by landless peasants, former co-operative members and seasonal workers. In Yapatera, the co-operative experienced at least three such land invasions between 1973 and 1975, with one writer estimating that almost 31% of land was lost to invaders (Fanchette 1984:84). In addition land was abandoned, sold and distributed to members for family gardens such that only about 850 hectares were left in the co-operative by the mid-1980s (Fanchette 1984: 46). During Fujimori's presidency, the large majority of co-operatives were dissolved and the land distributed among their former members. In Yapatera out of the original 288 co-operative members, only 152 were left by 1980 and in 1985 the co-operative was permanently dissolved.

Arriving in Yapatera and methods

I first lived in Peru for a year in 2001-2002, during which time I was employed by the National Institute of Culture (INC) on an archaeological excavation site and museum called Túcume, near Chiclayo, in the northern state of Lambayeque. While living in Chiclayo, I made the acquaintance of two sociologists, Lucho Rocca and Sonia Arteaga, who were in the initial stages of setting up the country's first Afro-Peruvian Museum, in the nearby town of Zaña, using Lucho's private collections. Lucho and Sonia invited me to participate in their efforts and I returned to Peru almost every summer thereafter to assist with the development of the museum in the form of photographs, illustrations, technical sketches, translations, interviews, recordings and other curatorial assistance. The aim, from the start, was to redress the silence, even taboo, around Peru's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, and to provide public education on slavery and the legacies of people of African descent in Peruvian society. As the museum grew from Lucho's dining room to taking over two houses on the Calle Independencia in Zaña, so my desire grew to understand contemporary Peruvians of African descent. Lucho and Sonia encouraged me to consider Yapatera for a field site even before I enrolled on a PhD programme. From their descriptions it fulfilled two criteria that made it particularly appealing. First, unlike the villages

of Ica in the south, Yapatera had been relatively under-exposed to the efforts of ethnic activists based in Lima, and this would allow me to study how different categories, including race, mattered in everyday life to ordinary people without the influence of explicit 'identity politics'.¹⁵ Second, the rural northern Peruvian coast has largely escaped long-term ethnographic research, offering an opportunity to draw out regional patterns and geographic comparisons to better studied areas.

In October 2009 Sonia accompanied me to Yapatera, where she had arranged for us to stay for a few days with the family of a deceased activist, who had been one of a very small handful of local representatives of the Afro-Peruvian ethnic movement (in particular the MNFC, see chapter I: 71). I was quickly adopted in the home of a local family with whom I lived for twelve months. For the last four months of my fieldwork I rented an apartment in the market town of Chulucanas and commuted to Yapatera daily.¹⁶ In the early days villagers assumed that I was either linked to the ethnic activists, a teacher, or an evangelical missionary. But when I was still there long after such outsiders would have left, villagers grew accustomed to the sight of me criss-crossing through the village on my bike. My days were spent going to the family farms and the late afternoons and evenings chatting to my neighbours, acquaintances and friends, usually on their front porch, the *vereda* (see chapter III: 134-135). I participated in family life and public life, attending birthdays, funerals, weddings, baptisms, requiem masses, village meetings, school parades and events, religious meetings, public occasions, the patron saint and mango harvest festivals and processions for several minor saints. My informants were either those individuals and families I sought out, because they had been described as knowledgeable about a certain issue (for example they knew an ancient prayer their grandmother had taught them, or they had worked in a particular role on the plantation and had a story to tell about that), or those who had expressed kindness, hospitality or simply curiosity towards me. I also made the

¹⁵ Should ethnic categories become more salient in Peru in the future, as they have done in the rest of Latin America, I hope that my ethnography provides a useful reference point.

¹⁶ This move was motivated by two factors: my wife joined me for the last two months of fieldwork and I was overseeing the construction of playground equipment at a workshop in Chulucanas for installation in Yapatera (chapter VI: 235).

acquaintance of many adult children of villagers who had migrated to Lima, several of whom I visited there. I did not always pay heed to the personal loyalties and animosities of my host family because I was interested in diverse experiences and views, yet never to the point of jeopardising my existing relationships.

My prolonged presence in the village and my initial reliance on observation allowed me to approach issues of race differently than many other research studies of the subject in Peru. Most of these rely on surveys, interviews, and focus groups and, while they have their merits, cannot capture subtler nuances in meaning. More problematically, by tackling the sensitive issue of race in ways which, by their very nature, are explicit, such methods are ill suited to uncovering local forms of knowledge and practice. My understanding of local ideas about race and other social categories or other forms of belonging unfolded gradually, revealing hierarchies of importance and connections between different domains and practices of everyday village life. It was only about eight months into my fieldwork that I prompted conversations explicitly about race, and I started doing so by asking what different racial or colour terms meant.

A few remarks are necessary concerning my relation to the ethnic Afro-Peruvian organisations and their leaders working in Lima. I deliberately did not begin building relationships with Afro-Peruvian NGOs until I was already well established in Yapatara. This was because I wanted to steer clear of the internal politics between Afro-Peruvian organisations and I did not want my informants to assume that I had formal links to these organisations since I felt that it would influence the data I would be able to collect. I later became acquainted with several ethnic leaders and they generously shared valuable information with me; I was also regularly invited by them to participate in various conferences, workshops, lecture series and book launches. I participated in many of these events whenever I visited Lima, but on the whole I chose to do so in an observational role. I responded where appropriate to requests for assistance from ethnic activists and, on one occasion, I participated in an expert feedback panel for a study funded by UNICEF on Afro-Peruvian youth and children: some of my findings made it into their report. Most of the findings I report in this thesis,

including the fact that people in Yapatera do not see themselves as ‘black’ or Afro-Peruvian, that they look down upon dark-skinned Peruvians, and that they do not readily embrace ethnic mobilisation come as no surprise to the ethnic activists. On the contrary, aware of the obstacles this poses to their work, activists dedicate a substantial effort to campaigns and workshops intended to raise ‘ethnic’ consciousness. Some of my arguments, including my stress on villagers’ practices of ‘mixing’ and the continuity between cultural practices in Yapatera and the surrounding (non-Afro-Peruvian) villages in the region are problematic for ethnic activists’ goal of gaining recognition of Afro-Peruvians as a distinct ethnic and cultural group since this requires defining a distinctive ‘culture’ (chapter I: 70-71). Other findings, including the importance placed on local plantation history and the category of peasants (chapters V and VI) as well as on the subtler, hidden discourses of racism, have been met with great interest by several activists, though to my knowledge, they have not had any effect on work with villagers or national campaigning.

Rodolfo and Baudilio were the local points of contact for the ethnic organisations. Though their relations to the ethnic organisations and their level of participation vary, they are both usually invited to represent Yapatera at ethnicity and human rights themed conferences and workshops in Lima and elsewhere. They are also the ones to receive visitors and to present Yapatera as an Afro-Peruvian village to curious outsiders. Both were very generous to me with their time and knowledge; however, I deliberately limited my interactions with them. This was for two reasons: first, although they seemed to present a united front outside of Yapatera they generally avoided each other in the village and I wanted to steer clear of being perceived as aligning with one over the other. More importantly, it quickly became clear that most villagers I spoke to considered them both as partial outsiders. Although both were born in the village and still lived there, they had each spent a substantial number of years living in Lima, for very different reasons, and neither had spent a significant amount of time working on the *hacienda*, in the co-operative or as a peasant, and had therefore not participated in what are perceived as crucial events and periods in Yapatera’s

village history (see chapter V). Charges of nepotism were also frequently laid against one of them, and of arrogance against the other.

Outline of the chapters

This thesis investigates the hard work which ordinary people put into downplaying the potential ethnic or racial distinctiveness and potential racial divisions of their village and the alternative practices by which they sustain their community and anchor it into regional and national history, economy and culture. I call this loose set of ideas and practices ‘mixing’. I also argue that these practices are framed by the threat posed when others, usually outsiders, construct Yapatera as a black or Afro-Peruvian place or people, and that race, albeit in a hidden form, structures such practices, despite what locals claim. My aim is to illustrate how such a dynamic works across different, yet inter-related domains of everyday life: indigenous knowledge about ‘race’, kinship, religion, history and economy, ideas about place, the future and village politics.

With this in mind I have therefore structured each ethnographic chapter (chapters II-VI) according to the following model: I begin each chapter with an alternative scenario of how, instead of mixing, the domain or issue in question could instead be conceived, or enacted, with explicit reference to race or ethnicity. The bulk of each chapter then shows how in Yapatera practices in this domain are instead conducted in other registers and concerned with downplaying the importance of race and emphasising mixing. In each chapter I return to the issue of race, showing how, in subtle ways, constructions of racial difference come into play. The chapters are as follows:

Chapter I. Mixing, race and ethnicity in historical and regional perspective. This chapter situates the thesis within the historical, regional and theoretical literature. Current scholarship of race and ethnicity in Latin America has tended to overlook contemporary Afro-indigenous relations, everyday practices of mixing, processes of ethnic de-specification and the study of people who are not easily identified as ‘indigenous’ or ‘black’.

Chapter II. A folk theory of race: Mixing, categorisation and racial essentialism. This chapter contrasts villagers’ experience of racism with a local

folk theory of race. The folk theory combines ideas about physiology, procreation and descent and suggests that race is conceived of as an invisible essence but which is necessarily multiple, and thereby unpredictable, making the classification of individuals in singular racial terms impossible. This local theory undermines 'race' as a useful social category. Engaging with literature in cognitive psychology on racial essentialism this chapter also presents experimental cognitive tasks implemented in the field which show how the local folk theory of race informs ordinary people's inferential reasoning but also suggests that race is not as superficial as the cultural narrative claims.

Chapter III. Carried in the heart: Surnames and bilaterality in kinship, marriage and personhood. This chapter uncovers the links between a local folk theory of race and ideas and practices of kinship, marriage and personhood. Bilaterality, and mixedness as an aspect of relatedness and personhood, provides a broader logic for the notion of multiple affiliations

Chapter IV. Keeping their tombs warm: Remembrance practices, sociality and the saint-like dead. This chapter discusses funerary and remembrance practices and their role in sustaining sociality and spatio-temporal continuity as well as providing a space for coming to terms with the uncertainty generated by Catholic ideas about the afterlife and purgatory. I interpret these syncretic and popular practices, which are fundamentally concerned with social cohesion, in the light of racist stereotypes which cast Peruvians of African descent as 'uncivil', infantile and disengaged.

Chapter V. Sugar Ruins and Rotting mangos: *Hacienda*, agrarian reform and becoming peasants. This chapter engages with villagers' historicity and traces the trajectory through which they come to inhabit and construct belonging as peasants. While the peasant category obliterates ethnic and racial difference, in the process of becoming peasants, inequalities along socio-racial lines present an obstacle.

Chapter VI. 'Yapatera the future district': The troublesome process of making one place out of two. This chapter discusses local practices of place-making which seek to obliterate differences between former plantation employees and field hands and instead seek a collective status within a raceless

national hierarchy. In the process of attempting to secure a modern, civil and respectable status, however, latent divisions disguising different racial origins re-emerge.

Chapter I. Mixing, race and ethnicity in historical and regional perspective

In the Lima mansion

Far away from the cruel desert heat of Yapatera I found myself, yet again, with a gin and tonic in hand within the cool, tranquil walls of a Lima mansion, tucked away amongst the trees in one of the city's most exclusive gated communities. Edward and Ursula, my hosts, had pieced together a museum-worthy home: an astounding collection of pre-Columbian textiles and artefacts, exquisite antique furniture, imposing colonial paintings, books and maps, and the striking depictions of rural *hacienda* life painted by Ursula, herself an accomplished artist. The meals here were plentiful and varied, and were accompanied by good wines and long conversations that shifted seamlessly in and out of Spanish, English and German. It was a welcome change from mealtimes in Yapatera, which were a silent affair and which often left me hungry, despite the huge heaps of rice. Edward and Ursula, now in their seventies, had been the last owners of the Hacienda Yapatera, the plantation whose ruins still stand in present-day Yapatera. Following expropriations during the agrarian reforms in the late 1960s and early 1970s the family had been forced to turn the family corporation, managed by three cousins, over to a co-operative, set up by the state for their former employees and field hands. I had not expected to make the acquaintance

of the former plantation owners.¹ But when my quest for historical *hacienda* documents in regional and national archives proved only moderately successful I decided to make contact with the three cousins, following a lead provided by my host grandfather in Yapatera, who had needed his former boss's signature for a pension claim. A friendship began with Edward and Ursula, and I visited their Lima mansion whenever I was in the capital.

On this particular visit, Edward drew my attention to the oak wardrobe, a family heirloom. The wardrobe was in the main living room facing the majestic seventeenth-century portraits of his ancestors, sons and daughters of Spanish nobility and first-generation New World residents. On the inside door of the wardrobe was taped a photocopy of a colonial inventory of the Hacienda Yapatera. It listed, alongside the monetary value of mills, clay jars and earthenware, the names and prices of three female domestic slaves.

In the adjacent room, an over-sized secretary desk housed a neat folder of plastic-encased letters, legal documents, newspaper clippings and obituaries stemming from the family's grandiose agricultural legacy in the state of Piura. One letter, written by Edward's grandfather to his children in the early twentieth century, instructed them to take good care of the *hacienda's* 'arms' (*brazos*), or workers for, he emphasised, they were 'the *hacienda's* greatest wealth'.

Both the colonial inventory and the more contemporary document illustrated the economic importance of those who worked for the *hacienda*, in the first case domestic slaves, in the second case plantation labourers. But they differed in two important respects: first, while the women mentioned in the colonial inventory were, in legal terms, property and assets of the *hacienda*, the people mentioned in the more recent letter were, in the eyes of the law, free individuals who were paid for their work. Second, the racial classification of the former was implicit in the legal designation of 'slave', a term that was sometimes used synonymously with 'black' (Romero 1944: 375): more likely than not they were individuals of West African descent. The workers on the twentieth-century *hacienda*, by contrast, were not referred to in terms which implied their ethnic or

¹ Initially this seemed to me like an act of betrayal against my informants; however, I soon discovered that villagers assumed that I knew the plantation owners and were surprised that I had never met them.

racial categorisation, although it could safely be assumed that they were not light-skinned Peruvians of European descent like the *hacienda* owners. Most of the *hacienda* workers mentioned in the letter were, at least in part, descended from slaves of African descent such as those listed in the colonial inventory, since historical records show the importance of slaves to the *hacienda*'s four hundred-year existence (Schlupmann 1994). Today's village inhabitants are descended both from these workers and, by extension, in part from slaves such as those in the inventory. Nonetheless, as the vignettes presented earlier (introduction: 14-22) suggest, the people themselves deny belonging to an Afro-Peruvian ethnic group or black race.

The process by which race and ethnicity apparently ceased to be of significance, both on paper and in the lives of ordinary people in Yapatera forms part of broader historical, regional, national and continental processes. This chapter explores some of the historical precedents to villagers' denial of racial and ethnic categorisation and to their emphasis on mixing. This chapter also situates the current thesis within the existing theoretical literature on race and ethnicity in Latin America and indicates the theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions made to this literature by the present ethnographic study of mixing in a contemporary village of Afro-indigenous descent.

Historical constructions of difference

To begin to understand why contemporary villagers in Yapatera downplay the relevance of racial and ethnic labels and how they instead emphasise practices and notions of mixing, one must first understand the centrality of racial mixture to Latin American history. Latin America's colonial history is marked by a unique process of *mestizaje*—the racial and cultural mixing between indigenous, African and Spanish populations. Compared to other colonial and post-colonial contexts where miscegenation was repressed, even taboo (e.g. Bear 2007; Stoler 1995), Latin America has witnessed a long, intense and comparatively unrestricted history of the mixing of populations. Formal limitations were sometimes imposed on unions between those of different descent (Stolcke 1974), but attempts to legally sanction racial mixture were aimed mainly at preserving

the elite sectors of society through marriage restrictions and were largely unsuccessful at preventing sexual relations, including rape, both in the middle and lower ranks of society. In particular, extra-marital unions traversed Spanish colonial society, creating a history of ‘mass illegitimacy’.² Whether consensual or not, these unions between men and women of European, Indian and African descent gave rise to a fascination with classifying the multiple types of *castas*, or ‘mixtures’, that resulted from them.³

Historical constructions of difference, for example through *casta*, were based primarily on legal and religious definitions, rather than on primarily biological and phenotypical ones (de la Cadena 2005; Gose 1997; Martinez 2008; O’Toole 2012: 25-29). The notion of *limpieza de sangre*, or ‘purity of blood’, for example, sought to distinguish Spanish Christians from new, religiously impure converts (de la Cadena 2005; Gose 1997; Martinez 2008).⁴ Categories such as ‘Spanish’ and ‘Indian’ were implemented primarily as legal categories to denote the rights and obligations of different kinds of citizens of the colony and subjects of the crown, including in particular tax and labour obligations (Harris 1995).⁵ The construction of these categories therefore contributed, in colonial Peru, to the creation of two parallel ‘republics’: the republic of Indians and the republic of Spaniards (Thurner 1997). These constructions of difference did not necessarily connote biological or physical differences, though such differences could be implied (Gotkowitz 2011; O’Toole

² This was an expression the late Olivia Harris used frequently in teaching and supervisions; unfortunately, I have not been able to verify whether it stems from another scholarly reference. On the issue of illegitimacy, compare Twinam (1999).

³ For an example of some of the *castas* of eighteenth-century Peru, see Mörner (1967: 58-59).

⁴ The ‘purity’ in question was primarily religious in nature and ‘mixture’ denoted the transgression of rules of faith. Originally serving to exclude Jews and Muslims in early modern Spain, the idea of *limpieza de sangre* was imported to the New World and served to exclude Indians and Africans (de la Cadena 2005; Gose 1997; Martinez 2008).

⁵ The category of ‘Indians’, for example, circumscribed those individuals who were subject to tribute-payments and forced labour services, known as *mita*, and who lived on *reducciones*, and in return could claim communal rights to land, royal protection and certain political offices and self-governance (Harris 1995; O’Toole 2012). Spaniards and *mestizos* (the offspring of Spanish and Indian parents) by contrast, were not subject to tributes and *mita* but could not occupy positions reserved for ‘Indians’. Neither Indians, nor Spaniards or *mestizos* could be enslaved, made to work without pay or bound as personal property to owners—this was reserved for those classed as ‘slaves’ a term which was often synonymous with ‘blacks’ in Peru (Romero 1944: 375; see also O’Toole 2012: 11-16). The term *criollos*, *creoles*, was initially applied to slaves born in the New World (to differentiate them from *bozales* born in Africa) but was soon used for white Europeans born in the colonies.

2012; Silverblatt 2004). As O'Toole has recently argued, for Peru, while these *casta* terms denoted legal positions, they nevertheless did much of the work of biological definitions of race, by articulating 'a colonial construction of difference and differential power relations' (2012: 164).

Colonial constructions of difference, for example through *casta*, were neither regulated nor standardised and the role of phenotype for classification was ambiguous, at best. As a result, there was some room for negotiation and manipulation by individuals who could sometimes change how they classified themselves or were classified by others. For example, depending on the political climate, it could be beneficial for an individual to describe himself as either *mestizo* or Indian.⁶ Ideas about *casta* classification included notions of family history, civic behaviour, religious conduct, good reputation, moral worth, respectability, honour, decency and neighbourliness (Herzog 2003; Stolcke 1974) and the ability to work, pay taxes or trade goods (O'Toole 2012: 162). Attempts to claim membership of any category and attempts to access rights or resources on the basis of such membership became subject to debate, manipulation, claims and counterclaims, including before the courts of law.

With the decline of the Spanish colonial empire, Pan-Latin American struggles for independence and the foundation of new republics, the system of *castas* slowly gave way to a racialised class system (Harris 1995; Larson 1995; Mallon 1995). Grieshaber has argued that with increasing cultural homogenisation and increasing competition over jobs, racial and somatic differentiation, and racial stereotyping, became increasingly prevalent as a means of keeping social mobility in check (1979: 125). By the mid-nineteenth century, many of the legal remnants of the 'two republics' in Peru were dismantled, motivated by rising commercial and industrial capitalism. Liberal reforms opened up new possibilities for individual property and demolished many communal forms of landed possession (Larson 2004: 12). While rights and protections for 'Indians' were diminished, these transformations also allowed many rural Indians to become urban labourers or coastal peasants and workers on

⁶ In some cases it was the mothers of mixed offspring who affected reclassification initially for the mixed offspring (Bouysse-Cassagne 1996) but potentially also for themselves (Hünefeldt 1994).

haciendas (Larson 2004). The colonial legacy of constructing Indians, and blacks, as ‘others’ found new mechanisms: elite creole modernizers, in their discourses of national improvement, made much of the ‘Indian problem’, which was considered the main obstacle in the way of order, progress, civilisation and modernity (Larson 2004: 51).

Ideas about racial unity and nationhood grounded in mixedness came to prominence in political ideologies of *mestizaje*, especially in Mexico and Central America during struggles for independence from Spain in the early nineteenth century; and here the *mestizo* was often exalted as the ‘chosen’ or ‘cosmic’ race (e.g. Miller 2004). In some Andean countries, particularly Peru, *mestizaje* had a lesser hold (Chambers 2003: 48; Larson 2004: 66) and did not provide a dominant unifying theme of cultural nationalism nor did it become official state policy. Instead elites were hostile toward racial fusion and to ‘progressive cross-breeding as an intermediate step in the Indian population’s upward evolution toward whiteness’ (Larson 2004: 66). Unlike in other parts of Latin America, in Andean countries indigenous peasants still constituted an overwhelming demographic majority and the bulk of the labour force. Nevertheless, as Larson argues, there was no unified vision of the Indian ‘other’ shaping state-making in the Andes (2004: 63). Neither was there a unified vision of the descendants of Africans, although it was assumed that they were culturally closer to white creoles, their ancestors having been uprooted and transplanted into the heart of creole society as slaves. In nineteenth-century Peru interest grew in remaking Indians into the nation’s labouring class and this called for aggressive programmes of cultural and behavioural reform (Drinot 2011a; Larson 2004: 163). Modernizers both blamed the Indian problem on, and sought remedy in, issues of immigration, education, production, consumption, religious ritual, family structures and practices and hygiene (Larson 2004: 163). Larson writes that, ‘Creole nationalist and civilising discourses thus sprang from the contradictory psychosocial forces of national need (to remake Indians into discipline modern subjects) ... and racial anxiety (inherent in the tensions and transformations of pluriethnic postcolonial societies)’ (2004: 69)

Race doctrines in Latin America at the turn of the century did not generally embrace imported theories of genetic determinism since these cast their national majorities as degenerate (de la Cadena 2000: 12-20; Wade 1997: 31-32). Instead differences theorised in cultural and moral terms offered, especially in Peru, 'the possibility of purposive action aimed at uplifting and improving racial-cultural character' (Larson 2004: 65). The differences between Indians and non-Indians in particular were explained by history, environment, morality and culture, and to a much lesser degree in terms of biology (for Peru, de la Cadena 2000). Regardless of the place of *mestizaje*, in all Latin American countries by the twentieth century an ideological form of 'racial democracy' became widespread: the notion that racism was absent and that societies were structured along class, not racial, lines.

Despite their dissimilarities, historical constructions of difference, including colonial *castas* and the racialised classes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, shared an important element: they either privileged or included non-biological notions of difference. In doing so, they offered the possibility of improving one's place in the social hierarchy, if only minimally, by performing certain cultural practices or displaying certain cultural characteristics associated with a higher status. Above all, they allowed individuals and social groups to think of themselves in terms which differed from how others classified them. As Harris has argued, the enduring competition for status, which characterises much of Latin America, overrides distinctions between people of native, European, and African ancestries (2008: 277). The chapters which follow demonstrate how contemporary Peruvians of mixed indigenous and African descent incorporate some of these historical notions of difference into their own ideas about mixing to improve their own collective status in Peruvian society. As I will show, these notions of race and mixing also encompass ideas and practices from domains which are not often associated with race: as well as kinship, they relate to religion, economic and micro-political practices, local history and interactions with the state and non-governmental actors.

Race and ethnicity in contemporary Latin America

National ideologies in the second half of the twentieth century tended to downplay the relevance of race and the existence of distinct racial groups in favour of distinctions along the lines of class. However, racism itself, the discrimination against those perceived as non-white (and occasionally against 'whites'), was not eliminated. Some of the earliest studies of race and ethnicity in Latin America, commissioned in the 1950s in the aftermath of World War II, and funded by UNESCO, showed the sociological relevance of race by drawing attention to the socio-economic inequalities between members of different racial categories (Wade 1997: 51-57).⁷ A puzzle that has deeply concerned scholars in the region, including anthropologists, is the tension between racism and constructions of these nations as 'raceless' (for Peru: de la Cadena 2000; for Ecuador: Whitten 2003; for Colombia: Wade 1993a; for Venezuela: Wright 1990; for Brazil: Burdick 1998; Goldstein 2003; Sheriff 2001; Telles 2004; Twine 1998, among others). This thesis contributes to this literature by showing how ordinary people have constructed their own narratives of mixture and 'racelessness', in spite of powerful forms of racist discrimination.

Ideological narratives of mixture and national symbols of mixedness, including *mestizaje*, have received scholarly attention in a wide range of disciplines including political science, philosophy, theology, literature, fine arts, performing arts, popular culture, museum studies, Chicano studies and queer studies, among others. Outside of Mexico, *mestizaje* has been particularly linked to ideologies and practices of *blanqueamiento*, or whitening (for an early example, see Whitten 1965; 1974). Race categories and racial terms, particularly those associated with indigeneity are linked to dress, occupation, geography and language, more so in Latin America than in other settings. An individual who begins to 'behave white', for example when he or she takes up urban work and alters their speech and dress, can come to be seen as whiter, less black or less Indian (on the latter, de la Cadena 1995).

⁷ Influenced both by Marxist peasant studies and the political climate of the time, early studies of race and ethnicity in Latin America, in the 1920s-1960s, assumed that racial and ethnic 'identities' were destined to disappear (Wade 1997: 40-58; for Peru: Seligmann 2008).

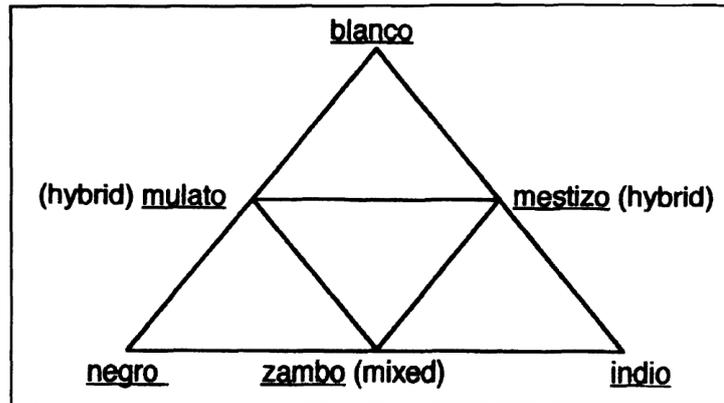


Figure 5. Race pyramid
(Whitten 2003:57)

Nation-building ideologies reveal a marked preference for mixedness, especially in Mexico, or a tendency toward whiteness, in many other Latin American countries. This preference excludes both black and indigenous people equally from the top of the social hierarchy (Whitten 2003: 57); hence Stutzman refers to *mestizaje* as ‘an all-inclusive ideology of exclusion’ (1981). As Whitten has pointed out, although racial hybridity is valued as a means to climbing the social hierarchy, it does not shed its racist foundations (2003: 57). Wade, similarly, draws attention to the fact that ideologies of *mestizaje* (or local equivalents) rely on re-essentialising the ‘pure’ elements of its constitution—white, Indian and black—thus this notion of mixture often involves re-inscribing racist stereotypes (1997). Scholars of race in Latin America have, therefore, critiqued celebratory approaches to hybridity in disciplines such as cultural studies (de la Cadena 2005; Hale 1996, 1999; Rahier 2003: 42; Wade 2005a).

An interest in ordinary people’s use of racial and ethnic categories in Latin America was sparked by Harris’s influential study of racial and colour labels in Brazil which stressed the fluidity, multiplicity, contextual specificity and ambiguity of racial classification in everyday usage (1970; for a restudy in Puerto Rico, see Gravlee 2005). As Wade (1993b) has noted, a contrast can be drawn between the North American rule of hypo-descent, or the ‘one-drop-rule’, in which any individual with a single black ancestor is included in the category ‘black’, versus Latin American ideas of race which posit a continuum of racial categories and reveal a preference for terms which denote a mixed ancestry and

which privilege ideas about race as based on appearance (such as skin colour) rather than 'essence' (on the latter, for Peru: Golash Boza 2012). The result is that terms denoting an individual's position on the spectrum from black to white, or Indian to white, vary between countries, regions and individual speakers and that categories such as 'black' have no single referent (Wade 1997: 15). Class, and other factors shape how individuals are viewed racially.⁸

At the level of everyday lived experience, anthropologists and others have increasingly focused on the role of gender, sexuality, interracial sex and ideas about the body and beauty for constructing ideas about race (Caldwell 2004; Goldstein 1999; McCallum 2006; Moutinho 2004). Others draw attention to the commodification of racialised bodies through tourism (Roland 2006), the role of heterosexuality in producing black masculinities (Urrea and Barbary 2004), the role of desire in creating racial difference and the power of bodies to provide evidence for racial purity (Nelson 1999; Wade 2009). Authors point to the embodiment of race through practices of commensality, the sharing of substance and the performative acquisition of racialised skills such as cooking, music-making and dance (Walmsley 2004; 2005). Scholars have also discussed kinship symbols and idioms in the imagination of nationhood in Latin America (Nelson 1999; Wade 2003) including reference to white fathers and black mothers of the nation (Weismantel 2001). Some research indicates how idioms about whitening affect actual kinship practices. For example, Twine has discussed how socially mobile Brazilian families remove the photographs of darker-skinned ancestors from family photo albums (1998), while Moreno Figueroa (2008) provides an example of how aspirations of whitening are continually challenged by kinship practices that transgress them.

A scholarly interest in the contemporary importance of ethnic and racial categories has been spurred on by several social and political processes, including the emergence of ethnic mobilisation, a turn to policies of multiculturalism, and the embrace of neo-liberalism (Hale 1997). Both indigenous and Afro-Latin American movements have sought to address not only

⁸ Other research highlights the continued importance of class in Latin America and the subtle interrelations between ideas and practices concerned with class and race (see for example, Strecker 1995; Wade 1997; Goldstein 2003).

the issue of inequality but also the need for state recognition of ethnic groups (Alvarez et al. 1998; Greene 2007; Hooker 2005). The ideology of *mestizaje* has been used to discredit ethnic activism (Hale 1999; 1996) and activists' demands for ethnic recognition (Greene 2012). As a result of such political mobilisation most countries on the continent rewrote their constitutions conceding new rights and protections on the basis of ethnic and racial categorisations. Many countries have since introduced in their censuses questions aimed at capturing both indigenous and Afro-descendant populations (e.g. Angosto Ferrández and Kradolfer 2012; Loveman 2014). These social transformations have strengthened an academic interest in 'identity politics' focussing on the interrelations between the law, politics and the contingent character of ethnic recognition and identification, material claims and assertions of ethnicity. Most studies written under the rubric of identity politics acknowledge the notion that ethnic and racial 'identities' are socially constructed, fluid, situational and multiple.⁹

Much of this vast literature points to the ways in which ideologies of *mestizaje* are flawed because constructions of difference in terms of race and ethnicity continue to matter for social categorisation in Latin America. Indeed they may matter increasingly. However, as Wade points out, much less attention has been devoted to understanding the lived experience of *mestizaje* (Wade 2005b).¹⁰ This thesis responds to scholarly interest in ordinary people's understanding of race and ethnicity in Latin America. My emphasis, however, is more on the continued currency of ideas about mixture for people of Afro-indigenous descent who are explicitly classed as black by outsiders.

⁹ Some scholars take a more sceptical approach toward the assumption that mobilisation around ethnic or racial 'identities' is intrinsically liberating and that such movements are necessary or even desirable to fight racism. Sansone (2003) argues that ideas about blackness in Brazil exist without a strong sense of ethnic or racial group membership. Like Sansone (2003), Bailey (2008) and Fry (2000) take a critical stance in relation to Brazil's racial affirmative action policies. Bailey, for example, finds that racial quotas, which instate black/white binaries in order to benefit disadvantaged Brazilians, end up excluding large portions of the population that should benefit from such policies (2008).

¹⁰ Outside of Latin America interest in the lived experience of 'mixed race' people has grown (Benson 1981; Parker and Song 2001; Root 1996; Sanjek 2013: 115-132, among others)

Afro-indigenous relations, mixed people and others

Latin Americans of African descent have received comparatively little attention by anthropologists compared to indigenous Latin Americans. Similarly, non-indigenous Latin Americans who are not easily identifiable in ethnic or racial terms have not often been the subjects of ethnographic writing. This study about people of African and indigenous descent who see themselves as mixed, cuts across some of the implicit boundaries in the anthropology of Latin America.

Wade has drawn attention to the division of labour which characterised academic research on Latin America until recently, namely between ‘race’ as the subject of sociology and ‘ethnicity’ as the subject of anthropology (Wade 1997; see also Hooker 2005). Wade writes that, other than in Brazil, blacks were rarely thought to have a culture *sui generis*, hence they were studied in their relations to ‘others’, while studies of Indians considered them as cultures in their right (Wade 1997: 76). Several Andean anthropologists now argue for the analytical significance of ‘race’ in the Andes and have examined the interplay between gender, sex, race, and culture in the making of Indians, *cholos* and *mestizos* (Canessa 2012; de la Cadena 2000; Poole 1997; Weismantel 2001; and the contributions in Weismantel and Eisenman 1998).¹¹ For Afro-Latin Americans, Wade points out that differences between blacks and non-black others, which have typically been perceived as racial, phenotypical or biological, were historically also constructed via ideas about cultural attributes (Wade 1997: 76).¹² Ethnographic work on Latin Americans of African descent has surged in the last twenty years, as discussed earlier.¹³

In many Latin American countries black and indigenous people are concentrated in different geographic regions. ‘Blacks’ and ‘Indians’ have also been socially and culturally constructed as distinct in the colonial, post-colonial and contemporary era (Hooker 2005; Wade 1997: 36-37; for Peru: O’Toole

¹¹ Many of them taking their cue from Stoler (1995; 2002).

¹² Including stereotypes of blacks as lazy, happy-go-lucky, having disorganised family life, an innate ability for music and dance and being sexually promiscuous.

¹³ For early ethnographic work on Afro-Ecuadorians: Whitten (1965; 1974) on Afro-Colombians: Wade (1989; 1993), and other early anthropological approaches to Afro-Latin Americans: the contributions to Whitten and Szwed (1970). One early anthropological debate concerned the question of what constituted ‘black culture’ in Latin America, often linked to the search for African ‘survivals’ in contemporary black Latin America, in particular by Herskovits (1966).

2012). Such geographical and historical distinctions, however, should not be taken as evidence that people of African descent and people of indigenous descent rarely engage in everyday encounters or that they never inhabit the same geographical spaces. Although there is a growing historical interest in black-indigenous relations (e.g. Restall 2005; for Peru: Arteaga Muñoz and Rocca Torres 2007; O'Toole 2012: 116-120), the contemporary co-existence of people of African and indigenous descent has received far less ethnographic attention. Four of the recent works that investigate such relations stem from Mexico. Lewis (2012) shows that local ideas about being *moreno* (brown) are intertwined with ideas about indigeneity, while Gonzalez (2011) tackles the issue of how Afro-Mexicans construct a sense of ethnicity through dance and other performances. Cunin and Hoffmann (2013) and Gudmundson and Wolfe (2010) each contend with issues of *mestizaje* as faced by black Mexicans. Anderson (2009) and French (2009) each analyse the interplay between ethnic activism and local forms of identification on the indigenous-black spectrum in Honduras and Brazil respectively.¹⁴ This ethnography contributes to this growing literature by looking at a people of mixed indigenous and African descent in Peru, and their understanding of race and racial and cultural mixing, far removed from identity politics.

Whitten and Whitten are among very few authors who discuss the historical and ideological form of indigenous-African mixture commonly called *zambaje* (2011: 35). They argue that while the racial mixing of black and white, and indigenous and white, has generally served to reinforce and legitimate social hierarchies by placing a higher value on whiteness, black-indigenous mixing has been seen as counter-hegemonic in Latin American history (2011: 35). *Mestizaje*, they argue, emanates from those at the top of social hierarchy (e.g. Whitten and Whitten 2011: 34) and, according to them, 'stifles creativity and the celebration of difference within a nation state' (2011: 34), by contrast with *zambaje*. Whitten and Whitten define *zambaje* narrowly as mixture between runaway slaves and

¹⁴ In the United States the growing cultural influence of Latin Americans of mixed indigenous-black descent (Jiménez Román and Flores 2010) is beginning to challenge racial classificatory labels including 'latino' and 'black' (see also Dzidzienyo and Oboler 2005).

Indians (2011: 35).¹⁵ However, a broader definition of *zambaje*, which would take into account communities such as Yapatara, could include historical mixing between indigenous people and all people of African descent: not just runaway slaves but also those still enslaved and those who were emancipated. It could also include post-abolition and contemporary Afro-indigenous relations. If defined in a broader sense, *zambaje* is not necessarily counter-hegemonic but may still take place within dominant social and racial hierarchies. Given that in some places such as Peru, where ‘Indian’ may have described a slightly more advantageous social and legal status compared to the category of slave or *negro*, Afro-indigenous mixing and other relations across the black-indigenous divide could certainly have been a means for improving one’s social status and opportunities in the past (O’Toole 2012: 116-120). This research extends an investigation of Afro-indigenous mixing into contemporary Peru and indicates how it relates to constructions of racial difference.

Despite embracing ‘race’ as an analytical category and Afro-Latin Americans as subjects of ethnographic research, Latin American anthropologists have been slow to include ordinary Latin Americans who do not themselves identify and are not easily identified by others as either black or indigenous, into the ethnographic repertoire. This is problematic because, as Harris has argued, it has often simply been assumed that the non-indigenous, non-black ‘rest’ of Latin America has values and practices supposedly derived from Europe (Harris 2008: 227). As Harris indicates, a more explicit anthropological focus on these populations, which in reality constitute the demographic majority in many countries, might help the analysis of patterns that override the common contrast between Native American and Euro-Christian (Harris 2008: 277). Some recent efforts in this direction include de la Cadena on ‘indigenous *mestizos*’ in Peru (2000) and Sue’s (2013) research into ‘mixed-race’ Mexicans. In Brazil, Warren (2001) studies people of mixed African descent in northeastern Brazil who

¹⁵ This definition is reflected in the examples given of contemporary populations which are the product of *zambaje*: Miskitu (Nicaragua and Honduras), Garifuna (Central America) and Mamelucos (Brazil) (Whitten and Whitten 2011: 35). An interest in *zambaje* leads on to an exploration of how indigenous perspectives on blackness differ from white perspectives. Whitten and Corr suggest that indigenous representations reject slavery as the defining feature of blackness and instead focus on self-liberation, cultural creativity, and adaptability (Whitten and Corr 2011).

identify as ‘indigenous’, and French (2009) follows adjacent communities of mixed-race peasants where one comes to identify as indigenous, while the other seeks recognition as *quilombo* (descendants of a fugitive African slave community). In Guatemala, Hale (2005: 25, 2011) investigates various groups in Guatemala who do not fit dominant racial categories and instead position themselves between labels such as *ladino* and Maya. He argues that ‘neither fully formed nor clearly defined, these expressions of *mestizaje* from below are noteworthy for the way they cut against the grain of state-endorsed efforts to carefully define each cultural group and its associated rights.’ (2005: 25) This thesis contributes to an understanding of social practices which are continuous across boundaries including indigenous-European, coloniser-colonised, and Andean-*mestizo*.

Ethnic despecification

While the creation or emergence of ethnic groups, or ethnogenesis, is a well-studied phenomenon, much less attention is currently directed by anthropologists to the gradual, non-coercive disappearance of ethnic labels and the merging of previously distinct ethnic groups into other groups or into an unmarked majority. This research project addresses this imbalance with a focus on processes of ethnic ‘despecification’ (Gow 2007: 201) that some ordinary people participate in.

Gow has recently proposed an anthropological re-appropriation of the concept of acculturation (2007). As he observes, the current aversion to the term in anthropology stems from the fact that it is taken to imply a lack of agency, a sense of loss, and victimisation of the people to whom acculturation ‘is done’ (2007: 195). In many contexts, including Latin America, state acculturation policies have indeed used oppressive, even genocidal methods to shape or eradicate indigenous, Afro-descendant and immigrant communities or their cultural practices. However, looking at people who consider themselves ‘ex-Cocama’ in Peruvian Amazonia, Gow argues that there is nothing inherently negative in acculturation as a social practice. In his view, the despecification of some former Cocama, including through intermarriage and a practice of

changing Cocama surnames to Spanish ones is not an attempt at ‘passing’, evidence of self-hatred or a disguise of their indigeneity (2007: 202-204). Rather it is the extension of a native Amazonian logic, which considers mixture dangerous but necessary for social reproduction, and which is continuous with an ongoing project of abandoning kin ties (2007: 207-208). As Gow puts it, ‘the phenomenon of the ex-Cocama and this new identity as “just Peruvians” is a continuous and uniform social process of transforming of the other into the self that is at least five hundred years old in Peruvian Amazonia, and doubtless very much older’ (2007: 213). Brubaker proposes a similar re-appropriation of the term assimilation, particularly in writing about contemporary Europe (2001). Assimilation, he argues is neither morally objectionable nor empirically dubious, but constitutes a basic ‘analytical concern with the nature and extent of emerging similarities in particular domains between populations of immigration origin and ‘host’ populations’ (2001: 535).

Acculturation and assimilation continue to be problematic terms of analysis because they have been misused in the name of overt political action. In addition, both terms lend themselves to the potential reification of that which is acculturated or assimilated. Nevertheless, I am sympathetic both to Gow’s argument that ordinary people can be invested in, and successful at, downplaying ethnic distinctions and to Brubaker’s observation that in a cultural encounter different people can transform each other and their practices. Both authors recognise that that which people acculturate or assimilate into is significantly shaped by these very social processes.

Whitten and Whitten have suggested the concept of interculturality specifically for understanding what they call mixed Afro-indigenous ‘heritage’, which, they argue, is silenced by multiculturalist discourses (2011: 35). They also use the term transculturation¹⁶ to refer to ‘the appropriation of cultural features by people in one system from those in another for specific purposes. Such purposes include trade, alliance against enemies and religious conversion, among many others’ (2011: 35). For the purposes of this thesis, the borrowing of

¹⁶ A term coined by Ortiz (1995 [1947]) and which was also of interest to Malinowski (1995 [1947]). Peruvian historian Romero used the term to refer to linguistic transformations accompanying the transatlantic slave-trade (1987).

cultural practices between societies is of less interest than the erosion of distinctions in order to create new practices, following both Gow and Brubaker. In a similar vein Bodenhorn has recently argued that practices of (racial) intermarriage should be thought of not just in terms of boundary crossing but in terms of boundary blurring (Bodenhorn 2013: 145).

That which is unmarked may be more difficult to analyse than that which is marked. Much scholarly attention has been paid to the invention of minority 'identities', and the creation of 'ethnic' groups. But as Handler points out, far less attention has been paid to the way in which the majority or mainstream is itself continually reconstructed and re-imagined as a homogenous cultural entity (1994: 38). Latin America provides an ideal context for such studies because ordinary people's understanding of social and cultural transformations often include ideas about 'acculturation' and homogenisation; an example of this are ideas about *lo criollo* in parts of Peru.¹⁷

¹⁷ The genealogy of the word *criollo* in Peru is complex and space does not permit a full discussion. In the first instance the term *criollo* was used to refer to black slaves born in the New World to distinguish them from African-born *bozales*, however, the word is better known as a description of Spaniards born in the colonies. In struggles for independence *criollo* nationalism (Mendez 1996) was legitimated by reference to the 'cultural distinctiveness' of the *criollos* from the Spanish colonisers while retaining associations of 'whiteness'. Most famously, Salazar Bondy (1968), described how invocations of *lo criollo* tend to contain a, by nature conservative, nostalgia for the by-gone 'golden era' of Lima. Such associations remain and have been critiqued by some (e.g. Portocarrero 2004). Anthropologists including Gillin (1949), Simmons (1955), Tschopik (1948) in the late 1940s and 1950s tried to define what they described as Peru's emergent '*mestizo*' or '*criollo*' culture, using the terms interchangeably. Simmons writes that 'In Peru, the term *criollo*, purged of biological connotations, has come to refer to a set of related idea and action patterns that express a cultural outlook to which *mestizos* are oriented in differential degrees. As an adjective, *criollo* is associated only with the *cholo*, *negro*, or the *zambo*, but never with the *indígena*' (1955: 109, emphasis added). He also notes that 'orientation to and manifestation of *criollismo* are generally regarded as the strategic criteria for distinguishing the '*mestizo*' from the 'Indian', and to a lesser extent, the *costeño* (coastal inhabitant) from the *serrano* (highlander)' (1955: 114, emphasis added).

To my knowledge little work has been done since to refine our understanding of what this term means in the lived experience of ordinary Peruvians. In my experience the term *criollo* has been reappropriated by middle- and working-class urban coastal Peruvians as a sign of autochthony in ways that does not signal alliance with the white oligarchy, even if it implicitly excludes 'Indians'. When people talk of *lo criollo* or being *criollo*, they are not referring to membership in a specific group. Rather *lo criollo* refers to a standard of aesthetics, values, skills, behaviours, practices, dispositions and tastes. For instance, it is associated with particular culinary traditions, genres of music and dance, *joie-de-vivre*, picaresque wit, satire, entrepreneurialism, inventiveness and the capacity for making do in dire situations. It can also carry negative connotations of trickery or maliciousness. *Lo criollo* is seen simultaneously as 'authentically Peruvian' and as the product of cultural mixture (see various contributions in Rostworowski et al. 2000).

The interesting questions that emerge from these proposals are: which people are more likely to participate in processes of boundary blurring and which are more likely to emphasise and recreate boundaries and differences? And under which circumstances do practices of ethnic despecification emerge? I address these questions by looking at the salience of practices of mixing in Peru.

Heterogeneity and mixing in kinship and marriage

Studies of the everyday meaning of race, ethnicity and *mestizaje* in Latin America, aside from in Brazil, have seldom focussed explicitly on ordinary people's everyday kinship practices, structures and ideologies. This is particularly true of studies of communities of African descent and communities that are difficult to define in ethnic terms.¹⁸ By contrast, literature on particular regions, especially Amazonia and the Andes, have well-developed concepts and debates around kinship but such discussions have generally been confined to specific culture areas (Harris 2008: 277) and few of these deal with issues of mixing. This thesis contributes to studies of Latin American kinship by a focus on the relation between kinship practices and ideologies and mixing, in a community of mixed Afro-indigenous descent.

Nation-building ideologies often involve idioms of kinship, and nationhood is frequently constructed via kinship practices. This goes against the presumption that 'modernity' is marked by the separation of kinship from economic and political relations (McKinnon and Cannell 2013). *Mestizaje* is a particularly good illustration of the kinship-modernity link, since it is an ideology that speaks to the creation of a certain kind of nation by purportedly saying something about kinship, including about the relationship between parents and children, and about the role of descent in creating a category of national subjects. This thesis examines how processes of inclusion and exclusion at play in national ideologies about racial mixture are worked out on the ground in relationships between ordinary people.

¹⁸ For some early ethnographic interest in Afro-Latin American kinship, including debate about the matrifocal character of household organisation, see Whitten (1965; 1974) and various contributions in Whitten and Szwed (1970).

The lack of attention to kinship in Latin American ideas about race and ethnicity is perhaps not surprising. It can be explained by a general decline in kinship studies over the last thirty years.¹⁹ As anthropologists have renewed their interest in kinship, they have tended to downplay difference and boundedness, as exemplified by early kinship scholars' emphasis on descent, linearity, structure and corporate descent groups, in favour of more open-ended, performative links (Harris 2008: 276) including through the notion of relatedness (Carsten 2000). An interest in mixing and 'mixed' people, and in the link between kinship and race, can contribute to kinship studies more broadly (Wade 2002; 2005b).

Mixing is based on the notion of ontological heterogeneity. Both Harris and Bodenhorn have independently suggested that heterogeneity is in an abstract sense the basis of all kinship, gender and personhood (Harris 2008) and of marriage (Bodenhorn 2013). As Harris argues, few anthropologists have examined how forms of inclusion and exclusion operate at the level of the person and in what way heterogeneous persons are produced (2008: 277). Bodenhorn suggests that marriage is inherently of transboundary or composite nature; indeed this is what gives marriage its alliance potential (2013: 132). She argues that it is only through the invention of categories such as race that the transboundary nature of marriage becomes explicitly marked (2013: 133).

Mixing involves a recognition of heterogeneity but can also involve an attempt to overcome this heterogeneity by reconciling relations premised on constructions of difference. This latter aspect speaks to Sahlins's recent proposal to define kinship as 'mutuality of being' (2011), that is in any society kin are those who are implicated in one another both in terms of social practices and in a wider ontological sense. According to Sahlins, mutuality of being entails 'the incorporation of others in the one person, making her or him a composite being in a participatory sense' (2011: 13). This thesis contributes to anthropological studies of kinship by examining how mixing involves, on the one hand, ideas about differences and practices of differentiation, and on the other, ideas about sameness and practices emphasising interconnectedness.

¹⁹ As discussed earlier, over the same time period, scholarly interest in race, ethnicity and 'identity' increased in Latin America.

One study which deals with the link between race and kinship and the inclusive and exclusive tendencies in mixing is Gow's work on the Piro in Amazonian Peru (1991). He suggests that when Piro speak of being of 'mixed blood' they are referring to a cosmology in which the original state of the world was one where different races existed as pure and distinct kinds of people. The continual reproduction of Piro sociality however, requires a denial of this past. As a result for Piro people

'race', in a sense, is a marker of personal identity which links a person to a particular known ancestor in the first or second ascending generation. 'Race' is part of the person's identity, and can be transmitted to his or her children. More than anything, identifying a person as of a particular 'race' places that person within the history of the construction of kinship. 'Race' is a mark that identifies a person as the child or grandchild of a particular person. But because everyone on the Bajo Urubamba is 'of mixed blood', identifications of 'race' locate everyone in the system of ancestral intermarriage which forms local history. (Gow 1991: 257)

While Gow limits his discussion to a cosmology and social history that is specifically Piro, his observations resonate more broadly. For example, Wade (2005b: 245) suggests it might useful to explore whether Latin Americans who consider themselves racially mixed retain a sense of two alternate forms of self-understanding. This thesis is a contribution towards understanding how mixing informs ideas about kinship, marriage and personhood.

Mixing, race and ethnicity in Peru

The study of mixing is particularly pertinent to Peru. Compared to the rest of Latin America, Peru has been exceptionally slow to embrace multicultural policies and to recognise and accommodate ethnic 'identities'. This work is intended to build on existing scholarship on race, racism and nationalism in Peru by providing an ethnographic account of the everyday salience of mixing from a perspective that is largely lacking from the literature: rural Afro-indigenous peasants in northern coastal Peru.

Ideas about nationhood in Peru still hinge largely on the notion of a society where race is, or should be, irrelevant; at the same time ideas about racial and cultural mixing are highly ambivalent. Two examples illustrate this. First, the Peruvian national census remains one of the last on the continent not to

enumerate race or ethnicity (Sulmont and Valdivia 2012). As a result, there are few reliable figures on the size of Peru's indigenous and Afro-descendant populations. The census does record languages spoken, other than Spanish; hence speaking an indigenous language can be taken as a proxy for 'ethnicity'. However, this measure excludes vast numbers of Spanish-speaking highland peasants who might elsewhere be considered 'indigenous' on the basis of other criteria. It also excludes Afro-descendant Peruvians who speak Spanish.

Second, the idea of Peruvianness, or *peruanidad*, as grounded in racial mixture is strong among ordinary Peruvians along the coast. On the coast, positive images of Peruvianness stress the fusion of Spanish, Indian and African elements to create a distinctive national heritage, culture and character, frequently via the idiom of *criollismo*, particularly in the areas of gastronomy and cuisine, music and dance (on the latter two, see Feldman 2006). The notion of racial mixture as widespread is reflected in proverbs such as folklorist Ricardo Palma's much cited *El que no tiene de inga, tiene de mandinga*, which roughly translates as 'If it's not indigenous heritage you've got, it's African heritage'. Because of this emphasis on mixture in Peru, individuals who classify others according to race, or who talk about races as separate groups of people, particularly in the media, are often called racists. The lack of standardisation of racial and colour labels and terms means that whenever well-meaning social scientists attempt to conduct surveys in which respondents are asked to self-identify in racial or ethnic terms, respondents have a very hard time doing so (Callirgos 1993; Drzewieniecki 2004; Sulmont 2010). The proportions of people who identify as being of mixed, white, indigenous and black descent vary depending on which categories are offered and how they are offered. For example, Sulmont finds that when the category 'black of African origin' is offered only 0.6% identify this way, but when the category is '*negro, zambo, mulato*' it climbs to 2.6% (2010: 11-12). This variability is especially true for the category of *mestizo*, the proportions of which vary in existing surveys between 52% and 76%, depending on how the question is asked and what alternatives exist (Sulmont 2010: 12). In one survey where participants were asked to categorise themselves at the beginning of the questionnaire and at the end, a

significant number chose a different category at the end than at the beginning (Drzewieniecki 2004).

An emphasis on racial mixing does not necessarily equate to a celebration of mixture. Ricardo Palma's proverb, for example, also serves to remind those who try to transcend their place in the social hierarchy of their 'racial' stain. Many Peruvians, like other Latin Americans, pin the country's problems and faulty national character on the fact of racial mixing. More precisely, they pin it on the combination of faults of the original 'races': Spanish, indigenous and African.²⁰ For example, the president of the irrigation committee for the valley of the River Yapatera articulated a widespread opinion when he told me that, 'We are a race like a boiled stew, mixed up. We are without race. Sometimes I think, if only we had taken the best from each race, but I think we were left with the worst of each.'

A popular emphasis on Peru as raceless can be explained by brief reference to some key historical transformations. Creole nation builders and liberal elites in nineteenth-century Peru never embraced ideologies such as *mestizaje* (Larson 2004). Instead nation-building projects constructed the modern, industrialised and civilised nation as 'raceless' and the modern, urban Peruvian subject as non-ethnic. This necessarily involved casting rural, agricultural highland peasants as backward and antithetical to progress and modernity (de la Cadena 2000, among others). Drinot, writing about Peruvian labour policies in the early twentieth century (2011a), writes that projects of rule in Peru have centred less on the management of the whole population and more on the micro-management of certain sectors of the population 'in ways that express racialised understandings of the ontological capacity of different population groups to contribute to, and ... be subjects of projects of "improvement" and national "progress" more generally' (2011b: 187).

De la Cadena has argued that since the early twentieth century Peruvian *mestizo* intellectuals contested European and North American racial determinisms, which would posit hybrids, like themselves, as degenerates (1998;

²⁰ Outside of Yapatera I have also often heard Peruvians express an anti-colonial resentment by saying that the Spanish invaders were degenerates, criminals or outcasts and that these characteristics are partially to blame for Peru's problems today.

2000). Instead, she argues, by the 1920s racial thought and race relations in Peru tended to subordinate phenotypic markers to allegedly invisible racial characteristics such as intelligence and morality. This process and the extent to which ‘culture’ and ‘civilisation’ came to define race rather than phenotype was influenced by *indigenismo*, an intellectual current of ‘Incan’ revivalism originating in the Andean town of Cuzco, which excluded most contemporary Indians on the basis of their supposed ‘acculturation’. De la Cadena argues that when, roughly in mid-century, the international scientific community rejected race as biological fact, Peruvian intellectuals dropped ‘race’ from their vocabulary and condemned racism (2000). The national census included a race category for the last time in 1940.

Powerful alliances between indigenous peasant leaders and leftist parties had waged class struggles that resulted in General Velasco’s military coup in 1968 (Deere 1990; Kay 1982; Poole and Rénique 1992). Velasco’s agrarian reforms contributed substantially to the ideological displacement of race and ethnicity in favour of class. On a practical level Velasco expropriated land and property from the traditional oligarchy and severed the hold of foreign enterprises on Peru’s powerful agro-export sector, replacing the former *haciendas* with cooperatives or dividing estates among once dependent sharecroppers and peasants (Deere 1990; Poole and Rénique 1992). At the level of ideology and discourse, General Velasco banned the word ‘Indian’ from use, and replaced it with *campesino* (peasant), in the name of national integration.²¹ The national holiday called Day of the Indian, 24th June, was renamed Day of the Peasant. Velasco’s government in particular affirmed the extinction of ‘real Indians’ but simultaneously invested heavily into the ‘folklorisation’ of the musical, dance and craft traditions of Peru’s popular masses to feed into a new sense of nationhood (Mendoza 2000: 48-83; see also Feldman 2006: 76; 126-132).

Ideas about Peruvianness which emerged in the twentieth century also bear a strong geographical dimension (Orlove 1993b; see also Greene 2006; for a

²¹ The downplaying of ethnic differences in favour of class differences is not unique in Latin America: see for example, Nelson (1999), on Guatemala; Wright (1990), on Venezuela; Goldstein (2003), on Brazil.

similar argument in Ecuador, see Whitten 2003). The notion of Peruvianness is often anchored in the popular imagination to a national geography split into *costa* (coast), *sierra* (highlands) and *selva* (jungle). In this imaginary tri-partition the coast has been constructed as the site for modernity, urban civilisation, industry, progress, democracy, education and culture. It has been seen as inhabited primarily by modern, raceless, non-ethnic, Peruvian citizens. The *sierra*, by contrast, has been constructed as being inhabited by backward, rural Indians or peasants in a more hostile mountainous environment. The *selva*, is imagined as a wild jungle barely populated by savage indigenous groups with strange and foreign customs. This picture posits a teleological move toward the coast, which necessarily excludes 'ethnic' traits. Various scholars have dedicated research to the perceived divide between *costa* and *sierra* (e.g. Poole and Rénique 1992: 5-6) and to the construction of the *sierra*, in particular, as racially 'other' (e.g. Poole 1997). This tri-partition obscures both the heterogeneity within each area, and the long historical networks, both pre-Columbian and modern, which link the areas through trade, the quests of empire, labour migration, and the diffusion of cultural and religious practices. Anthropologists may themselves inadvertently perpetuate this tri-partition by privileging the *sierra* and *selva* as sites of ethnographic study. The Peruvian coast, in particular, the rural coast, has largely been ignored by long-term ethnographic enquiry.²² There is a pervasive sense in which the *costa* is seen by anthropologists either as the site of cultural 'loss' or, to use Rosaldo's terms, 'post-cultural' (1989: 198-201): coastal Peruvians are supposedly too similar to the analyst's culture (whether Peruvian or foreign) because of their supposedly full participation in national citizenship and in capitalist, Euro-American cultural and social forms, to warrant study as anthropological subjects. In addition, while historians usually consider the coast to be part of the Andes, anthropologists seem to exclude the coast from their definition of the Andes. This thesis seeks to bring an ethnography of the rural

²² Exceptions to this geographic oversight exist including studies of northern coastal shamanism (Glass-Coffin 1998; Joralemon and Sharon 1993). One of the last published ethnographic monographs, in English, on a northern coastal village was Gillin's *The Moche* (1947). Gillin found in the late 1940s a coastal community where indigenous coastal languages were still remembered and where peasants had managed to resist incorporation into the local *hacienda*. This monograph defies the notion of a coast of 'acculturated', industrial, non-indigenous Peruvians.

coast into dialogue with anthropological research on the Andean highlands, and to help balance a Lima-centred focus of our understanding of the Peruvian coast.

In the last three decades the official image of Peru as raceless has been increasingly challenged. During the 1980s-90s an internal war waged between Maoist Shining Path terrorism and military counterinsurgency, ravaging the rural central and southern highlands and coastal cities. The final report of Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR 2004) revealed that 75% of the 70,000 civilians killed or 'disappeared' in the crossfire were Quechua- and Aymara-speaking peasants who had increasingly been targeted on the basis of their supposed ethnic or racial difference. A concurrent process of intensified migration to the coast of displaced peasants in search of economic opportunities contributed to the explosion of *pueblos jóvenes*, or slums, in Peru's major cities. Drawn from the derogatory term *cholo*, 'urban Indian-*mestizo*', the transformation and upheaval of urban centres has been described by some as the phenomenon, or problem, of *cholificación* (Quijano 1980).²³ In the aftermath of the internal conflict Peru signed on to the notion of multicultural rights and citizenship that swept through Latin America in the 1990s. But compared to the large-scale pan-ethnic indigenous mobilisations in neighbouring countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia, Peru seems not to have experienced the 'return of the Indian' (Albó 1991; Millones 2000). Greene has shown how Peru's multiculturalism remains exceptionally superficial because laws and policies designed to protect indigenous communities and to confer rights on the basis of ethnic categorisation are under constant attack (2006; 2012).²⁴ The demands of

²³ Space does not permit a full discussion of recent attempts to reappropriate the term as an alternative, popular, basis for Peruvian national 'identity'. This positive reclaiming of the term fed into the election in 2001 of a non-white presidential candidate and has been backed by prominent Peruvian intellectuals, for example ethno-historian Maria Rostworowski.

²⁴ To give a recent example, the Law of Prior Consultation, requiring community approval for industrial exploitation on territories of indigenous communities, are under attack, especially where they are seen to threaten foreign investment, such as in the extractive industries. Current president Ollanta Humala declared, on a television interview that Andean Quechua-speaking communities would be excluded from the Ministry of Culture's list of indigenous communities, due to the fact that, 'On the coast, there are basically no native communities. In the highlands, the majority are agrarian communities, the product of the agrarian reform. Overwhelmingly the native communities are in the jungle' El Comercio, 05/05/2013. *Viceministro de Interculturalidad formalizó su renuncia al cargo*. <http://elcomercio.pe/actualidad/1571905/noticia-viceministro-interculturalidad-formalizo-su-renuncia-al-cargo>

ethnic activists are also discredited by a popular emphasis on the notion that all Peruvians are ‘equally mixed’.

As a result of the historical and intellectual trajectories, ideas about race and ethnicity in Peru are today shaped more by class, education, culture, dress, language (de la Cadena 2000), ideas about decency, modernity, even elegance (Mendoza 2000) and folklore (Mendoza 2008), than by ideas about biology, phenotype, descent or ‘essence’ (de la Cadena 2000). Anthropological work in the Andean highlands stresses the participation of ordinary Peruvians themselves in these narratives and shows how peasants overtly reject ethnic and indigenous labels (Garcia 2005; Nugent 1997; Salomon 2002). Instead, Andean peasants construct ideas about belonging and ‘groupness’ at the level of the village, parish, region, other jurisdictional units, descent group, class, and through connections to the land, to the ancestors and in terms of Christianity. De la Cadena (2000) has illuminated the ways in which the idea of a raceless ‘mixed’ society has been renegotiated by some of those labelled as *mestizo* in order to include ideas about Indian-ness and tradition while defying national discourses of assimilation and purity, producing Peruvians who see themselves as ‘indigenous *mestizos*’ in Cuzco. This research adds to existing anthropological work by showing how coastal peasants, who seldom figure in contemporary anthropological work, construct notions of belonging in Peru.

Racism in Peru

Despite emphasis on racial mixture and the downplaying of ‘race’ as a social marker or category of difference, racist discrimination and stereotyping are far from absent in Peruvian society. This thesis contributes to scholarship on racism in Peru by providing an ethnographic account of localised racist narratives and how ordinary people respond to them.

Overt racism, which caricatures blacks, Indians, *cholos* and occasionally whites, is especially widespread in the media.²⁵ Ostensibly less explicit forms of

²⁵ Negative stereotypes about blacks circulate widely in popular culture and television, and are normalised in everyday talk such as in racial epithets. Blacks are caricatured as being of low intelligence, delinquent, lazy, inherently happy or sad, childish, over-sexualised. A study of

racism exclude Peruvians of indigenous or African descent from obtaining certain jobs, such as the common requirement in job adverts for applicants with *una buena presencia*, or ‘good appearance’, a euphemism for lighter skin and European features (Drzewieniecki 2004). Structural or institutional racism prevents Peruvians of alleged black or Indian descent or those who have non-white facial features from better access to jobs, education, health, politics, entertainment and shopping establishments, among others, and helps account for social inequality (Calligros 1993; Portocarrero 1993; among others). Social inequalities along ethnic lines are difficult to quantify because of the lack of standard ethnic labels and the absence of ethnicity and race from national censuses and surveys (for exceptions: on indigenous people, Thorp and Paredes 2010; on Afro-descendants, Benavides et al. 2006).²⁶

Peruvian literature on racism is heavily influenced by the disciplines of psychology and sociology and often focuses on the causes and impacts of racism at the level of the individual (Calligros 1993; Portocarrero 1993). The so-called ‘internalisation’ of racist stereotypes (Bruce 2007; Flores Galindo 1988) refers to the idea that ordinary non-white Peruvians have appropriated and normalised negative racial associations and that they habitually ‘self-discriminate’ against themselves and people within their own social circles. Many authors relate this to the fact that ordinary Peruvians’ preference for whiteness was originally imposed by the colonisers and the white oligarchy as a form of control (e.g. Manrique 2006 et al.). As academics and public intellectuals such as Calligros (1993: 181), Cuche (1975: 109), Manrique (2006), and Portocarrero (1993), each point out, ideas about Peru’s supposed ‘mixedness’ appear democratic and egalitarian but serve the interests of white elites in negating the existence of racism and supporting social hierarchies along the lines of class. Arguments such as these

university and secondary school students in Lima found that the characteristics most associated with *negros* were ‘lively’, ‘amusing’, ‘good athletes’ and ‘thieves’ (Drzewieniecki 2004).

²⁶ One report, authored by an independent think-tank, highlights that while Afro-Peruvian communities fare somewhat better in basic markers of inequality and poverty than indigenous communities, they fare worse than non-indigenous Peruvians (Benavides et al. 2006). Particular issues include household incomes which are below the national average and the greater incidence of chronic ill-health among household-heads than for any other population group, including indigenous Peruvians (Benavides et al. 2006).

are poignant and account both for the role of social hierarchies and inequalities of power and for the participation and response of ordinary individuals.

In addition to overt and structural racism, Peru is characterised by racism that is hidden or masked behind other narratives about difference. Terms such as *serrano*, *andino* or *provinciano*, for example, which ostensibly refer to one's geographical origins, are used to discriminate against people who in the past would have been seen as Indians or as bearing an indigenous 'stain'. De la Cadena has written extensively about what she calls 'silent' racism and its origins (2001), showing how Peruvian intellectuals in the mid-twentieth century rejected the concepts of race and racial difference 'but preserv[ed] culturalist interpretations of difference to reify social hierarchies and to legitimate discrimination and exclusion' (2001: 3). She argues that this silent racism displaced 'scientific' ideas about race into equally discriminatory ones about 'culture' and education.²⁷ In the words of Seligmann, race in Peru 'lies just beneath the surface': muffled yet still shaping social relations (2004: 148). Seligmann writes that in the absence of definitive and accepted phenotypical markers of who is Indian,

One critical concept that has come to dominate views of race is a scale of inferiority and superiority that depends heavily on an assessment of whether one is 'cultured'... In addition, others may perceive a person as not cultured, whereas that person may perceive herself as 'cultured'. This disjunctive between self-perception and social perceptions has a long history in the Andes. (2004: 148-149)

Silent racism can be subtle, and is not always recognisable to outsiders, witnesses, perpetrators or victims, but this may make it more, rather than less, powerful. For example, activists, intellectuals and academics who publicly draw attention to racist practices in Peru are routinely shot down for projecting racial agendas where supposedly there are none.²⁸

Silent racism has generally been seen as a phenomenon primarily affecting Peruvians of indigenous descent. Peruvians of African descent and

²⁷ For parallels outside Peru see M'charek et al. (2014); Goldberg (2008); Hartigan (2010); Bonilla-Silva (2003) and Sharp (2001).

²⁸ Emerging research suggests that new technologies might be providing a platform for recreating silent racism in Peru in novel ways. Salem (2012) argues that the phenomenon of cyber-bullying against so-called 'amixer' on popular social media sites thinly disguises racist discrimination amongst children of Andean migrants in Lima by casting specific aesthetic and linguistic practices as degenerate.

mixed Afro-indigenous descent have, implicitly, not been considered as affected by silent racism. This is because they have generally been constructed as biologically ‘other’ (Drzewieniecki 2004) but culturally similar to *mestizo*, urban, coastal, modern society. Golash-Boza, writing about the community of El Ingenio, near Yapatera, argues that ‘blackness’ is defined exclusively by skin colour and does not involve a construction of difference in terms of social practices, cultural attributes and shared history (2011: 59). However, as suggested earlier, a contrast between the ‘racial’ construction of Afro-descendants and ‘ethnic’ construction of indigenous people is outdated. In what follows I will show how Peruvians of mixed Afro-indigenous descent engage with and contest local narratives which attempt to construct them as culturally ‘other’.

Peruvian slavery and manumission

This thesis extends a historical concern for how Peruvians of African descent engaged with racial categories and social hierarchies in the past, to an understanding of the contemporary social practices of Peruvians of mixed Afro-indigenous descent. Some aspects of Peruvian slavery are worth highlighting here to help explain why practices and ideas of mixing have particular salience for Peruvians of mixed Afro-indigenous descent.

The first aspect I would like to draw attention to concerns the statistical disappearance of blacks through miscegenation and negotiations over legal status. Slavery was more important to the establishment of colonial governance, society and economy and to the subsequent growth of the Republic of Peru, than popular wisdom and official state narratives recognise (Aguirre 1993; Blanchard 1992; Bowser 1974; Hünefeldt 1994; O’Toole 2012).²⁹ Colonial Peruvian

²⁹ The Spanish invasion of what was to become Peru had resulted in a decimation of the native population and led to the creation of the *encomienda* system, which provided for the protection of Indians and their lands directly under the Spanish Crown and prohibited their enslavement in exchange for tribute payments. The resulting demand for labour, especially on coastal plantations owned by settlers and in urban domestic settings, was met instead by the import of slaves from Western Africa often via the Iberian peninsula, the circum-Caribbean and Central America (Blanchard 1992; Bowser 1974). African slaves and free men and women were employed in a wide range of occupations and became an indispensable form of income, investment, prestige and collateral for even the most humble Europeans (Bowser 1974). Those of African descent, both

economy and society came to depend so heavily on the presence of enslaved and manumitted blacks that travel writers in the seventeenth century reported that a third of the population of many coastal towns was black and some colonial censuses cited proportions of *negros* as high as 40-50% in coastal cities (Romero 1944: 378-386; see also Aguirre 1993: 47; Bowser 1974: 75). By the time of the first census of the Republican era in 1876, however, the percentage of *negros* had decreased to 1.94%; by 1940, the last census enumerating racial categories, the proportion lay at only 0.47% (Romero 1944: 378; for Lima, Aguirre 1993: 47-48). The historical literature suggests that this statistical disappearance of Peruvians of African descent is due to the fact that, gradually, many Peruvians of slave-descent managed to move out of, or distance themselves from the category of *negro* and other African *casta* categories (Aguirre 1993; Bowser 1974; Hünefeldt 1994; O’Toole 2012; Romero 1944). The incentive to move away from stigmatised categories to more favourable ones was probably greatest for those of slave-descent because, by contrast to the category of ‘Indians’, close to no benefits were associated with being classed as *negro* (O’Toole 2012: 17-34).³⁰ In attempting to account for the steep decline in numbers of those classed as *negros* Romero remarks that already ‘in the censuses of the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century Africans and their children were classified as Negroes *only if they were slaves*’ (1944: 375; original emphasis). All free blacks and those of mixed descent who had one slave parent fell under the separate category of ‘mixtures’, which included other ‘mixed’ individuals, including *mestizos*.

Bowser, in a similar vein, argues that

the process of race mixture ensured that many free Afro-Peruvians *were* Spanish, at least in part... it was the racially mixed who moved upward in Spanish society. This was perhaps because of the paradoxical nature of Spanish racial attitudes: race mixture was regarded with contempt, but the white blood in a mulatto made him more acceptable than a black man. As the process of race mixture in Peru continued and, with it, the almost morbid fascination of society with racial classification, free coloureds came to share this fascination, and to see in it the advancement or frustration of their own ambitions and those of their children. Intelligent free Afro-Peruvians who had accumulated modest fortunes were quick to see that racial solidarity was all very well,

free and enslaved, were also important intermediaries between indigenous communities and Europeans, and at times acted as agents of conquest and colonization, particularly those slaves who had undergone multiple passages between Iberia and the New World (Garofalo 2012).

³⁰ However, as O’Toole argues (2012: 160) the tools available to individuals of African descent for negotiating social status were largely extra-legal compared to those available to Indians. They included negotiations over labour relations, manipulating slaves’ market values and their kinship connections.

but that 'whitening' and 'passing' culturally if not racially, was the key to socioeconomic advancement. Any sense of community the free coloureds possessed was constantly eroded by their recognition of the value of having ties to those who were lighter or wealthier or better connected than themselves. (1974: 321)

Historians emphasise the sustained agency of African slaves themselves in bringing about their own manumission and that of their offspring, siblings, parents and partners (Aguirre 1993; Bowser 1974; Hünefeldt 1994). Practices of kinship could be a vehicle of continuity or a source of potential rupture for slaves. Kinship relations including across the slave/non-slave and the black/non-black divide, were central to negotiations and transformations of legal status including by providing a means out of the category of slave (Hünefeldt 1994).³¹ O'Toole has argued that in Peru *casta* terminologies and categories were created by colonial authorities and slaveholders to suit economic, especially labour needs but also that ordinary people used, manipulated, and rejected such categories (2012). This thesis contributes to a revision of Afro-Latin American history and an understanding of 'the ways that race was obscured and enabled by other classificatory phenomena of the age... the ways that race both existed and did not exist as a social reality in colonial lives' (Bryant et al. 2012: 11-12).

Another aspect of the Peruvian slave trade which is relevant to the anthropological study of contemporary Peruvians of mixed Afro-indigenous descent concerns the multiple passages and cultural adaptation undergone by those enslaved in Peru. Peru's geographical location on the Pacific coast meant that there was no direct route for slave ships coming from West Africa. As a

³¹ Hünefeldt (1994: 79-84) describes how slaves laboured and saved extra income in order to purchase their own liberty or that of parents, siblings, children and spouses and this method became the most common method of emancipation. Slavery itself involved slaves in the domestic and kinship realms of Spaniards, and in mutual relations of relatedness, care and transubstantiation: as cooks, wet nurses and child-carers, as sexual partners, domestic companions and as mothers to illegitimate children fathered by whites (Hünefeldt 1994: 130-132). Slave mothers held white and *mestizo* fathers accountable for mixed offspring born into slavery (via the rule of 'slavery of the womb') in order to obtain their manumission, and both male and female slaves actively sought or made use of existing relations with white, *mestizo* and other mixed partners to improve their outcomes (Hünefeldt 1994). This sort of evidence suggests that Peruvian slavery had elements of an 'open' system in the classic anthropological distinction between 'open' and 'closed' systems of slavery (Watson 1980). One hallmark of a closed system was the rupture of the slave's previous kinship ties, a form of a 'social death' (Patterson 1982). Many 'open' systems on the contrary, included kinship as a means out of slavery; here the creation of new kinship relations between enslaved and enslaver, often modelled on a parent-child relation, constituted a means of hierarchically incorporating, in a relation of dependency, otherwise vulnerable and potentially dangerous foreigners with no other kin (Miers and Kopytoff 1977).

result, men, women and children enslaved in Peru had experienced a lengthy transatlantic journey, often being held for extended periods of time in the Caribbean, especially the ports of Panama and Cartagena, Central America and Brazil; in addition, many had been born on the Iberian peninsula (O'Toole 2012: 39). They were also often bought and sold several times, moving between various locations, before being transported on to Peru (O'Toole 2012: 40). O'Toole argues that these multiple passages, which could last up to several years, meant that slaves arriving to be sold in Peru had already undergone extended processes of ethnic and kin dispersal, and of cultural, linguistic and social encounters and exchanges with other enslaved people of different ethnic origins, as well as processes of acculturation into creole societies (2012: 38-45).³² O'Toole suggests that the extensive and prolonged nature of the Peruvian slave trade provided slaves arriving in Peru with cultural tools and knowledge which could help them negotiate their prospects within slavery (2012: 44-45). At the same time as slaves were undergoing processes of social, cultural and linguistic exchange, slaveholders, colonial and ecclesiastical authorities discursively flattened out cultural or ethnic distinctions between slaves of different origins (O'Toole 2012: 46-47). While slaveholders and authorities recognised differences, and made use of *casta* labels to differentiate slaves of different alleged ethnic, tribal or national origins, they cast such differences as inconsequential (O'Toole 2012: 45-48). By claiming that ethnic differences cancelled out a potential for solidarity amongst slaves, they were constructed as being unable to organise resistance against the colonial order, which in turn was taken as proof of the lower social development of enslaved people and used to legitimise the slave system (O'Toole 2012: 46-48).³³

One result of these dual processes of cultural adaptation and flattening of cultural differences, is that few easily identifiable 'African' cultural practices and

³² Counter this historical research, one well-known Piuran folklorist maintains that the majority of slaves arriving in Piura were of Malagasy origin (Zúñiga de Riofrio 1998; 2007). Her claims are based on the presence of place names such as the Mangancheria in Piura but are difficult to substantiate using historical data. Her work, much cited in the Piuran media, is often used to make claims that Piura's Afro-descendant population differs racially from Afro-Peruvian populations in Lima and southern Peru.

³³ In this way enslaved men and women were also constructed as docile, complacent and obedient, and to naturalise their subservient location in the colonial order (O'Toole 2012: 46-47).

symbols survive in communities of African descent in Peru, compared in particular to Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil. Instead, if one is to characterise any pattern as particularly Afro-Peruvian, based on the historical literature, it may be the very ability to fuse different cultural practices, the skill of mediating between different segments of society, including indigenous and Hispanic, and, in the process, reinventing and creating the practices and meanings relevant to large parts of Peruvian society. Garofalo (2006) provides an example from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century religion arguing that Afro-Peruvians in colonial Andean cities quickly became experts in the provision of indigenous Andean ritual practices including witchcraft, divination and love magic and ‘helped blend together Catholic prayers, Native American coca leaves, invocations of a re-imagined Inca ruler, grape brandy and other colonial drinks, into a unique and coherent body of urban witchcraft that the Catholic church failed to effectively suppress’ (Garofalo 2012: 54; see also Silverblatt 2004: 61-85).

A third aspect of Peruvian slavery that I wish to highlight here concerns the economic motivations behind the abolition of slavery and the consequences for rural Peruvians of African descent. Historical research strongly suggests that the abolition of slavery in Peru was not motivated by humanitarian concerns, but rather by the demands of a growing liberal economy. Abolition of slavery in 1854 went hand in hand with the abolition of the *mita*, and was driven by emerging export oligarchies pushing their agendas to dismantle protectionist barriers, develop infrastructure, promote export and encourage foreign investment (Larson 2004: 48). Expanding capitalism required Indian lands and labour. As a result, liberal ideals of equality and freedom were invoked against ‘ethnic’ restrictions and privileges (Larson 2004: 48). On the coast, the construction of a category of peasants gained urgency: unattached to communal lands and properties, free of ethnic ties and protections, apt and willing to work on the *hacienda*.

Many rural Peruvians of African and mixed descent, whose ancestors had been enslaved, also fit this bill (Collin-Delavaud 1984: 74; Peloso 1999: 5; Seligmann 2008: 331). Collin-Delavaud has argued that the majority of former

slaves in Piura abandoned the *haciendas* after the abolition of slavery and went to work in the cities and ports (1984: 74). Those who stayed on the *hacienda* increased the population of landless peons that lived in the new jurisdictional districts created around the old *haciendas* (Collin-Delavaud 1984: 74). Despite the stigma of slavery, Collin-Delavaud, describes these rural blacks as ‘the perfect type of coastal *cholo*, free of any ethnic obstacles’ (1984: 74). Almost a century later, Collin Delavaud reports on the decreasing numbers of blacks in the 1940s on the northern coastal *haciendas*, owing to ‘rapid assimilation, and the fact that *mulatos* and *zambos* (mixtures of Indian and Black) are generally considered white *mestizos* rather than blacks’ (1984: 74). Urban Peruvians of African descent, specialising in a number of professions and crafts, had some opportunities and incentives to create ethnic alliances as artisans of colour (Bowser 1974: 125-146). On the rural *haciendas* however, while some plantation owners and overseers promoted some racial distinctions (Peloso 1999: 41-43), free people of mixed African descent had more motives to intermingle and intermarry with other peasants (Peloso 1999: 155). An aim of this research is to increase understanding of rural Peruvians of African descent by showing how contemporary peasants understand such processes of mixing and the salience of economic categories and transformations.

Afro-Peruvian ethnic mobilisation

This work sheds further light on the challenges faced by ethnic mobilisation in Peru by illustrating the disjunctures between the language of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘identity’ used by activists, and the everyday understanding of race and practices of mixing for rural Peruvians who are seen as potential beneficiaries of ethnic activism. I would like to highlight some of the difficulties faced by Afro-Peruvian activists, in order to help explain why their campaigns have not found greater resonance in places such as Yapatera.

Demands by indigenous and Afro-descendant activists for official recognition of ethnic groups and demands for rights on the basis of membership of such groups are often rejected by the state and by popular opinion in Peru, which see such organisations and their demands as unruly, even insurgent. These

efforts disturb a narrative of nationhood which claims to be raceless. Indigenous and Afro-Peruvian activists and organisations share many common obstacles, but indigenous political issues have historically overshadowed Afro-Peruvian politics (Greene 2007; 2012). Indigenous activists have historical precedents for demanding rights from the state on the basis of ethnicity and the construction of cultural or ethnic difference, otherwise used to present Indians as backward and degenerate, can be used as a vantage point in lobbying for rights and protections. Afro-Peruvian activists, on the other hand, are often discredited by indigenous activists, and government authorities, who claim that they do not represent a ‘culture’, ‘nation’ or ‘people’ distinct from the dominant *mestizo* and *criollo* population (Greene 2007; Hooker 2005 for similarities elsewhere in Latin America). While Afro-Peruvian activists are part of a broader Afro-Latin American ethnic mobilisation, they have been far less successful than their counterparts in other countries (Greene 2012; Valdivia 2014). According to Greene, multicultural reform in Peru, is ‘neo-indigenista’ in its outlook, often working to include Peru’s indigenous populations, while excluding Afro-Peruvians in practice (Greene 2012: 158). Greene observes that

state officials generally cite existing clauses in the Constitution about the equality of citizens or antidiscrimination legislation as a means to simply dismiss the need to implement further legislation in favour of Afro-Peruvians. The liberal ‘equality’ of Peruvians, already ideologically enshrined in the Constitution, is routinely used as a means to trump any further claims specific to the historical and contemporary circumstances of the Afro-Peruvian population. (2012: 157)

As a result, despite the implementation of some symbolic multicultural policies that reflect the regional trend (introduction: 14-16), to date no legislation has passed which positively affects the material conditions or political representation of Afro-Peruvians (Greene 2012: 156).

Another challenge for ethnic activists is the fact that Afro-Peruvian culture has been seen as hierarchically encompassed within national, or *criollo*, culture. Afro-Peruvian ethnic activism has its origins in a movement of cultural revivalism in the 1950s and 1960s initiated by artists and intellectuals who sought to discover, celebrate and create Afro-Peruvian folklore and performance (Feldman 2006; Greene 2012; Valdivia 2014). Expressive culture continues to be an important medium for creating a sense of ethnic consciousness for activists working in beneficiary communities and on the national and international scene

(Greene 2012: 153; Rocca Torres 2010). The early efforts of ethnomusicological and folkloric revival successfully popularised Afro-Peruvian music and dance in Peru (Feldman 2006: 83-124). But despite having underlying political motivations and despite drawing inspiration from the civil rights movements in North America, they failed to have a wider political impact (Feldman 2006). For example, symbols and practices associated with blackness, such as certain instruments (*cajón*), dances (*festejo*) certain dishes (*tacu tacu*, *cau cau*, *picarones*, *anticuchos* to name a few), religious figures (*Cristo Moreno* or *Señor de los Milagros* and the *mulato* Saint Martín de Porres), circulate widely as part of ‘national’ culture and are often conceived of as ‘contributions’ (*aportes*), to *peruanidad*, including by prominent intellectuals (Rostworowski and Aguirre 2000).³⁴ This hierarchical encompassment within *criollo* culture tends to cast Afro-Peruvian culture in ‘folkloric’ terms and constructs Afro-Peruvian people as living in an idyllic past (Feldman 2006: 126-132) with little room for an understanding of the issues faced by ordinary Peruvians of African descent today.

As Greene chronicles, efforts to create a more explicit political platform began with the formation of the Movimiento Negro Francisco Congo (MNFC) in the mid-1980s by a small group of black intellectuals and professionals in Lima (2012: 153; see also Valdivia 2014). The MNFC was also the only activist organisation that attempted, in the 1990s, to extend from Lima to the provinces by forming assemblies in various small communities with an Afro-descendant presence on Peru’s coast (Greene 2012: 154), including in Yapatera. Greene writes that a change of name to Movimiento Nacional Afroperuano Francisco Congo, in the late 1990s, reflected a shift in political strategy to appeal to a broader national base, beyond the Lima-based primarily middle-class origins of

³⁴ There is a certain fascination with uncovering the African contributions to Peruvian culture among many intellectuals. Commenting on the publication of his book on *Blackness in Peru*, Rodríguez Pastor, a Peruvian anthropologist, states that ‘*Los costeños somos, culturalmente y de manera oculta, afros*’ or ‘Culturally and in a concealed manner, we coastal Peruvians are Afros’. A distinguished linguist expressed his frustration with this African ‘obsession’ to me once pointing out that many idioms and words of Spanish origin in Peru are often mischaracterised as African, simply because they sound curious or amusing. Feldman similarly argues that in constructing notions of Afro-Peruvian culture and authenticity, continuities with indigenous, Andean *mestizo* and Iberian cultural traditions are often downplayed or ignored (Feldman 2006: 192-202).

the movement (2012: 154). In conversations with me, one of the leading Afro-Peruvian activists also told me that the change from *Negro* to *Afroperuano* in the movement's name constituted a 'culturalist turn' in Afro-Peruvian activists' and intellectuals' thinking and that they wanted to move away from a racial conception of blackness to a more 'inclusive, cultural, performative' one. Since the 1990s the national Afro-Peruvian movement suffered from internal fractures including diverging pro- and anti-Fujimori views (Thomas 2011; Valdivia 2014: 57-84). This resulted in the splintering of the previously unified movement, and resulted in the formation of new Afro-Peruvian organisations and NGOs. While different organisations often collaborate, usually under the leadership of the organisation CEDET, by many activists' own admissions, a unified strategy and cross-organisational platform are lacking. This makes it especially easy for government to dismiss ethnic activists' voices as marginal.

One pressing need for ethnic activists is for demographic information, particularly a population count, of 'Afro-Peruvians'. Lobbying efforts have intensified in the last few years demanding that the National Office of Statistics include a question on the national census for ethnic self-identification, including an ethnic category for Afro-descendants. In the meantime, activists operate with population estimates ranging from 1% to 10%, with 5% a widely cited figure. As Greene (2012) and Sulmont and Valdivia (2012) highlight, such estimates are complicated by methodological and historical difficulties. Peruvians of African descent often describe themselves using designators that elide connotations of blackness, and given the choice will stress non-black descent. A further difficulty is that unlike on the rest of the continent, Afro-descendants in Peru are not concentrated in particular areas but are distributed throughout the coast and Lima. One approach that some activists have adopted is to designate entire villages or geographical areas as 'Afro-Peruvian' where they find a combination of historical evidence for slavery and the prevalence of what they refer to as an 'Afro' phenotype (personal communication). One prominent activist stated that this was part of the strategic culturalist turn: any individual who shared in the legacy of Afro-Peruvian culture, for instance by living in an 'Afro-Peruvian village', could be classed as 'Afro-Peruvian', regardless of their appearance.

Such ideas influenced how the map produced by the World Bank was created (see figure 1). The authors of one report admit to having had to convince reluctant locals to self-identify as *negro* or *afro* in order to include them as participants in a survey and focus groups. Such methods compromise the plausibility of research findings and are ethically questionable.

All of these organisations are extremely small and often lack the most basic funding, depending for much of their work on international aid organisations. As a result most Afro-Peruvian organisations therefore concentrate their efforts on lobbying in Lima and on work in the southern communities near Chincha. They rarely visit places such as Yapatara and when they do, they seldom stay for more than a day or two. As Greene writes, activists have been plagued by a lack of means to engage Peruvians of African descent both in urban areas and in the rural north and have largely failed to articulate a vision of Afro-Peruvian culture or to develop black consciousness (2012: 154).³⁵ The material presented in this thesis helps explain some of the difficulties activists face in engaging with local populations.

A note on the absence of ‘identity’

Many of the practices and narratives which I discuss in the thesis might be described as practices, performances or the creation of ‘identity’ or ‘identities’. But some readers might be surprised to find that the term ‘identity’ is absent from my analysis. This requires a brief explanation.

Firstly, ‘identity’ is largely a foreign concept to villagers and not one that many have heard, let alone used. Indeed, a much-heard complaint among ethnic activists when talking about Yapatara is that the village or villagers ‘lack identity’ (*[les] falta identidad*). Cultural leaders, intellectuals and even some ordinary people in Peru also increasingly complain that all Peruvians pathologically ‘lack identity’. What is usually meant by these statements is that

³⁵ I am not implying that the two parties are doomed to speak past each other. Certainly, if activists were able to deliver on their promises of projects for development, infrastructure and material resources, their ‘ethnic’ messages might be more favourably received in Yapatara. I am not precluding the possibility that if there were incentives to do so, more people would be disposed to identify themselves as ‘Afro-Peruvian’.

people lack either self-esteem, confidence, pride, patriotism, education, culture and/or knowledge.³⁶ Ethnic activists also mean that people in Yapaterra do not describe themselves as ‘Afro-Peruvian’ or ‘black’. ‘Identity’ has also become a ubiquitous term in the social sciences, particularly in writing influenced by constructivism (Brubaker and Cooper 2004: 28-31), however its analytical value is debateable. This thesis contributes to attempts to move beyond ‘identity’ in critical analysis.

As Brubaker and Cooper have argued, the concept of ‘identity’ is used in multiple ways, to mean so many different, even contradictory things, as to render it analytically useless (2004: 33-41). Reviewing some of its most common uses, Brubaker and Cooper find that

the term ‘identity’ is made to do a great deal of work. It is used to highlight non-instrumental modes of action; to focus on self-understanding rather than self-interest; to designate sameness across persons or sameness over time; to capture allegedly core, foundational aspects of selfhood; to deny that such core, foundational aspects exist; to highlight the processual, interactive development of solidarity and collective self-understanding; and to stress the fragmented quality of the contemporary experience of ‘self’, a self unstably patched together through shards of discourse and contingently ‘activated’ in differing contexts. (2004: 35)

But it is hardly useful to classify as ‘identity’ both the way in which certain social categories can appear, on the one hand exclusive, essential, primordial and fixed, and on the other contingent, constructed and loosely defined (see also Handler 1994: 29). Given the ambiguous, multivalent meanings attributed to ‘identity’, it becomes hard to imagine humans without ‘identities’.

The use of ‘identity’ by cultural and political leaders around the world, in other words its existence as a ‘category of practice’ (Brubaker and Cooper 2004: 31-33), cannot be taken as evidence that all humans share universal concerns about identity. Handler argues that the widespread use of ‘identity’ is instead testament to the rapid spread of hegemonic ideas about modernity and ethnicity and to the fact that such leaders seek to appeal to others who speak ‘the language of identity’ (1994: 38). But to use ‘identity’ analytically entails the danger of

³⁶ A good example of this is when Guiomar, an archaeologist working for the municipality of Chulucanas told me that his job was to

achieve identity [*lograr identidad*]. Here, 98% of people don’t have identity... the young people especially, because of technology, consumerism they have no identity. That’s why you see bad things happen like *huaquerismo* [robbing pre-Columbian tombs to sell stolen artefacts on the black market]. To achieve identity means that when tourists come, we shouldn’t feel unworthy, as if we were less than them. If you go to Lima you hear people discriminate against themselves, they say: ‘Stinking highlander, stinking *cholo*, stinking black’. What we need is an Incan saint like Mexico that has the Virgin of Guadalupe!

reifying the very things we hope to study, including processes of reification themselves (Brubaker and Cooper 2004; Handler 1994).³⁷ Handler argues that while social scientists are now wary of treating cultures, traditions, nations and ethnic groups as actually existing, bounded, and unchanging entities, and instead are apt to conceptualise them as constructed and negotiated, many fall back comfortably on the concept of 'identity' (1994: 27) as the product, outcome or reason for the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of culture.³⁸

Much of the existing scholarship on Afro-Latin Americans, including this study, is motivated by a desire to challenge a historical silence about slavery in Latin America, to expose its legacy in racism and social inequality and to emphasise the agency and resilience of people of African descent. However, there is at times a marked tendency to take for granted the constructions, reconstructions and performances of 'identity' often furthered by activists, in a way which sometimes risks reifying Afro-descendent 'culture', 'identity' or 'ethnicity'. Moreover, imputing such concepts and categories on ordinary people compromises our understanding of their own realities and experiences. In this case, seeing villagers' practices in the light of externally constructed Afro-Peruvian 'identity' or 'ethnicity' gives excessive attention to the discourses of ethnic activists, and risks turning a blind eye to what villagers consider important. Finally, it is precisely because of villagers' supposed lack of 'identity', and lack of identification with 'ethnic' labels, that their interests, concerns and opinions are sometimes sidelined or dismissed outright. This serves as a reminder that globalised discourses of identity and ethnicity may have empowered some actors and groups, but that it can potentially exclude others. It

³⁷ Brubaker and Cooper (2004: 41-48) therefore suggest using existing concepts to tease apart the different uses to which 'identity' is regularly put. These include studying processes and acts of 'identification' (of self, others, and of the self by others) and 'categorisation', self-understanding as an emotional and cognitive sense of oneself in relation to the social world or in a social structure, 'commonality' as the sharing of a common attribute and 'connectedness' as the relational ties that link people, and 'groupness' as the sense of belonging to a distinctive bounded, solidary group. I take it to be implicit in their critique that as social scientists we must be equally concerned with the conceptual opposites: for example, what processes drive dis-identification and dis-connection, and how is a sense of groupness undone?

³⁸ Handler also suggests that the notion of identity is intimately tied up with a Western concept of the individual (1994: 28-30), therefore it follows that 'people who do not routinely imagine human activities in terms of such bounded, unique agents would have less interest in the notion of identity (whether personal or collective) than we often ascribe to them.' (1994: 31)

is for these reasons that I have found the term ‘identity’ unhelpful, and at times deceiving, for the analysis of my ethnographic data.

Given the historical, theoretical and anthropological background outlined in this chapter, my work seeks to develop an ethnographic approach to studies of racial and cultural mixture as a lived experience, from the perspective of Peruvians of Afro-indigenous descent. Influenced both by national narratives which downplay race and ethnicity, and by powerful socio-racial hierarchies of exclusion, how do ordinary people navigate such contradictory forces and how do they conceive of the social world? Beyond its ideological use and abuse in *mestizaje*, what is the purchase of ‘mixing’ for ordinary people? I propose an ethnographic account of mixing which asks how it is shaped by practices in the domains of kinship, religion, historicity and economic relations and how it is embedded in local social history. Contributing to anthropological research on Peru specifically, I hope that my work helps balance the highland and Lima-centred emphasis of most research on racial constructions, ethnicity and racism. I also plead for greater ethnographic engagement with the Andean coast and a more nuanced understanding of rural peasant communities.

Complementing existing studies on overt racial stereotyping and exclusion of Peruvians of African descent, I propose an ethnographic investigation of everyday life in a rural Afro-indigenous village from the perspective of villagers themselves. I also seek to challenge the assumption that Peruvians of African descent do not face more the more subtle forms of racism often associated with indigeneity. In light of the rapidly expanding literature on Afro-Latin American culture and politics I wish to offer an ethnographic perspective from a geographically under-represented area: the Andean coast. Somewhat against the tendency to emphasise the growing importance of racial and ethnic labels in Latin American society, culture and politics, I offer the view from a community of people of mixed Afro-indigenous descent who have been largely unaffected by waves of ethnic mobilisation and who reject ethnic and racial forms of classification.

Chapter II. A folk theory of race: Mixing, categorisation and racial essentialism

‘The White’: I went to wash a black guy
To see if he would fade
The more I washed him
The blacker he became.

‘The Black’: I also bathed a little whitey
To see what he would say
I put a finger in his butt
And how he wriggled, the fag!¹

Cumanana by Fernando Barranzuela

Fernando’s *cumanana*

The above *cumanana*, a rhyming verse traditionally improvised between two competing performers throughout the Alto Piura valley, always provokes a great deal of laughter when performed by its author Fernando Barranzuela, a local poet and lay historian. To the outsider it is also one of the more disturbing verses in his repertoire: the joke stems from a homophobic taunt and sexual assault.

Another of his *cumananas*, which makes clever use of the phonetic similarity between slang names for body parts and sexual practices on the one hand, and terms related to food preparation and staple ingredients in local cuisine on the other—specifically the similarity between *culantro* (coriander) and *culo* (ass)—contains lines which may be liberally translated as ‘*Negrita* [little black girl], when can I grind your ass?’

¹ *Blanco*: ‘Me puse a lavar un negro/ a ver si se desteñía/ cuanto más lo jabonaba/ más negro se ponía’. *Negro*: ‘Yo también bañé a un blanquito/ a ver qué cosa decía/ le metí un dedo al potito/ ¡y el maricón, como se movía!’

Fernando, who claims he is the only surviving *cumananero* in the village, usually performs outside the village in provincial and regional celebrations and for visitors such as journalists, television crews and more or less illustrious visitors, including, recently, Mario Vargas Llosa, Nobel Prize-winning author who reprinted the above *cumanana* in leading Spanish newspaper *El País*. Fernando claims, in his 2007 book and elsewhere, that the genre was invented by black slaves who came to Yapatera from a place in Venezuela called Cumaná.² Within the village, competitive *cumanana* performance as a form of entertainment has become largely extinct, although some older people remember a few lines of old poems. Of the ones I was able to collect, however, none dealt with, or mentioned issues of race, nor is the genre regarded as ‘Afro-Peruvian’ by locals; instead it is simply one of the things the ancestors did at their *chinganas*, or get-togethers. More importantly, while people in Yapatera will laugh at the ‘black-white’ *cumanana*, Fernando’s approach to the subject of race largely goes against local wisdom and practice. The poem seems to suggest that each of the fictitious speakers, ‘the white’ and ‘the black’, as stock characters, stand for ‘whites’ and ‘blacks’ in general and assumes an inherent hostility between the two races. The sexual assault of black on white implies a stereotype of the aggressive, hyper-sexualised, heterosexual black body, and an effeminate notion of white masculinity. Such stereotypical depictions of blacks (and, less frequently, whites) can be found in the Peruvian media, and in racial insults. Outsiders regularly construct the village of Yapatera and the majority of its inhabitants in racial terms as ‘black’ or using the ethnic term ‘Afro-Peruvian’. Furthermore, villagers, a large number of whom have darker skin and/or other features that can be read as containing elements of ‘blackness’ in Peruvian racial typologies, are sometimes subjected to racial discrimination and insult as I show in this chapter.

In Yapatera, however, villagers are very reluctant to acknowledge the existence of racial stereotypes, although they will freely stereotype along the lines of class or place of origin. Moreover, talk which implies the notion that

² The association of *cumananas* with African roots was popularised by the cultural revivalism of Nicomedes Santa Cruz (Feldman 2006: 272) and is supported by Romero (1988: 91), but there are other theories as to its roots and it is performed in villages without historical evidence of slavery.

humans can be categorised neatly into white or black (or Indian) is rarely heard. Nevertheless, villagers do make use of the term *raza* ('race') and also employ racial and colour labels such as *negro*, *moreno*, *cholo*, *blanco* and others. The way in which race is talked about in Yapatara, and the local theory of what 'race' is, is the subject of this chapter. This work contributes to a well-established body of literature that points to the tensions between national ideologies based on racial mixing, and the experience of racism, 'on the ground'. It does so by taking an ethnographic approach, showing what villagers mean by race and how it relates to their ideas about descent, procreation and physiology. I also discuss how and whether race relates to other forms of potential social classification and human categorisation. Rejecting 'ethnic' or 'racial' labelling most of the time, villagers draw attention instead to practices and idioms of 'mixing'. This suggests that despite racism and inequalities along the lines of race, mixing has an everyday significance that informs 'lived experience' (Wade 2005b).

Using data obtained from experimental tasks, which I designed and conducted in the field, and engaging with research from cognitive psychology, I ask whether people's reasoning about race is solely informed by the cultural narrative of mixing and the folk theory of race.³ The results suggest, on the one hand, that the cultural narrative of 'mixing' influences villagers' inferential reasoning. On the other hand, the results also suggest that such narratives may be constrained in part by an understanding of race that contradicts the one that underpins the idiom and practices of mixing.

Overview of racial/colour terms

Despite the common assertion, both in Yapatara and elsewhere in Peru that 'all Peruvians are mixed', several racial, 'colour' and other labels denoting racial or ethnic associations are used in Peru, with some regional variation in their usage and associations. In Yapatara, the following are the most common terms.

³ The design and implementation of experimental cognitive tasks was made possible by a grant from the International Culture and Cognition Institute (ICCI), which is gratefully acknowledged. I am particularly indebted to Rita Astuti (LSE) and Gil Diesendruck (Bar-Ilan University) who provided feedback on the task design, to Sean Epstein who helped with randomisation, and to Tony Whelan (LSE) for his assistance with the statistical analysis.

Negro/a

‘Black’. This term is applied to individuals who are considered to have very dark skin. Also a common nickname.

Moreno/a

‘Brown’. This term is used more frequently in Yapatera than *negro* either to indicate a lighter skin colour than *negro* or as a euphemism for *negro*.

Claro/a

‘Light’. This term is used as an adjective to describe lighter skin colour or used to ‘lighten’ the term *moreno* and so differentiate between a darker and a lighter skinned *moreno*, e.g. *un moreno claro*. The opposite *oscuro/a* (‘dark’) is never used.

Blanco/a

‘White’. Villagers differentiate between different types of whites. They will identify people, including villagers, as ‘white’ who have significantly lighter skin, or hair colour, than average. Often such individuals are identified as being of highland descent. In northern Peru, highlanders are often considered to be ‘whiter’ than coastal Peruvians. This is a subject of much surprise to Peruvians from Lima and the south, where highlanders are considered darker. Villagers point to the often lighter, ‘yellow’ or ‘honey-coloured’ eyes of highlanders and to the fact that many have ‘blond’ (*rubio*) hair. Many villagers link the ‘whiteness’ of highlanders to Chile’s territorial invasion and military occupation of the Peruvian highlands during the War of the Pacific (1879-1890). Chilean soldiers are alleged to have left large numbers of illegitimate descendants. Upper-class compatriots living in Lima, Limeños, are a purer white, but villagers stress that they too are a mixture and these Peruvians prefer to marry foreigners to maintain and improve their whiteness. White foreigners are the whitest and are also referred to as *gringo/a*.⁴

⁴ Which explains why some local children gave me the nickname ‘paper’ (*papel*).

Colorado/a

‘Coloured’. The label is used to describe someone white, often with a pinkish or reddish skin-tone (‘to blush’ is *ponerse colorado/a*), with blond or reddish hair, or to describe the lighter eye-colour of northern *serranos*.

Chino/a

‘Chinese’. The term is used to refer to anyone of real or alleged partial Chinese or Japanese descent, of which there is a significant proportion in Peru, or more generally to anyone with single-fold eyelids. This is also a common nickname.

Cholo/a

In Andean anthropology the term is often translated as ‘of mixed indigenous descent’ or ‘urbanised Indian’.⁵ From the 1950s it has been used in a derogatory way, most often to refer to Andean migrants settled in urban shanty-towns. More recently, the term has enjoyed a re-appropriation to describe the notion of national belonging and an ‘authentic’ working-class Peruvian.⁶ In northern coastal Peru, it implies a rural, provincial origin more than necessarily a highlands one. Rather than being used to describe racial ‘otherness’, it is sometimes used to describe the ‘authentic’ majority. Villagers in Yapaterra use this term in a more pragmatic sense to refer to people with a specific hair type: thick, *lacio* (straight), *suelto* (loose) and black. It is associated with specific haircuts which show off the way it lies flat or sticks straight up, or with women with long, straight hair. In contrast to this definition based strictly on appearance, villagers also have a more local definition of *cholos* as people from neighbouring villages such as Sol Sol, Paccha, the city of Piura and the Bajo Piura valley.

Zambo/a

The colonial definition of this term denotes black-indigenous mixture. However, in local use it is the conceptual opposite of *cholo* and implies a curled hair type. In explaining the meaning of *cholos*, villagers often say that ‘the majority here, we are *zambos*’, in contrast to the neighbouring villages (although there are

⁵ Thurner has translated *cholo* using the term ‘upstart darkie’ (2009: 60).

⁶ Hence its increasing potential to unite people for political or social action, by pitting ‘authentic’ working- and middle-class Peruvians against the old oligarchs. Together with two dozen men from Yapaterra I attended the inauguration of a much-awaited irrigation project in Chulucanas attended by the then president Alan García and the president of the state of Piura, who addressed the crowd by crying out: ‘we are the *cholos piuranos!*’

plenty of *cholos* in Yapatera). This hair type is explained as *crespo* (frizzy), *ensortijado* (curled up), *enrollado* (rolled up), *ondulado* (wavy), and children say it is like fusilli pasta. The extreme of this in Yapatera is called *mocho* (literally ‘blunt’, flat-topped, stunted), and people frequently add that ‘the hair does not grow’ or ‘the water will not go in’ (the equivalent of ‘kinky’ or ‘nappy’ hair in North America). *Zambo* can also be used as a euphemism for *negro* or *moreno* since by focussing on hair texture, which is less stigmatised, one draws attention away from the dark skin colour of most *zambos*.

Serrano/a

‘Highlander’. This is usually used to denote place of origin and to imply a difference between the customs of highland and coastal people (*costeño/a*, the conceptual opposite). The term sometimes carries a racial connotation in the sense of ‘whiteness’ (see above).

The following terms are often found in Andean and Latin American anthropology and history, but are not commonly used in Yapatera:

Mestizo/a

‘Mixed white-indigenous’. The product of Spanish-Indian mixture, *mestizo* is the word often used to describe the majority populations of countries influenced by *mestizaje* ideologies and racial mixing. The Quechua variant often recorded in Andean ethnography is *misti*. I never heard this term used in Yapatera, partially because mixing is precisely the default, unmarked condition of race. On very rare occasions, and only when prompted to talk about such matters, I heard informants use the idiosyncratic variants ‘*mesquizo*’ and ‘*mezcolado*’, to explain that an individual was a ‘mix’ of his parents or to explain their lighter colouring.

Indio/indígena

‘Indian’/‘indigenous’. These are very rarely used in Yapatera, especially the latter. However, when prompted, my informants would refer to *los que viven en la selva*, ‘those people who live in the forest’, whom they consider remote, uncivilised, tribal savages. *Incas*, by contrast, are usually recognised as the original, and extinct, inhabitants of Peru.

Racism

Ethnic activists based in Lima construct Yapatara as an Afro-Peruvian village and as a vestige of Afro-Peruvian ‘culture’. This is because Yapatara has a higher concentration of individuals with darker skin, hair texture and facial features associated with blackness, than most other villages in Peru, linking it to more well-known Afro-Peruvian villages in the south. The existence of a former *hacienda*, famous for its sugar cane production, supports the view that contemporary villagers are descended, in part, from African slaves brought to work on the plantation. In addition, a small handful of Peruvian academics, most of them with links to ethnic NGOs and activists, and some writers and folklorists, cast Yapatara as a black village, different from the neighbouring villages which are not seen as racially or ethnically distinctive. These constructions of Yapatara as black or Afro-Peruvian evoke its place in an African Diaspora and give the impression of a people with enduring ties to the African motherland (in addition to the *Madre Patria* of Spain).

However, within Yapatara villagers identify as ‘Afro-Peruvian’ not themselves but only the ethnic activists who visit the village once or twice a year. If one asks who the Afro-Peruvians are, the locals will respond that Afro-Peruvians are those city-people, Limeños who come with their promises, posters and workshops for a few days and then leave again. Sometimes, villagers also refer to activists as *los de la raza*: ‘those of the race’. Also, they defer knowledge of Afro-Peruvian things to the village’s two self-acclaimed cultural leaders, who act as the main points of contact for ethnic activists and other outsiders: Rodolfo, the poet and lay historian, and Baudilio, the writer and cultural activist. Furthermore, villagers distance themselves from ‘true blacks’, such as Africans and black Peruvians who live in southern coastal Peru, and whom they see on television. As Domingo said to me, ‘I may be an ugly black, but not like those people from Chincha. I don’t say to them “Hey, fellow countryman!” I don’t call them that. They don’t look like they are from here [Peru]!’ Constructions of Yapatara as a black or Afro-Peruvian village, in a positive, celebratory sense, are not encountered on a day-to-day basis, but are experienced within the parameters

of very specific occasions, such as the Afro-Peruvian women's pottery project mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis.

Villagers' more immediate experience of being cast as racially or ethnically 'other' is in being witnesses, and potential victims, of racism. Despite the myth of *peruanidad*, or a sense of Peruvian national belonging based not on race, but on racial mixture, people who are alleged to be of black, Indian, Chinese or Japanese descent in Peru suffer overt, 'silent' (de la Cadena 1998) and structural racism (chapter I: 61-63). One important source of racism is the media; newspapers and television programs regularly portray blacks as sexually promiscuous and inexplicably happy, stupid and childlike, vain and wasteful, or unruly and criminal, and often all of the above simultaneously. But because people in Yapatera disassociate from so-called true blacks, for example through the idea of 'mixing', they therefore do not see themselves as victims of such racism, at least in theory.

However, this does not stop others, including strangers, from casting many villagers as 'black' or 'brown' in negative terms especially outside of Yapatera. In particular, villagers risk becoming the victims of discrimination when they travel to the nearby market town of Chulucanas or the regional capital of Piura to access banks and markets, educational facilities, medical and public services. On our weekly shopping trip for fresh produce to the market in Chulucanas, Luz, a member of my host family in Yapatera, was stopped by one of the market women and was asked very loudly whether she was from Chinchá (the region in southern Peru which is famous for its black villages). Luz, visibly irritated, but not surprised, replied that she was 'from around here' and hustled me on to the next chore—ignoring the market vendor's look of disbelief. The vendor's scepticism was not unusual: most ordinary Peruvians, including people from northern Peru and even the state of Piura itself, and many academics, are unaware that people of Afro-indigenous descent are to be found in Piura. Other informants told me they had heard insults such as, 'shitty black' (*negro de mierda*), 'black who only thinks until noon' (*negro que solo piensa hasta las doce*), and pejorative nicknames such as *coca-cola* and *morocha*, the name of a commercially produced chocolate biscuit.

Outsiders with a temporary presence in the village often speak in ways that thinly veil racist stereotypes in other discourses, especially about ‘education’ or ‘culture’. Visiting priests describe villagers as disproportionately lacking in Christian values, casting them as religiously deficient (chapter IV: 150-154). Others suggest quite openly that underlying Peru’s official ‘racelessness’ lie tensions along the lines of race. The chief of police, Superintendent Manuel, who was often stationed in Yapatera for several days at a time, told me:

Here there is no discrimination because of race. Before the law all are equal: *cholos*, *zambos*, whites. If it weren’t like this, I myself would have beaten all the *zambos* up by now [*ya los hubiera veteado toditos*]! That’s how I joke with them, I say that to tease them!

Manuel’s ‘joke’ associated blackness with criminality and normalised physical punishment of these racial ‘others’. He also insinuated that while the law is oblivious to racial difference, legal order was juxtaposed on to a default or natural state of inter-racial hostility, with obvious winners and losers.

But what do villagers themselves say about the existence of racism? On the whole, my informants were reluctant to talk about racist discrimination and quick to shrug off racial insults. Many said they had never experienced racism. Others, who acknowledged that they had experienced it, said that the word ‘black’, which is often used in a derogatory way, was just a skin colour, not an insult per se. *Negro* or *negra*, referring to someone’s skin or hair colour, is a common nickname, and like other nicknames such as ‘Doll’, ‘Cat’, ‘Buffalo’ and ‘Tooth-face’ (*Muelón*), it singles out one feature of individual physical appearance.⁷ Uttered between equals, *negro* is an everyday expression of endearment or affection, a recognition of ties of friendship and relatedness. However, a difference in power between namer and named, whether actual or insinuated, turns the term into an insult, hence its appearance in anecdotes about racism. Significantly, the utterance of racial slurs is referred to by its potential victims by the term *negrear*, ‘to blacken someone/something’ (e.g. *nos negrearon*, ‘they blackened us’), as if to say that the victims were not truly black

⁷ Other common nicknames draw attention to a personality trait (for example, *Chicharra*, ‘Chatterbox’) or refer to an amusing childhood anecdote (for example the nickname, *Cuchara*, ‘Spoon’).

to start with. The mere accusation of being black is offensive to people in Yapatera.

The few stories about discrimination that I did collect always ended on a triumphant note in which the perpetrator was chastised, often by a higher force, and the victim was redeemed. Significantly, in all these stories, an alleged 'racial' difference between perpetrator and victim was juxtaposed to another social difference: between teacher and student, policeman and civilian, engineer and peasant, overseer and farmhand. In this way, anecdotes of racism were framed more generally as moral commentaries about the abuse of power, its punishment and retribution for the victim. The following is a story I was told by Amador about an occasion at a popular local tavern, or *peña*, in the nearby market town of Chulucanas:

We were about ten people, and there was another table of about six, and one of them was a *cholo* who kept saying, '*negro* this!' and '*negro* that!'. He just wouldn't stop pestering; for about half an hour he went on like that. My cousin was this humongous *negro* with arms that measured one and half metres each. And he said, 'listen *cholo*! come here with your *poto de chicha* [cup of maize beer]!' And when the *cholo* comes over, my cousin gives him one big whack on the head with the jar of *chicha*. And me, well, I don't like to fight, but I was obliged... And the *cholo* fell down to the ground with one big thud. And nobody in the entire *peña* protested, none of his friends, not the owner of the *peña*, she said nothing. Instead, they all supported us and the owner, she threw the *cholo* out. Everyone defended us.

Cipriano provided the following moral parable to a visiting evangelical missionary:

There once was a *hacendado* [plantation owner] who had a *negro* and he said to the *negro*, '*Negro*, in the fiesta we will kill a bull and eat it'. And the *negro* responded, 'God willing'. And the next day the *patrón* [master] says to the *negro*, 'In the fiesta we will kill the bull'. And again the *negro* responded 'God willing'. And the *patrón* said, 'What's this about God?! It is I who gives you food to eat!' And the fiesta arrived and they killed the bull and when the *patrón* went to take the plate to eat, already holding the spoon... Ba! Suddenly he falls down and is about to die. And the *negro* says, 'Do you see what I told you? God willing'. And the *hacendado* dies.

Flavia, my host mother, told me that upon completing her teacher's education at the university in Piura with top marks, one of the professors had tried to deny her the honour of giving a graduation speech because it would be 'unsightly'. But her fellow students and other professors rallied against the offending teacher and Flavia gave the speech, while the professor listened red-faced and shamed. It is

the turning of the tables where the initial victim has the last laugh over the initial perpetrator, which is the source of amusement in such stories of discrimination. Stories about racism where the potential victims come out in a place of moral superiority seem to suggest that although racist discrimination exists, its effects are negligible or can be overcome—at least within the village.

However, such is not the case: racism cannot always be held at arm's length and it encroaches into the village and into the domestic sphere. In Yapatara, black skin colour was often referred to as 'damaged' or 'wasted' colour (*color desperdiciado/perjudicado*).⁸ Some close informants said they would prefer for their children to marry someone with whiter features than their own. Evaristo told me proudly that four of his daughters who had migrated to Lima had married highlanders and produced lighter offspring; this was because they had followed his euphemistic advice of 'changing their environment'. But his wife, Reinalda, mockingly reminded him that her parents had initially rejected him as a son-in-law and, in an attempt to whiten him, had thrown a bucket full of bleach at him when he arrived for the customary pardoning ritual after their elopement (see chapter III: 129-134). Husband and wife agreed that they would prefer for their youngest son, the only one still living at home, to marry a local *morenita* ('little brown girl'), if it meant that he were to stay in the village, live close by and continue to work with his father on the *chacra*. On a separate occasion Evaristo and Reinalda's adult daughter, Lindaura, a close friend, refused to let me photograph her oldest son, because, she said, 'he comes out too black in pictures'.

As a result of this preference for whiteness, together with the notion, which I explore later on, that families are racially heterogeneous, discrimination on the basis of racial attributes is also sometimes experienced within families.

Take Cayo's story:

My sister, she was a widow when she met Rosendo, who became her second husband. He had two children already. My sister she was *negrita* [black], but Rosendo saw that she was well situated and basically, he fell in love with her money. Their first children together came out *morenos*: they were Eugenio and

⁸ A preference for white and European facial features permeates coastal Peruvian ideas of beauty. When walking in Chulucanas I was frequently subject to verbal harassment by men who would shout, 'I want to fix my race with you!' In Yapatara I was often told to keep out of the sun, so as not to 'turn black'.

Wilson. And then came Enrique, he came out *mestizo*, and then came Beatriz, she came out white.

So Rosendo's children from his first marriage would say that Beatriz was their sister because she was born white and also Enrique, but the others, the blacks: whose could they be?! Not their father's! How they insulted them, dear God! One of Rosendo's sons from the first marriage was Aurelio; he rejected Eugenio. He denied they were brothers. Aurelio despised Eugenio, but Eugenio loved Aurelio. Well, the years went by and by ... when suddenly the day came where Aurelio, the proudest one, became ill and he went blind.

One day recently I was at the doctor's and there I saw Aurelio who was walking, supporting himself on the shoulders of Eugenio. Eugenio sat him down on a bench and he came over to me: 'Hello Uncle, how are you?' And I told him: 'God bless you, Eugenio. Son, I don't want you to feel bad, but when you were young Aurelio would say that you weren't his brother because you are black!' But life can change its course many times! Now the black brother is the cane for his white brother! Now the white one depends on the black one.

Domingo told me the sorrowful story of his first marriage to a woman from the northern Andean city of Cajamarca, whom he had met while working in the city of Sullana and dining daily at her mother's restaurant. One of his wife's brothers, he said, hated him and spoke down to him:

Negro this and *negro* that! One day, my friend, the other brother, took me to one side and said that the other one was threatening to kill me with a knife, like one kills an animal, not even with a gun. So I got my things together—I'll be right back! But I never came back. I abandoned her. I don't think about it anymore; we were married for such a short time. But sometimes I remember and I feel sorry, I become sad—what became of her?

So far I have discussed how villagers are cast by others in racially negative terms and how racist discrimination can come to play within family life. In addition, villagers in Yapatara on occasion discriminate against a particular kind of perceived outsiders by making reference to their apparently fixed and invisible deep-seated characteristics. Migrants from the Piuran highlands who have descended into the coastal valleys, including to Yapatara where they work as day wage labourers to help on the *chacras* (family farms), are often portrayed as uncivilised, drunkards, and violent *serranos*, 'highlanders'. A peculiarity of northern Peruvian ideas about race is that these highlanders are not cast as 'Indian' as they often are in central and southern Peru; instead they are cast as being of lighter skin, hair and eye colour than coastal people. However, this sort of racialisation of new migrants of highland origins is hard to sustain, since many villagers from Yapatara acknowledge having ancestors from the highlands. In

addition, the children of migrants, many of them born in Yapatera and in surrounding villages, are increasingly marrying the children of villagers.

The examples given here are premised on the undesirability of being categorised as 'black' (and *serrano*). They expose the way in which certain racial labels can be used to infer an individual's place in the social hierarchy and that racial terms can signify a lack of social status. However, villagers do not readily acknowledge this. Anecdotes about racism do not attempt to invert a preference for whiteness by invoking a sense of 'black pride' or by creating a ground for action on the basis of race or ethnicity. Instead many of the stories claim that racial difference and discrimination is ultimately trumped by values of humility, religious faith, community justice, family loyalty, hard work, merit and friendship. The reason why villagers downplay the occurrence and the significance of racist discrimination, and the reason they draw attention to other social differences, is that the acknowledgment that one has become the victim of racism would involve the admission that race is more consequential than suggested by local ideas about mixing.

A folk theory of race

My informants did not engage in everyday talk about race, other than by occasionally singling out aspects of an individual's appearance such as skin colour or hair texture in order to describe them. Observing this, I waited about nine months before initiating conversations about the subject of race. I began by asking my informants the meaning of a number of key terms. What I present here as a 'theory' about race is gleaned from a wide range of recorded statements and observed uses of racial terms rather than from a coherent set of ideas that are explicitly articulated and publicly discussed. Nevertheless, these ideas are fairly consistent between speakers. I refer to them as a folk theory in so far as they constitute a form of everyday knowledge about human biology, with explanatory and predictive power.

Villagers in Yapatera use terms such as *raza* and *color* which may be translated as race and colour into English. While, in general, race is used with reference to descent or ancestry, colour usually refers to physical appearance.

However, the meanings of the terms are imprecise, sometimes conflated, and vary depending on context. With their reference to a person's physical appearance, racial and colour terms are most often used in everyday conversation when two or more speakers wish to identify an individual who is not present. Speakers will usually make use of other means of identification first, for example by referring to the person's kinship relations (e.g. 'she is the child of X') and to their surnames (see chapter III), and only recur to racial terms if other descriptions fail or there is still ambiguity as to who is meant. Since such terms lack any standardised referents, they are not entirely reliable for purposes of identification.

The other primary use for such terms is for talking about family resemblances, when villagers make use of racial or colour labels such as *negro*, *moreno*, *cholo*, *blanco*, *serrano* to refer to specific ancestors and relatives. Notably, these terms are very rarely used as collective terms to speak about or refer to social groups defined by race or ethnicity. Rather, as it is understood locally, race is a loose set of ideas about the relation between kinship, descent, procreation, substance, physiology, appearance and personhood.

In brief, according to the local folk theory, 'races' are hidden substances that sit inside the body, especially in the 'blood' and sometimes in the 'genes' (a word used mainly by informants with some further education, especially teachers). Blood is the force responsible for animating bodies: it is fixed, unchangeable and given at birth. It is contrasted with other physiological substances, most importantly bones, which are malleable.⁹ Races, inside the blood, are inherited, or 'dragged' or 'pulled' down (*arrastrado/jalado*), directly from one's immediate ancestors: in the first line from one's two parents, and in the second line from one's maternal and paternal grandparents. The two parents are thought to be made up of inherently different bloods. However, the blood they each contribute to conception is not thought of in gendered terms, even though they are carried by gendered 'vehicles': sperm and ova. The bloods are also not thought of as pertaining to a particular kin group.

⁹ Newborns are considered *aguados*, 'water-like', and in the past were swaddled tightly to 'harden' them. Bones, which, unlike blood, grow and harden over time, are vulnerable to breaking, hence the occupation of the *huesero*, or 'bone fixer'.

Because father and mother are made up of different bloods and genes, they are also, by extension, made up of different races. In the moment of conception, referred to as the *cruce* or ‘crossing’ of the bloods, the races from the father and the mother come together in equal parts. Ultimately, however, one may be stronger or weaker in determining the racial composition of the offspring. Races are thought to be responsible for determining a host of visible characteristics of the individual’s physical body, including skin colour, hair texture, shape of the nose and mouth, body shape, stature and so on. However, there is no predictable pattern by which they do so, such that one can never know how a particular child of two particular parents will come out (for Brazil: see Jones 2009). The child may take after one parent in some characteristics and after the other in other ones, including race. When I asked my friend Yuridia what would be the correct name for the offspring of a white and a black parent (*mulato* in many countries), she responded, ‘it depends on how it comes out. It can come out looking like the mamá or papá. Or it comes out crossed [*cruzadito*]’. In a conversation with Luz, I received the following explanation:

T.H.: What happens if a white person marries a black person?

Luz: [the child] can come out white or *trigueño*! [a mix of dark and light, lit. wheat-coloured] Perhaps it can even come out black. There is no general rule. Like my mother, you see, some [of her children] came out very black, others more whitish, others more blackish, others more brown than others and so on like that, you see! They never all come out the same colour. Every time each one comes out different.

T.H: But if the parents are the same, shouldn’t they all come out similar?

Luz: When they beget you, you are dragging down the genes of your grandparent, your great-grandparent. In the moment of conception, it’s possible, you know, that of the millions of genes that can come down... Some are malignant and a Down syndrome child, your brother, comes out... but you weren’t born that way! In this moment the genes are made that are of a more black race or of a whitish race, or... or it’s possible that at this time not one is born but two!

The extreme unpredictability of the appearance of an unborn child, and the way in which a child can differ from its parents in appearance and otherwise, is reflected in the proverb ‘two ugly parents make pretty children’ (*entre padres feos, hijos bonitos*).

Because of the relation of race to blood, the life force, race is also associated with ideas about energy, strength, and potency that manifest themselves in particular types of bodies. Blackness was sometimes associated

with more musculature, less body fat, greater bodily density, fibrousness or bodily ‘heat’—ideas which resonate with the association of black bodies and aptness for sport elsewhere. However, race, as a quasi-substance, is not singular, where an individual’s characteristics are determined in an obvious way by a single essence; instead, particular bodies are the product of the unpredictable mixing of different bloods. As Tito explained:

In the case of my siblings, my mother was stronger. We are crossed [*cruzados*] but we are more *zambos*. My mother has more energy. But it’s not always the case; there are *morenos* who are heavier built, bigger [*bien hechos, cuerpudos*] but, even if you are *moreno*, it could be that in your offspring—not one resembles you. Sometimes you want your children to be like you, but it’s not up to you alone. You see, when a child is made, two forces collide, mother and father. Both are equal but it depends on what value, what potency, what energy each person has. If the mother has more energy or force the child might be more like the mother. Or, of your children some are like the mother, some are like the father.

Villagers do not believe that two parents who are different in appearance and in race will produce children who are all equal mixtures of their two parents, but that the precise mixture is likely to be different for each child. Villagers, like elsewhere in the world, comment on the family resemblances of newborn infants, however, an equally good conversation piece is how siblings differ from each other. Using terms proposed by Wade (2005a), villagers’ view of this sort of racial hybridity is not ‘blended’ but ‘composite’. This composite nature reflects local understandings of personhood, kinship and marriage (see chapter III).

With reference to the racial and colour terms listed earlier, villagers maintain that ‘true’ or ‘pure’ whites are foreigners, and that true blacks are people from Chincha or Africans.¹⁰ These two categories, located as they are outside the village, operate as what Gow (2007: 199) has called ‘external poles’ (in his example, Indian and non-Indian), thus rendering, by comparison, all villagers more or less ‘mixed’. Villagers utilise a combination of terms to differentiate individuals including skin colour and hair texture, diminutives (such as describing someone as ‘little black’), and comparatives, which qualify the positive (such as ‘lighter brown’). All of this means that family members, including siblings and even twins, are likely to be described in different racial

¹⁰ Expressed as *blancos/negros verdaderos* (real whites/blacks), *blancos/negros netos* (pure whites/blacks), or *blancos blancos* (white whites) *negros negros* (black blacks).

terms. For instance a set of three cousins who lived on my street were described in the following very different terms (see figure 6).



Figure 6. Three cousins

In the photograph, the girl on the left is considered *chola*, because of her straight hair; the one in the middle is often nicknamed *negrita*, drawing attention to her dark skin; the girl on the right is considered *zamba*, with reference to her curly hair, which differentiates her from the first girl. While she shares her hair texture with the second girl, she differs from her in that her skin is lighter: she is *morena*. Similarly, when I visited the local primary school on the first day of class of the new academic year, the first grade teacher took me aside and pointed out a set of 5-year-old identical twin girls: ‘Even though they come from the same placenta, see how different they look?! One is *zamba*; the other is *lacia*. One is quick to learn; the other is slow’.

Casilda often told me the story of her mother who had given birth to six children: three white and three brown. Of these, she said, all the white children, with light brown hair and light brown eyes, did not survive past infancy, but all

the brown ones, with their *zambo* hair, had survived to adulthood, married and had children. Casilda told me this story with a mixture of sadness about her mother's loss and enthusiasm about her white siblings' appearance. But she was also pointing me in the direction of an instance where preferences for whiteness were challenged: the brown children, those which do not fit into Peruvian ideals of racial whitening, survived while the white ones, unable to beat childhood illness, died one by one.



Figure 7. A 'mixed' family

None of these racial labels are in any way standardised, and terms are often invented on the spot revealing the degree of creativity that is possible in classifying oneself and others racially. The precise labels applied to each individual depend on the eye of the beholder—this allows people to avoid classing anyone as straightforwardly black by making use of euphemisms and diminutives or drawing attention to a feature other than skin colour, such as hair instead—hence *morena*, *negrita* and *zamba* can all be used as euphemisms for *negra*. Because there is some liberty for the speaker, other people's ways of labelling are contestable, for example Luz told me of her sister-in-law, 'she and her sisters just think they are lighter!' I was told, on more than one occasion, that artificial lighting in particular could affect how a person's 'colour' was seen.

While Lindaura had worried that her son would look ‘too black’ in a photograph, Tío Checho said, ‘Am I *moreno*? Well, that’s not for me to say, I won’t say if I am more *moreno* or someone else is. For example, I had a twin,’ he pulled out a photograph of his deceased brother, ‘do you see? I, by contrast, in photographs don’t come out like this [*yo por fotografía no salgo así*]’. Although Tío Checho was considered to be very dark-skinned he was suggesting that photographs spoke another sort of truth, which made him lighter relative to his twin brother.

While race is usually thought to be fixed at conception, two ideas often heard in Yapatera suggest some limited room for malleability. The first concerns cases of post-natal whitening or darkening. It is widely accepted that children may change in colour and hair texture over the course of their infancy or childhood. Fernanda explained:

The other day a woman was telling me, ‘Miss, my son was born purple.’ ‘Purple?!’ ‘Yes, he looked like he had been asphyxiated’. I told her, ‘are you sure it wasn’t that his umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck when..?’ ‘No the doctor didn’t say anything like that’. And after three months she brought him to me, and he was very light [*clarito*], it’s because the lady [his mother] is very white, very, very white. And the father, he was of a purple colour [very black]. The little baby, his first days he looked like his papá, and as he started to change, he started looking like his mamá. In terms of his colour like his mamá but in terms of his face like his papá. It is like my son, when he was born he wasn’t white, he was *trigueño*. And then he started changing little by little, as he grew he became white, white. Since then he has been his colour. The other children tease him, ‘*Serrano*, you aren’t from here!’ they say.

In this case race is a latent potential, and appearance becomes stable over time to match it. The second example of racial malleability is provided by the statement that some women ‘have a good belly’ (*tienen buena barriga*). This is the belief that some women who are very dark skinned, and whose partners are very dark skinned, can produce a significantly lighter offspring against the odds. These children might be especially prone to the envy that causes *daño*, witchcraft-induced illness or tragedy. Wombs that whiten are today considered an old wives’ tale by younger generations. Nevertheless, many of my informants still contemplate what causes some children to resemble their mothers racially while others resemble their fathers:

We sisters, our children don’t come out black. You look at the children of my oldest sister: they aren’t black. They aren’t black, black, they are light brown. The son of my second sister, he is white. The son of my third sister is also white. All of my sisters married men who were whiter. And me with the father of my child, he is white and my son he also isn’t black. My brothers, by contrast, the

first married a girl who was really white, white, of Cajamarcan descent and his child came out *moreno*. Another brother he has two daughters from two different mothers: one *negrita*, the other, also *negrita*. My third brother, his wife is very white too, but their daughter is *morena*. The fourth brother's children: *morenos*. In the case of my brothers, the men predominate.

With the exception of these two examples of limited malleability, races are, however, seen as ultimately fixed and unchangeable. In addition, while villagers often insist that terms such as *negro* or *cholo*, refer to visible appearance, the local folk theory makes it clear that such characteristics are in turn determined by things that are invisible and underlying, namely races which sit in the blood. Hence people in Yapatera, if asked, say that a black person who cosmetically altered his skin colour, and lightened and straightened his hair would remain 'black' (the famous example being Michael Jackson). Many of my informants likened the changing of skin colour in this case to the painting of one's house, which one might paint green, white or grey, but which would still continue to be one's house. Pushing further to ask what would happen if a black person surgically replaced his blood with that of a white person my informants were stumped. Some insisted that science and medicine were not yet advanced enough to pose this dilemma, and that its outcome was uncertain. Others entertained the possibility of such a transformation but all of those who did mentioned Michael Jackson himself, and stated that such an intervention was necessarily to blame for the pop star's illness and inevitable death, suggesting that 'natural givens' had been inappropriately disturbed.

Overall, this local folk theory of race posits that racial ascription is an individual physiological characteristic. Insofar as race derives from one's kin relations, in a literal sense, as the combined effect of what is carried in one's mother's and father's blood, it is necessarily multiple rather than singular. All individuals are racially mixed.

Race and social categorisation

In many cultural contexts race is constructed in order to exclude certain people from status groups and positions of power or privilege. Constructions of race often serve to carve the world into discrete categories of people and to police

boundaries between such groups. Ideas about race can reinforce or legitimise social distinctions by kinship, class, religion and other attributes. By linking superficial characteristics, such as skin colour, to supposedly more deep-seated differences, and by grouping people into exclusive racial categories, race is often constructed as an inferentially rich category, that is, racial labels are used to predict or explain other things. For example, racism often relies on the assumption that people can be classed according to mutually exclusive racial groups and that a member of such a racial group holds the same, in this case negative, characteristics as all its other members. The construction of Yapatera as an Afro-Peruvian or 'black' village by outsiders, contains the claim that the village is racially or ethnically homogeneous and distinctive, and it singles out race or ethnicity as the most salient, identifying characteristic of Yapatera.

In Yapatera, villagers make a link between more superficial and individual physiology and descent, which is more socially meaningful. However, the local folk theory of race in Yapatera does not lend itself easily to the creation of groups and policing of social boundaries. Race is not thought of as a substance shared equally by all the members of an in-group. The crucial role of mixing in the process of procreation has the result that individuals, families and the village are 'mixed'. This makes it impossible to categorise people unambiguously into discrete racial groups. The effect of the local folk theory of race is therefore to undermine the very existence of racialised groups (for Brazil: see Jones 2009) and by placing mixing at the epicentre, the notion of race is antithetical to ideas of purity and pedigree.

According to the local theory, attempting to sort people into groups according to skin colour, would make as much sense as grouping people according to their height or the shape of their noses. Villagers recognise that some racial characteristics may cluster along certain lines, for example, they say that upper-class Peruvians are disproportionately white. However, they maintain that race cannot be used to create sharply bounded, mutually exclusive groups. Race does not explain or predict other socially significant things like a person's customs, beliefs and behaviours.

Villagers will avoid generalising about ‘whites’, ‘blacks’ or ‘*cholos*’ and instead recruit other social markers to explain why a person or group of people might behave in a certain way. Race, is considered a weak predictor compared to membership in social categories marked by class, occupation, religion and place of origin or residence. For example, they explain the local practice of marriage by elopement (see chapter III: 129-134) with reference to shared membership in the class category of ‘the poor’: young men in Yapatera cannot afford to ask for a girl’s hand in marriage because this would require a costly period of engagement, including displays of wealth and gifts for the bride and her family—instead they resort to ‘stealing’ women. Alternatively, they might point out that stealing women is a regional practice done throughout the Alto Piura valley, and that marriage practices differ more significantly between rural and urban, or coastal and highland traditions.

Villagers make an ontological distinction in human capacities, behaviours and attributes between what is given at birth and what is taught or acquired. What is given at birth—human biology—indicates a fixed, innate potential, which sets the limits of what is possible. But villagers also stress the importance of shared customs (*costumbres*) that are acquired as they are passed on from grandparents and parents, and society at large, to children. As a result grandchildren born and raised in Lima are usually regarded as Limeños, not Yapateranos. The former are bread-eaters, the latter are rice-eaters. The former, when they visit Yapatera, cannot withstand the sun and heat—it makes them physically ill—while the latter cannot bear the cold humid climate of Lima, the sensation of shoes on their feet, or the feeling of being locked inside the house when they visit the city. One can learn and unlearn such customs: it is all a question of *acostumbrarse*, that is, acquiring the custom, ‘getting used to it’, or *enseñarse*, ‘teaching oneself’. In the anecdote given by Luz, below, a child born in Lima to a mother from Yapatera adapts quickly to rural village life:

There is a case like this, the son of a cousin of mine, his name is Jonatan. That little one, if you saw him, he looks just like his dad, who is from Lima, but his skin is black, really black like his mother who is from here. He lives in Lima and when he comes here—if only you could see him! He rides the donkey, he goes to drive the cattle, the sheep; he adapts fast. He runs around barefoot like the children here, he wouldn’t put on shoes. Here children don’t tell their parents, ‘I’m going here or there,’ and the parents don’t ask. The first time he came, it was as if he lived in the *chacra*. They had to bring him his food there; four or

five times a day he went to the *chacra*. Eating the fruit from the *chacra* all day long. His mamá, you see she instilled in him: ‘in Yapatera, it’s like this’. His mamá told him how it was in theory and he here put it to practice. These characteristics are learned.

Although Luz draws attention to the boy’s racial characteristics, his successful adaptation to life in Yapatera is explained by explicit reference not to race but to socialisation and learning.

My informants suggested that I, the foreign ethnographer, could never become *negra*, *morena*, *zamba*, or *chola*—something that would not be desirable in any case. However, many of my informants did note, approvingly, that over time with their help I had become Yapaterana. They pointed out that although I had initially complained of the heat, unlike other guests to the village, I had physically adapted and was able to stay. By participating in everyday life and by sharing (*compartir*; for the religious and moral significance of sharing, see chapter IV: 167-171), by talking, by going to the *chacra* and especially by eating the food prepared by others and offered to me, I had become Yapaterana. I overheard the following exchange between my host aunt, Digna, and a neighbour during a funeral procession:

Tamarita, when she first arrived in the village, was scared and she said, ‘how can I be here? Maybe they aren’t good people’. But now she has learned how to be here [*ya se enseñó acá*]. She is from here now. It’s because the people here are good, so good.

I am not claiming that people never use categories to classify themselves and others into larger social categories, or that they never act as if they pertained to social groups. But when they do so they use markers that differ fundamentally from race as locally understood. The social categories they do invoke include:

- *campesinos* (peasants)
- *pobres* (poor people)
- *católicos* (Catholics)
- *cristianos* (humans)¹¹

¹¹ Villagers use the word *cristianos*, literally ‘Christians’, to refer to humans, mankind or ‘proper people’, although this use is less common with younger generations. Technically, the term distinguishes those who are baptised from those who are not and echoes a colonial distinction between Christians and Moors or Jews (on baptism, see chapter III: 141-142; chapter IV). In practice, however, villagers use it in a broader sense to distinguish all humans from animals (on personhood and differences between humans and animals, see chapter III: 142-143). A similar use of *cristianos*, for humans or ‘proper people’, has been documented in Amazonia (Gow 2009) where it is often used by indigenous people to distinguish ‘civilised Indians’ from ‘wild Indians’ (2009: 39-41) and in the Bolivian Andes (Harris 2006).

- *norteños* (northerners)
- *costeños* (coastal people)
- *peruanos* (Peruvians)
- *piuranos* (people from the state/city of Piura)
- *alto-piuranos* (people from the Alto Piura valley)
- Yapateranos (people from Yapatera).

Different categories are invoked in different conversational contexts or social situations and membership or non-membership is determined by different processes—none of which involves an explicit reference to race. Conversely, racial labels, although they do not refer to ‘groups’ according to the local theory of race, do carry connotations of social status and particular class positions. For example, for villagers it goes without saying that most people with black skin are poor, while most of those with true white skin are rich. However, villagers in Yapatera deem race to be a relatively weak marker of membership in a social group compared to class and other categories. Tito, who in his youth had participated in conferences and campaigns organised by Afro-Peruvian activists, explained the difference between race and colour as follows:

Colour and race are not the same. Race has more weight. Colour comes when a couple gets together and a nice colour comes out. But race... it is natural. You, from your colour you are white. Your race? From the *gringo* [white foreigner] race, what is it called? But what also matters, what also carries weight, is the accent, the religion, the region, the history of Europe, the infinite number of wars... so many things, damn it!

Tito’s differentiation between race and colour was quite exceptional. In villagers’ use of the terms race and colour there is considerable slippage. But in drawing attention to other criteria for categorisation—language, history and religion—Tito was more consistent with village ideas about race. While some villagers speak as if race is a significant means to distinguish foreigners from Peruvians, most deny that it is a significant to understanding social differences at a national, regional or village level. Overall when talking about fellow villagers and fellow Peruvians, villagers insist that race is a relatively poor indicator of differences in customs, beliefs and behaviours.

Each of the social categories listed above, and the practices associated with them, are in different ways concerned with creating a sense of social cohesion and spatio-temporal continuity. These categories emerge from and

invoke villagers' participation in broader social, economic, religious, historical processes and shifts, which historically have included people of Indian, African and European descent. Therefore, they help downplay Yapatera's potential ethnic or racial distinctiveness and instead emphasise continuous cultural patterns and social practices.

Despecification and mixing as a historical process

According to the local theory of race, each act of procreation is a 'crossing' of races, a mixing of bloods. The overall cumulative effect of the repeated crossing of races is that the village as a whole is seen as racially mixed. Mixing is the physical product of a physiological process of procreation. But in so far as it requires mothers, fathers and ancestors, who drive this mixing, it is also a social and historical process. It is linked to the notion of the passage of time, the notion of the historical agency of the ancestors, and it gives character to the village as a whole today.

Most villagers will readily admit that in the past there were more people who were 'blacker', 'burnt', or 'ink-coloured'. However, they are quick to point out that today few 'true blacks' remain. Black skin colour, as a result of kinship and history, is 'lessening' or 'going down' (*se va bajando*) 'is blending itself away' (*se va matizando*) or 'is thinning itself out' (*se va raliando*). Dilmar, Yapatera's civil registrar and one of the most active participants in the Afro-Peruvian pottery project, quietly shared with me his objection to the classification of Yapatera as a 'black' village by the ethnic activists: 'I don't know why they keep going on about this "Yapatera is a black village" business! Have you ever seen a *negro* here? There are no more pure blacks [*negros netos*] here!' Rodolfo, one of a small handful of villagers who embraces both the terms 'Afro-Peruvian' and 'black' to describe himself, explained to me 'If ten like you [whites] come here, then it [black skin colour] goes away'.

Most informal conversations about family history and most discussions sparked by my attempts to construct kinship diagrams with my informants, led back to the marriage (or other union) of an 'ancestral' couple, albeit only three or four generations removed. Villagers, more often than not, drew attention to a

racial difference and/or a difference in origin between the husband and wife. Most of the kinship diagrams I collected featured, or drew attention to, a marriage between a migrant labourer, a *cholo*, *serrano* (highlander), *forastero* (outsider),¹² or his daughter or sister, and a local *morena* or *moreno*. When talking in this way, people in Yapatera usually associated an abstract sense of blackness with autochthony, and assumed that *cholos*, *serranos* and others came to Yapatera from elsewhere, initially as outsiders. Plácida's description was typical:

On my mother's side there are also two kinds of families. Her father was from Yapatera and her mother from Piura, but she came from the Chalaco race, from the Sierra of Morropón, over there. My mother was born here. My cousins are big tall whites [*blancos*]. The *negrito* [a little black] part comes from the Riega, from my maternal grandfather. And my mother's first children were very white, but they died. My father he was an overseer on the cotton plantation, he was a foreigner, he immigrated to here and he married my mother. You see it's a hodgepodge [*mezcolanza*] of families, of races.

It is highly unlikely that all marriages in previous generations occurred between *cholos* and *morenos*; for demographic reasons some would have had to occur between *morenos* (and between *cholos*). However, it is significant that these mixed marriages are the ones that villagers chose to draw attention to, since these fit with the project of mixing and projecting the notion of a mixed people and village. On the other hand, my informants' stories about intermarriage between ancestors, whom historians might class as being of indigenous and African descent, are consistent with historical research on northern Peruvian plantations, which stress the heterogeneity of its resident populations from early colonial times (for Piura, Diez Hurtado 1998; O'Phelan et al. 1998; Schlüpmann 1994).

The particular historical pattern of mixing which locals describe for Yapatera, characterised initially by the intermarriage of local *morenos* and migrant *cholos*, could be seen as a 'lightening' of race. This brings me to the issue of whitening or *blanqueamiento*, much discussed in the literature on race in Latin America (e.g. Wade 1997; Whitten 1985; Stutzman 1981). Whitening has been used to describe a number of different processes. It can refer to progressive phenotypical changes in a population over time, either as the result of government policies to encourage immigration of Europeans (in the hopes that

¹² Grieshaber defines *forastero* as an escapee from *mita* or tribute obligations (1979: 115).

this would result in miscegenation) or without such intervention. It can also refer to the reclassification of an individual's 'race' or 'colour' accompanying a change in social status (usually upward social mobility): in Brazil a black who migrates to the city, secures an office job, dresses professionally, and changes his speech may become seen as a *mulatto*. In the Andean context, an Indian who lives in the city and works in the market is often seen as a *cholo* by Indians who live in rural communities (de la Cadena 1995). In Guatemala an indigenous woman dressed in European clothes and speaking Spanish can come to be seen as a *ladina*.

Mixing resembles whitening in the sense that it refers to the progressive 'blending away' of black skin colour as related to village history. It does not describe a transformation in individuals, but a gradual, generational transformation. However, mixing should not be understood as synonymous with whitening. Mixing is not a move toward the 'white' pole (see Whitten's diagram, figure 5) in a white/non-white binary, although it does entail 'lightening'. Instead, ideas about race and mixing find their reference points not just at the abstract extremes of the racial or colour spectrum, but are worked out in concrete encounters and relations between individuals and families who are classed in various shades of 'brown', *zambo*, *cholo* and *serrano*. Since mixing in Yapatera involves ancestors whose racial categorisations invoke various levels of blackness (*zambo*, *negro*, and *moreno*) and indigeness (*cholo*, *serrano*) it can be understood as continuous with colonial forms of Afro-indigenous relations known as *zambaje* (Whitten and Whitten 2011: 35). By considering mixing as a form of *zambaje*, this ethnographic evidence supports growing historical interest in Afro-indigenous relations (e.g. Restall 2005; for Peru, O'Toole 2012; for contemporary Mexico, Lewis 2012).

More importantly, while the notion of whitening draws explicit attention to race as socially significant, local practices of mixing draw attention away from race: villagers suggest that while race may have mattered in the past, it has become increasingly less significant as each generation is more mixed. The fact that villagers lack a name and category for 'mixed people'—for example *mestizos*—is extremely significant. Mixing should not be thought of as a process

whereby individuals, and the village as a whole, switch from one established racial or ethnic category to another. Mixing is not thought to generate a new category of 'mixed race' people. To label the processes described here as a creation or performance of 'mixed identity' or 'mixed ethnicity' (instead of, say, an Afro-Peruvian ethnicity or identity) would be to miss the point of mixing: namely, to deny the very significance of racial forms of categorisation. Mixing severs the ties between racial labels and social groups. Mixing is rather a form of ethnic 'despecification' (Gow 2007: 201). It relies on, and entails, an emphasis on processes and categories that are deliberately 'un-ethnic' (Salomon 2002). Mixing in Yapatera carries a normative weight: to suggest to a villager in Yapatera that individuals can be classed in a straightforward manner into exclusive racial categories, is to claim that mixing has not happened. This is to deny the very course of history, kinship and village-making and to deny the agency of contemporary and ancestral villagers in driving such a historical process.

Essentialism and experimental tasks

The local folk theory of race, together with ideas and practices of mixing posit, among other things, the view that humans cannot be divided into mutually exclusive racial groups. Instead, villagers insist that race is inconsequential for the categorisation of humans compared to other socially significant categories: for example, class, religion, kinship and place of origin or residence. On the whole, villagers talk as if race is a physiological, individual characteristic and that this makes it ambiguous, unpredictable and weak in social meaning.

However, despite this cultural narrative, villagers are exposed to some alternative ideas about race that contrast starkly with the local folk theory of race. Racism is one such example, as is the construction of Yapatera as an Afro-Peruvian or 'black' place by ethnic activists and other outsiders. I have also suggested that the local folk theory of race is not entirely coherent and that it is at times ambiguous: certain views professed by the villagers themselves contradict the overall cultural narrative of mixing. For example, while today blackness is said to be blended away and all people are thought to be mixed, villagers suggest

that in the past race was a socially more significant category. Ancestors are classed more straightforwardly as *cholo*, *serrano*, *negro* and so on. In addition, while villagers claim that race is individual and physiological, they also sometimes consider it to have a deeper, invisible, more fundamental value, such as when they make the distinction between race and colour. Contrary to the notion that race is not socially significant for classifying people into social categories, villagers attribute a broader value to race when they view other Peruvians (whites, *serranos*) or foreigners, but not themselves, in terms of racial categories. Villagers also acknowledge that others do behave as if race matters, for example, when they suggest that upper-class Peruvians try to improve their social status by marrying ‘whiter’ foreigners. Race also has a historical and sociological significance: Peruvians of Indian and African descent have, historically, been constructed as ‘racially other’ and have faced social inequalities as a result of such cultural constructions (see chapter I).

Some scholars have suggested that constructions of race as socially significant and as useful for carving up the human world may be a pervasive phenomenon across cultures and throughout history (Hirschfeld 1998). Cognitive psychologists have argued that thinking about human kinds may be biased towards ‘essentialism’, that is the tendency to think about humans in terms of racial groups, as if they were natural kinds, and to regard people of different races as essentially different kinds of people (e.g. Hirschfeld 1998; Gil-White 2001a). In light of such claims, one might expect that villagers in Yapatera hold an alternative view of race, which differs from the one explicitly articulated in the folk theory and through their emphasis on mixing.

In Yapatera, participant observation and discursive research methods, such as interviews, tap into explicit, verbally articulated narratives about race. However, conversations about race are, by nature, difficult conversations to have. Villagers are aware of the negative stereotypes surrounding blacks that circulate in Peruvian society and are keen to position themselves at a distance from such categories. But would they reason any differently if asked about people other than themselves, their own families or the village of Yapatera—in other words, if the stakes were not so high? By using a simple experimental tool, I set out to

explore whether the local theory of race and the emphasis on mixing might co-exist with an alternative understanding of race, which does not get articulated in the flow of social life but which might inform people's representation of racial groupings.¹³ In order to do this, I draw on research and methods in cognitive psychology on racial essentialism.¹⁴ According to Gelman:

Essentialism is the view that certain categories (e.g. women, racial groups, dinosaurs etc.) have an underlying reality or true nature that one cannot observe directly. Furthermore, this underlying reality (or 'essence') is thought to give objects their identity, and to be responsible for similarities that category members share. (2004: 404).¹⁵

Hirschfeld has suggested that thinking about human kinds, including races, is biased toward essentialism and that even very young children tend to essentialise human kinds, including race (1996; 1997; 1998).

To test for racial essentialism, I selected one of the properties of essentialism as defined by Gelman (2003), which the local theory seems to defy.¹⁶ Since I was most interested in the claim that race is not a valid basis for categorisation of humans and that racial labels are inconsequential for understanding, predicting or explaining a person's customs, beliefs and

¹³ Astuti (2001) draws attention to a similar discrepancy between what is articulated, and accessible to ethnography, and implicit knowledge, accessible via methods such as experimental tasks, for the issue of ontological dualism.

¹⁴ There has been a cross-disciplinary consensus about the need for a more cognitive approach to the study of ethnicity, race and nationalism (Astuti, in preparation), particularly in cognitive and evolutionary anthropology (Boyd and Richerson 2005; Boyer 2006; Gil-White 2001a; Hirschfeld 1996) and cultural anthropology (Levine 1999). As Brubaker et al. (2004) argue, the social and cognitive construction of ethnicity (and race and nation) are not contradictory but are necessarily mutually constitutive: as shared ways of understanding, interpreting and framing experience, constructions of ethnicity require cognitive processes and mechanisms found in individual minds. Despite this consensus there are few such studies outside of North America and Europe.

In Brazil, cognitive methods have been used to investigate the claim that despite local ideas about race positing continuous, rather than categorical racial variation ordinary people operate with basic conceptual prototypical categories for classifying racial diversity into quite clear cut basic categories of black, white, and Indian (Sanjek 1971; Sheriff 2001). Cognitive methods have been used to counter (Baran 2007; Baran and Sousa 2001) and confirm (Gil-White 2001b) the notion that Brazilian race is binary. Jones (2009) directly investigates the issue of racial essentialism in Brazil finding a local theory or racial essences, but also that such essences can be mixed in individuals and that race does not create clear-cut groups.

¹⁵ Cognitive psychologists, including Gelman, argue that essentialism is a basic cognitive tool through which humans understand and navigate the world (2004: 404).

¹⁶ Other properties of essentialist thinking include: the belief that categories are stable and resistant to change, that they have causal features, that they have hidden, non-obvious features and that they are absolute, sharply bounded rather than graded (Gelman 2003: 23).

behaviours (compared to other categories), I decided to design an experimental task that would test the ‘inductive potential’ of race. Gelman writes:

Induction is the capacity to extend knowledge to novel instances, for example, inferring that a newly encountered mushroom is poisonous on the basis of past encounters with other poisonous mushrooms. This capacity is one of the most important functions of categories. Categories serve not only to organize the knowledge we have already acquired but also to guide our expectations. (2004: 404)

As Gelman argues, inductive potential is an indirect measure of essentialism; the more a category is essentialised, the greater inductive potential it will have (2003: 26-59). I wanted to know whether, in an experimental task, villagers would treat race as a category with inductive potential despite their claims to the contrary. I devised two tasks, Custom Task 1 and Custom Task 2, to find out whether participants would make novel inferences based on race.

Design of Custom Task 1

Custom Task 1 was adapted from a study by Diesendruck and HaLevi (2006) which investigated whether personality traits or social category membership are more powerful sources of induction for adults and children in Israel. In Yapatara I designed a task to establish the inductive potential of race versus social categories. The study presented participants with the possibility of making an inference based on either the social category membership or the racial trait of a fictitious character. Participants were asked whether a fictitious character followed the same customary practices as a person who was racially similar (and socially dissimilar), or a person who was socially similar (and racially dissimilar). The task was conducted after fifteen months of continuous fieldwork and I chose to test race against social categories which had emerged as especially culturally salient: class (rich vs. poor), religion (Catholic vs. Evangelical), origin (from the state of Piura vs. from Lima), and kinship (cousins vs. acquaintances). I also used salient local racial terms against which to test social categories. The cultural practices or customs were all fictitious, novel, previously unknown properties since I was not interested in testing participants’ knowledge of real customs, but rather whether they would use race or a social category to make their inference about a fictitious character’s customs. The fictitious customs

included culinary preferences, forms of dress, and rituals or cultural practices. Twenty-four individuals ranging from 9 to 78 years of age participated in the study.¹⁷ Each participant took part in eight trials. While I read the script for each trial, I presented participants with props in the form of paper cards with the relevant traits written on them, to aid their memory. These were arranged on a table between the participant and myself. For the sake of illustration for the reader, I include diagrams here to help explain how the task was conducted.

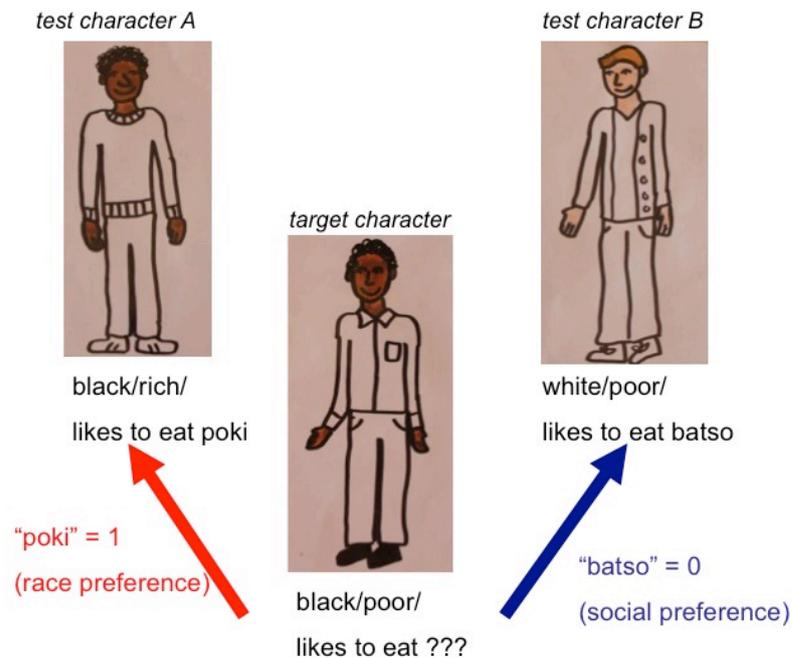


Figure 8. Sample formulation of Custom Task 1

To give an example, the trial was formulated as follows:

Here are two men. This one here (pointing to A) is black. He is rich. He likes to eat a food called poki. This man here (pointing to B) is white. He is poor. He likes to eat a food called batso. Here now is a third man (pointing to target). He is black like him (pointing to A) and poor like him (pointing to B). In your opinion this third man, does he like to eat poki like him (pointing to A) or batso like him (pointing to B)?

¹⁷ Although I tried to test participants individually and privately, several children, when they caught a glimpse of what I was doing, begged to participate in the tasks. They were given randomised trials and tested in the same way as adults. Because all their results were consistent with those of the adults and their verbal explanations for their choices were similar to those given by adults, I include the results obtained from tasks conducted with children. I did not test any children younger than nine.

Participants' responses were scored as '1' if they judged that the target character had the same property as the racial trait match and '0' if they judged that the target character had the same property as the social category match. The order and combination of race and social traits was randomised across the participants. I conducted eight trials per participant giving a total of 192 trials and 192 possible responses: either race or social category.

Design of Custom Task 2

As a control for Custom Task 1, I conducted Custom Task 2, which followed the design of task 1, but in which I replaced the social categories with superficial, random and individual characteristics such as having a wound on one leg versus the other, having a birthday in January versus October, and so on. The local folk theory of race suggests that race has as little relevance for understanding and organising social life as superficial characteristics such as an individual's height, therefore I wanted to test race's inductive potential not only compared to social categories, but also compared to superficial or random similarities. If race were truly as irrelevant for human categorisation as superficial characteristics, one would predict that participants would use race and superficial characteristics to make inferences with equal frequency. In other words, participants should not show a preference for race. Again, cards were used as visual props, but I include a diagram here to illustrate the task.

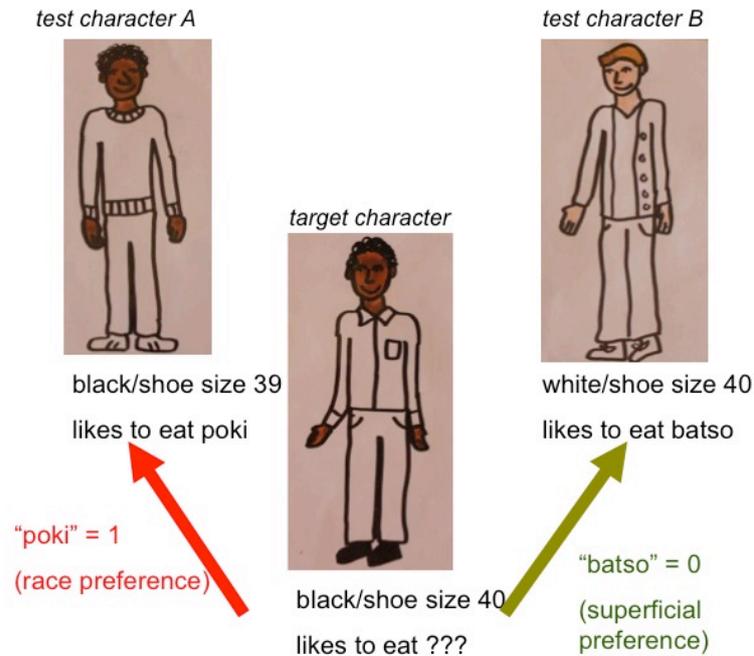


Figure 9. Sample formulation of Custom Task 2

A sample trial in Custom Task 2 read as follows,

Here are two men. This one here (pointing to A) is black. He has shoe size 39. He likes to eat a food called poki. This man here (pointing to B) is white. He has shoe size 40. He likes to eat a food called batso. Here now is a third man (pointing to target). He is black like him (pointing to A) and has shoe size 40 like him (pointing to B). In your opinion this third man, does he like to eat poki like him (pointing to A) or batso like him (pointing to B)?

I scored race responses as '1' and superficial responses as '0'. The order and combination of race and social traits was randomised across the participants. In this second task I had 16 participants, ranging between the ages of 9 and 82. Each participant completed eight trials, giving a total of 128 trials.

Results of Custom Task 1

In Custom Task 1, pitting race against social category, there were three possible overall results. The first result would be roughly equal proportions of race and social category responses—in this case participants showed no preference for either race or social categories. The second possible outcome was more social category responses; this would suggest that they reasoned according to the local folk theory of race. Finally, if participants consistently chose race over social

categories, this would suggest that despite their local folk theory of race, and their emphasis on mixing, they reasoned about race in an essentialist manner, at least in the sense of its inductive potential.

For a total of 192 trials, I obtained only 56 race responses compared to 136 social choices. Expressed as a percentage of the total, 29% of answers reflected a race preference, while a large majority of 71% reflected a social category preference. Since I had a relatively small sample and because there were two possible outcomes for each trial I conducted a binomial test which verified the statistical significance of these results (see appendix). Participants systematically made inferences based on social category more often than expected by chance.¹⁸

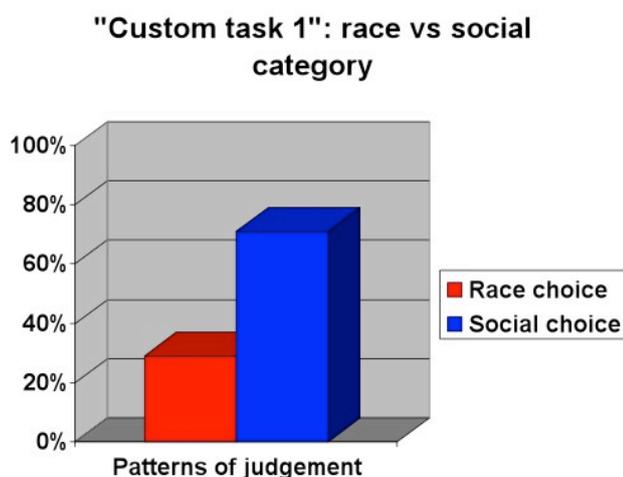


Figure 10. Results of Custom Task 1

Results of Custom Task 2

In Custom Task 2, pitting race against superficial characteristics, there were only two plausible outcomes:¹⁹ either a roughly equal mix of race and superficial

¹⁸ The data set was too small to provide statistically significant results on the relative inductive strength of the different social categories compared to each other. It was also too small to provide results on the relative inductive strength of the different racial categories in relation to each other. Preliminary results indicate that class, origin, religion and kinship are not equally ranked against race across the sample and that class is inductively richest relative to race (compared to origin, religion and kinship).

¹⁹ One could make the case that a third outcome might have the majority of participants making inferences based on superficial characteristics. However, since the definition of these

characteristics, or a majority of race responses. If race were truly as arbitrary and insignificant as the local theory predicted, I should obtain a mixed result with participants as likely to make inferences on superficial resemblances as on racial resemblance.

The results of this second custom task were 103 race responses versus 15 superficial responses, out of 128. As a percentage of the whole, in 80% of trials race was chosen and only in 20% of trials superficial characteristics were chosen. The binomial test confirmed the statistical significance of the result (see appendix). Participants systematically made inferences based on race more often than expected by chance.

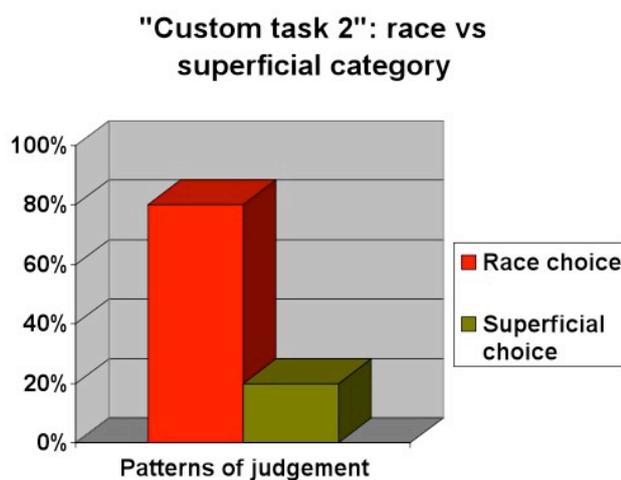


Figure 11. Results of custom task 2

Discussion of results

The results of Custom Task 1 show that participants relied far more on social category for their inferences than on race. That is, they extended social customs (from one fictitious character to another) on the basis of shared social traits rather than racial similarity. When other socially meaningful categories are available, race is not used to make inferences about a character's customs. This result is consistent with the local folk theory of race and the emphasis on mixing. In a

characteristics was that they are never used to categorise people into meaningful social groups, such a result would have indicated serious flaws in the methodology and the design of the task.

novel, fictitious scenario participants' reasoning about a fictitious character's social customs was systematically based on social category membership, rather than race. This is new empirical evidence on ordinary Latin Americans' ideas about race, which suggests that the cultural narratives and practices of mixing and folk theories of race inform some individuals' inferential reasoning.²⁰

But while Custom Task 1 shows that social categories are inferentially richer than race in Yapatera, it does not provide conclusive evidence that race is not essentialised.²¹ When race was pitted against superficial characteristics in Custom Task 2, race was deemed inferentially richer than random superficial resemblances shared between fictitious characters. Participants here did extend customs (from one fictitious character to another) based on racial similarity rather than on shared superficial characteristics. This indicates that race is essentialised more than the local folk theory suggests. The inductive potential of race is weak compared to other social categories, as per the local theory of race; however it is certainly not as weak as local narratives claim.

These results have implications for the interpretation of my ethnographic data. In everyday life, people in Yapatera are able to act, think and speak as if race is relatively socially insignificant, focussing their attention on other social markers instead and justifying themselves using the local theory of race and the normative weight of mixing. However, counter this anti-essentialist emphasis, the results of the two tests combined lead me to make more of the essentialist view of race than my informants. In the light of essentialism the local folk theory of race is rather inconsistent. For example, while it stresses mixing, it does not preclude an ontological primacy of separate pure, races. Furthermore, an alternative model of race as essentialised can make itself felt. Indeed thickly and thinly-veiled differences emerge in the very practices which contribute to mixing, as the coming chapters suggest.

²⁰ In a cultural context where race is conceived of in more essentialist terms, one might expect to obtain either a mixed result, or a preference for race, where people might rely systematically on race for inferences over other potential categories.

²¹ My test of essentialism is far from complete, but focuses on one property of essentialism. Further research might test for various other properties of essentialism, for example as defined by Gelman (2004).

A final observation is in order about the experimental tasks. Conducting these trials, in particular Custom Task 1, offered me an opportunity to ask my informants to draw comparisons between race and social categories in a way that normal language and conversation did not allow—both because of the abstractness and thorniness of such a comparison. After presenting participants with the hypothetical and fictitious story of each trial and recording their response, I asked them to explain their judgements. Their answers made things explicit which could not otherwise be articulated. For example, in the cases where participants made a social category choice over race, they often verbally stressed the social or cultural similarity between two individuals who differed ‘racially’, often going out of their way to deny that race was meaningful. For example, one participant told me, ‘A black and a white are of different races but it doesn’t matter. In Lima there are blacks and whites. And there are some whites who like *ceviche* [a fish dish] and other whites who don’t like *ceviche*.’ More interesting perhaps are the explanations given for the minority of cases where participants did make an inference based on race: how could participants justify such responses, in the light of their powerful cultural narratives on mixing and the irrelevance of race? In the few instances where two fictitious individuals were said to resemble each other both racially and in their customs and behaviours, the participants were quite imaginative in drawing attention to, inventing or invoking circumstantial social, environmental or cultural factors that would explain such similarities rather than attributing them to race alone. For example, in order to explain a race choice, they imagined and told me that the racially similar test and target character, shared a house, came from the same village, were friends, or were work colleagues. In other cases participants made up elaborate stories about the target character emulating the customs of the racially similar test character, in order to overcome a status disadvantage shared with the other racially dissimilar but socially similar test character.

Conclusion

Mixing and the folk theory of race I describe in Yapatera are related to *mestizaje*, or national ideologies and other narratives of national belonging that posit that

Peruvians are racially mixed and that class or culture constitute the most relevant categories for social differentiation rather than race (see chapter I). Mixing is in part testament to the fact that such narratives, however flawed, nevertheless hold some significance for ordinary people. The salience of mixing for ordinary people suggests that despite the rise of multiculturalism and ‘identity’ politics, both globally and in Latin America, many communities that are cast as beneficiaries of ethnic mobilisation continue to reject ‘ethnic’ labels. In Peru, notions of *mestizaje* are themselves ‘despecified’; historically they have been ephemeral and elusive, even regarded as degenerative rather than explicitly theorised, implemented, instructed or passed on (see chapter I). Public narratives of mixture usually take the form of state education that teaches that contemporary Peruvians are descended from Indians, Spaniards and Africans but most of the time, the notion that Peruvians are racially mixed is what goes without saying, an implicit mutual understanding. Ideas about mixing in Yapatera are partially informed by national narratives about Peruvian-ness as the product of racial mixing. However, mixing is not the direct appropriation of an ideology imposed from above. Rather mixing and the local folk theory of race, as forms of everyday experience and indigenous knowledge, are an autochthonous way of making sense of and responding to historical and contemporary forces. Instead many ordinary Latin Americans are engaged in everyday practices of ethnic despecification, in this case via an emphasis on mixing as a fact of kinship and history.

Ideas about race in Yapatera are shaped by a local folk theory of race, procreation and physiology and the notion of mixing as a social, historical process. Both help to downplay the suggestion that humans can be categorised according to mutually exclusive racial groups. They also serve villagers’ claims that they are no longer black and that everyone is racially mixed. Villagers are heavily invested in these processes of mixing. Mixing is not only a cultural narrative but informs everyday practices and, as shown by one of the experimental tasks, it shapes inferential reasoning in novel, hypothetical scenarios. However, ideas and practices of mixing do not occur in isolation. They are contested by powerful instances of racist discrimination against villagers on

the basis of their supposed racial attributes.²² They are also in tension with an alternative, more essentialist view of race, although this alternative view tends to be downplayed by villagers. Notions of mixing, which are salient in Yapatera, are nevertheless constructed in dialogue with racist discrimination and with racial essentialism.

²² One Lima-based ethnic activist once asked me whether I thought that being a white foreigner had affected the findings I reported; in particular whether villagers had perhaps denied experiencing racist discrimination and portrayed themselves as ‘non’-black in an attempt to minimise the differences between themselves and me, while in fact they thought about race categories in a more ‘essentialist’ and black-white binary way. This is an important question, which deserves to be addressed. Her observation that villagers were trying to lessen a perceived racial difference between us could be true, but in itself this reveals an understanding of race as negotiable, fluid and more ambiguous than essentialist constructions of race would allow. I am certain that villagers did downplay the racist discrimination they face, but I believe this has less to do with me, than with the wider social logic discussed earlier in this chapter. According to the local schema I was indeed classed as a white foreigner, but rather than attempting to hide this fact, people in Yapatera frequently drew attention to it, although they were infinitely more interested in my ‘foreignness’ than my ‘whiteness’.

The ways in which they minimised differences between us, however, were not conducted in registers of ‘race’ but by social practices that sought to incorporate me into kin and family life, and by implicating me in relations of reciprocity. Villagers talked approvingly of how I transformed myself—especially physically—in order to live in the village: by growing accustomed to the food, by adapting to the heat and generally by ‘learning’ how to be there. In other instances, my informants were not concerned with minimising differences between us but instead actively drew attention to them. In explaining their ways of thinking or behaving, they often made use of hypothetical scenarios in which I took the role of the ‘outsider’, for example as the capitalist seeking to buy up the farmers’ *chacras* to create an industrial plantation, or as a migrant marrying into the family.

Chapter III. Carried in the heart: Surnames and bilaterality in kinship, marriage and personhood

Tumba, Urpi, Cazombon

It was early November 2010 and a typically cold and humid day in Lima, the sky being the proverbial colour of a donkey's belly. On this day I found myself poring over a large stack of yellowing note cards scribbled on in faded pencil, in an attic which had been turned into the personal library of my new acquaintance, anthropologist Humberto Rodríguez Pastor, in his house in the old historic district of Rimac. The notes in question were bequeathed to Humberto by his mentor and friend Fernando Romero Pintado (1934-1996), a Peruvian historian, former Marine official and pioneering scholar of Peruvians of African descent. Romero published several works, providing keen insights into the Peruvian slave trade and into colonial and Republican census data (1944), as well as pursuing his fascination with the presence of African words in Peruvian Spanish and with the survival of other, what he called *afronegrismos* in *criollo* culture (1987; 1988). The notes that Humberto had generously allowed me to read over and to copy pertained to an unpublished research project for which Romero had set about collating an annotated list of surnames found in Peru that he presumed to be of African origin. I counted over one hundred surnames that Romero linked, in his notes, to the names of tribes, clans, languages and toponyms he had identified in African ethnography, referencing in particular the work of George Peter Murdock (presumably his 1959 book 'Africa and its peoples'). Examples of such surnames were the sonorous Tumba, Urpi, Lobatón and Cazombon. His

main sources for the compilation were newspaper articles, ranging from the late 1960s to 1990s, in one of the leading national newspapers, *El Comercio*. He also drew on the lists of recruits and applicants for the Marine Corps, to which he had privileged access.

Romero's project goes against the grain of what many Peruvian, indeed many Latin American, families are engaged in, namely it is an affront against the common attempt to trace family origins to white European settlers (Harris 2008: 282), often via surnames. The preference for European ancestors is captured in idioms such as the description of an individual as 'wearing their well-donned Spanish surname' (*lleva su apellido español bien puesto*) in the same way a gentleman might proudly wear a fine and well-fitting hat. Take his note on a certain African sounding surname which he traced back to a Mbuntu clan. Romero had identified it in a 1990 article on a white upper-class lawyer-turned-politician, who later became an extremely well known leader in national politics. Romero's note on the card read sarcastically: 'What would she say... isn't she of the upper class? She is middle-class with money [*clase media con plata*]. She would be ashamed! Isn't her father a racist?' Few Peruvians with surnames identified by Romero as African would want to claim such origins, although the risk, in reality, is minimal, since none of the surnames collated by Romero in his compilation are very common in Peru and I have found only a handful in the telephone directory.

While many ordinary Peruvians look to their surnames for European origins and Romero looked to surnames for African origins, the two projects take a similar approach: in both cases surnames are assumed to have an 'ethnic' quality, which can then be bestowed upon the individuals so named. Similarly, Peruvians with Andean surnames, such as Quispe, Condori, Mamani, are often stigmatised as degenerate, backward, 'Indians' and these surnames, marking Andean origins, become a vehicle for silent or overt racism. It is for this reason that surnames, despite their apparently 'fixed' legal nature, are subject to being changed throughout the Americas (for Bolivia, see Sanabria 2001; for lowland Peru see Gow 2007: 201-205). In all these cases, and elsewhere in the world (Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 9), surnames can be used to create a sense of

ethnic belonging, to construct racial or ethnic boundaries, to convey a sense of purity of descent—or to challenge such notions.

In Yapatera, villagers' interest in surnames is, in a general sense, similarly concerned with creating and marking similarity and difference through an idiom of kinship. However, as this chapter shows, surnames in Yapatera do not serve to mark different 'kinds' of people, so much as they show that all people are made of different kinds. Ideas and practices relating to kinship, in particular bilateral descent, marriage and personhood, I argue, provide a logic or model for thinking about race and ethnicity. Kinship practices and ideologies legitimise the local folk theory of race that emphasises racial mixture, and the multiplicity of origins (see chapter II). Mixedness is an aspect of kin relations, marriage and personhood and thereby involves recognition of heterogeneity within kinship (Harris 2008).

Double surnames: natural, civilised and good to think with

My interest in surnames arose from a continually recurring conversation between my informants and myself throughout my sixteen months of fieldwork in Yapatera. The conversation usually went something like this:

Tamara, tell me again, what are your surnames? [literally: how do you surname yourself?]

T.H: My surname is Hale.

And the other one?

T.H: No, I have only one surname—it is Hale.

But what about your other surname, your maternal surname?

T.H: I have only one surname...it is Hale.

Wow! [*Gua!*] And why is this...?! Tell me again?

My personal case was of interest to my informants because I represented an anomaly in having a single surname. In Yapatera, as in all of Peru, and all of Spanish-speaking Latin America, individuals have two surnames: the paternal surname followed by their maternal surname, or more precisely, the father's paternal surname followed by mother's paternal surname.¹ What the recurrence

¹ Countries vary in the extent to which they legally enforce and regulate this double transmission, with some countries allowing individuals to go by just one surname, and Peru having some of the strictest laws. In Brazil, the order is reversed—maternal followed by paternal—something villagers in Yapatera frequently bring up as an interesting or humorous fact.

of this conversation suggested to me, over time, was that double surnames were not merely a fact of life, but revealed a particular perspective on the world, on the place of humans within it and on human society and interrelations.

Before I discuss the ethnographic evidence, which points to the importance of double surnames for thinking about humans, let me briefly introduce the system of surname transmission common in Spanish-speaking countries, with the help of a diagram.

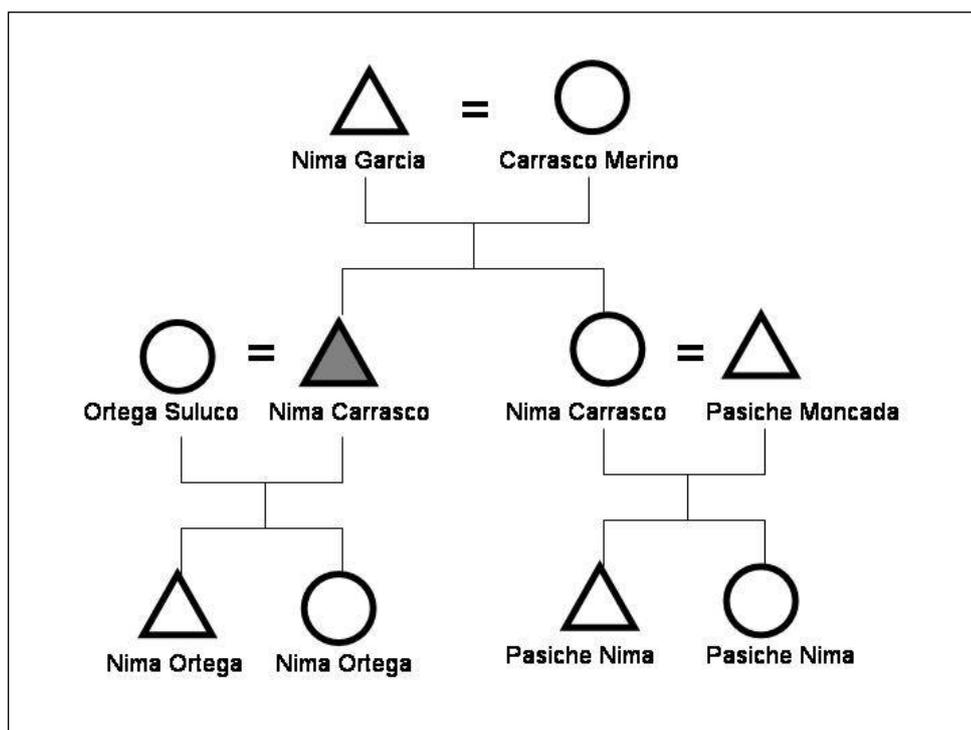


Figure 12. Double surname transmission pattern

Ego, the triangle shaded in grey—in this case a male—inherits his first surname (his paternal one, in this case Nima) from his father. He inherits his second surname (his maternal one, in this case Carrasco) from his mother. His full surnames are therefore Nima Carrasco. Females inherit their names in an identical fashion.² In each generation, all individuals, male and female, receive their surnames in this manner and, at least in principal, identical surnames mark

² Older generations of women customarily added their husband's surname after their paternal surname using the prefix *de*, or 'of' thereby dropping their maternal surname, at least on paper. However, they would still introduce themselves using their paternal and maternal surname. The practice of replacing the maternal surname with the husband's surname is more frequent in the Peruvian upper- and middle-class.

out a full sibling relationship. Note that when this principle is repeated for the generation following that of ego, ego's maternal surname—Carrasco—is lost. Females do not pass on their surnames in the same way as males.³ In other words, while the naming system 'looks' bilateral from the perspective of one generation, overall, the naming system is patrilaterally skewed (for similarities in contemporary Andean naming practices see Bolton 1977; Isbell 1977; Sanabria 2001; for urban Peruvian elites see Gilbert 1981).

My informants frequently followed their introductions with sentences like, 'I am Pasiche through my father and Nima through my mother' (*Yo soy Pasiche por mi padre y Nima por mi madre*) providing, in a sense, an explanation of how they came to be named so. Put quite simply, for people in Yapatara, having two surnames is the result of being the product of one's father and one's mother. More broadly, it is the result of being related both to one's father's kin and one's mother's kin, and marks one as such. Villagers consider that both men and women contribute to the making of children (see chapter II: 89-96), and insist that it is only natural that children should therefore take the surnames of both their parents. To do otherwise would negate the contribution that each parent has made. The anomaly of a single surname points to the degree to which the use of double surnames is considered natural and respectable. Checho, whom I addressed as *Tío*, 'uncle', made his feelings clear one evening when he discovered, yet again, that I had only one surname: 'With all due respect, *blanquita* ['little whitey'], but no, I don't agree with it... If you ask me: it doesn't seem right to me [*no me parece*]!' Domingo, assuming that my only surname came from my father, challenged me:

From where were you born? [*¿De dónde renació usted?*] From your father? No! From a mother! So why should your father figure on his own there? What republic are you from? Germany. The Germans, in this part, have failed. They have been negligent. I'm sorry to tell you this. When you go back to Germany, you must tell them: we are mistaken!

Presenting them with a hypothetical scenario I asked my informants to imagine an individual with only one surname and asked them what reasons might explain a single surname. The responses I received usually fell along the following lines:

³ Some authors, therefore, refer to both surnames as patronyms, although from the perspective of ego the maternal surname is seen as transmitted by the mother, not the maternal grandfather.

- He has forgotten his father!
- He doesn't love his mother!
- One has to know one's blood!

Forgetting one's parents, which is considered tantamount to not loving them, is considered a particularly abhorrent behaviour. When these parents are deceased, 'forgetting' can have dangerous consequences, since these deceased individuals become lost souls who haunt the living (chapter IV; on the importance of blood see chapter II: 89-96).

Villagers in Yapatera are not unique in their transmission of double surnames. This is a naming practice that links contemporary Latin Americans to the cultural traditions of Spanish invaders, who imported their ideas about kinship to the New World. Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn suggest that in Europe 'from a historical perspective, the imposition of hereditary surnames facilitated the creation of conscription lists, tax rolls, property deeds, and so forth, but also was a convenient strategy for the landed gentry to protect their lands' (2006: 14). In Latin America, introducing surnames helped colonial projects of administration of Indians, slaves and other *castas* and furthered Christian conversion. Pre-Columbian Andean naming practices followed parallel inheritance patterns, with women inheriting names from their mothers and men inheriting names from their fathers (see Sanabria 2001 for references). This practice was retained and incorporated into surname transmission, surviving into the early nineteenth century (Sanabria 2001: 139-140), and in some rural locations influencing local naming practices and existing alongside legal ones into the early 1970s (Frank Salomon, personal communication). Therefore bilateral descent and bilateral naming practices also contain pre-Colombian continuities of parallel descent.

Colonial and Republican documents reveal the wide range of ways different individuals were identified, and even the diverse ways in which individuals identified themselves on different occasions: using single, double or more surnames, adding markers to indicate geographical origins, privileging patrilineal or matrilineal descent, and changing the order of surnames. Despite variability before the twentieth century, surname usage usually departed from a

general pattern of ‘paternal plus maternal surname’. How the double surname system became the standard and how it was received by local populations in the Americas, has received surprisingly little scholarly attention. It is likely that the paternal-followed-by-maternal rule became standardised only with the introduction of such Republican institutions as electoral rolls, military conscription and civil registries.⁴

In Peru, double surname transmission is probably linked to the introduction of compulsory voting in 1933, which required the introduction of electoral rolls and proof of identification (the *libreta electoral*, later replaced by ID cards, *Documento Nacional de Identidad*, or DNI). Scott, writing on the link between surnames and the constitution of citizens, argues that, ‘the surname was a first and crucial step toward making individual citizens officially legible, and along with the photograph, it is still the first fact on documents of identity’ (1998: 71). However since suffrage only became universal in Peru in 1979, with the extension of the vote to illiterates, the system of double surname transmission only recently became closely regulated and legally enforced. Today Peruvian civil law enshrines the individual’s right, and obligation, to carry ‘the first surname of the father and the first surname of the mother’ (Código Civil Art. 21).

Despite what is a relatively recent phenomenon, the way in which villagers in Yapaterra think and speak about double surname transmission suggests that the custom has existed since the beginning of time and that no other ways of transmitting surnames are even conceivable. Villagers consider double surname transmission natural, both in the sense of something that is inevitable and in the sense that it is true to their understanding of biological processes. My informants would always introduce themselves to me, and to other strangers, with both their surnames and children as young as three or four were able to recite both surnames in the correct order. Talking in this way, using both names, is considered proper speech, which conveys a sense of formality and bestows an air of respectability on the speech act.

All bureaucratic procedures and many commercial, public or social transactions require the use of two surnames, from roll calls at school, to village

⁴ I thank Silvia Espelt Bombín, Ainara Vázquez Varela and Francisco Eissa-Barroso for this suggestion.

meetings, to paying electricity bills and going to the doctor's. Two surnames are recorded in birth certificates, in school attendance lists, on ID cards, and for every imaginable service. As informants pointed out, there would be severe practical consequences of not having two surnames. For example, Tito told me that, 'Any business, any formality, any procedure would be invalid, you couldn't even receive a money transfer or a package. You couldn't buy a piece of land, or sell your house or go to the doctor! Having your two surnames—it's a requisite!' Similarly, Fernanda told me that, 'Here, one has to have one's two surnames, by law. It is the state, it is the nation. Here they ask you, what is your paternal surname? What is your maternal surname?'

Acquiring the ID card was seen as a kind of rite of passage into legal adulthood for teenagers during my fieldwork. The recent (2010) introduction of ID cards for children and the requirement that children present their own cards to enter primary school may bring changes to the meaning villagers attribute to ID cards. Perhaps most importantly, since the Peruvian state is still officially 'blind' to race and ethnicity and no official form or procedure asks individuals to identify or be identified in racial or ethnic terms, the ID cards confirms that one's most important identifier is one's name, leaving the photograph to be read 'racially' and varyingly by the beholder.

The use of double surnames informs notions of citizenship (Scott 1998: 64-71). Parents of newborn babies in Yapatara and the surrounding hamlets dutifully make their way to the Civil Registry Office housed at the Municipality of Yapatara, a small concrete complex, to register the birth of their children. Dilmar, my friend and informant, was the civil servant who wielded the large paper rolls of the civil registry, which he filled in meticulously by hand. While Dilmar often hesitates or even smirks at the first name that the parents have chosen for their newborn, he does not ask for the surnames, as he can deduce them from the surnames of the parents. Behind his large desk, on the wall facing the visitors, he has taped an eclectic collection of inspirational sayings and government communications. The centrepiece is a cartoon drawing of a donkey with the following instructions: 'SAY HELLO. DON'T BE LIKE ME'. Another sign reads: 'Nobody likes their name spelt wrong'. These messages emphasise

the values of being polite, speaking properly and in a civilised fashion (*hablar bien*), linking education and literacy to a notion of respectability. They also remind the new parents, and other visitors, of their responsibility in following and ensuring correct naming and spelling practices.

Despite informants' insistence on double surnames as universal and self-explanatory, naming irregularities sometimes occur; these underline the culturally constructed significance of double surname transmission. In particular, irregular surnames imply the stigma of illegitimacy. Mothers and children in Yapatera, like elsewhere in the world, are often confronted with the problem of absent fathers and unrecognised paternity. Naming illegitimate children is distinctively a woman's problem. As Genara explained, 'When you go to register your children you have to put down two surnames—it's your problem where you get them from!' Unrecognised paternity causes a great deal of anxiety because, at least in the past, the father had to be present or give consent to have his surname bestowed on the child on the civil registry. One solution is to delay the registration of a child's birth in the hope that an admission of paternity will be negotiated with the child's father later on. But this only postpones the problem since school registration requires the birth certificate, and now the ID card. The most common solution in the past, I was told, was for the mother's father (i.e. the child's maternal grandfather) to declare the child as his own. Such an illegitimate child would therefore be given the exact same names as its mother.⁵ This was usually a permanent solution since later changes to the names required costly and time-consuming bureaucratic interventions and years of legal limbo.

The sharing of the same surnames by mother and child, therefore, made them appear to be siblings, at least on paper. This kind of manipulation of the facts of kinship for legal purposes appears to undo what is perceived to be a natural, proper and inviolable hierarchical relation between mother and child.

⁵ Informants who told me about these cases, which were deemed to be fairly common in the adult generation, were less clear on who would be put down as the mother on the birth certificates of such illegitimate children claimed by their maternal grandfathers. Current civil law specifies that illegitimate children will bear the name of the progenitor/s who recognises him or her (Código Civil, Art. 21). It also specifies that if the child is recognised only by one parent that this parent must not reveal the identity of the other parent (Art. 392). The current code specifies that in cases where the biological parent is deemed mentally incapable or has 'disappeared' the grandparent should recognise the child as his/her own (Art. 389).

Simultaneously, there is a symbolic suggestion of incest, since the maternal grandfather figures as the father. While many villagers will know that a mother and a child with the same two surnames are not in fact siblings, the situation opens up ambiguity in official or public contexts. In such public settings two people with the same two surnames are always assumed to be siblings, even if there is a large age gap between them.⁶ Individuals who bear the same two surnames as their mothers must often explain themselves, saying that their supposed sibling is in fact their mother, thereby forcing them to draw attention to their illegitimate status. These scenarios are distressing, especially when dealing with authorities and institutions where names, not actual family history, may be seen to constitute reality. Flavia, my host mother and the director of the local secondary school, related to me how affected mothers would cry in her office over the anguish caused by this situation, and she discussed in great detail the psychological difficulties she thought it caused for such illegitimate children. One of the more abstract implications of the naming of illegitimate children was that unrecognised paternity (through the choice of the father) symbolically undoes the maternity of the mother (through no choice of her own)—it appears that kinship in Yapatera is either bilateral or nothing.⁷ Many villagers reported that in some cases of individuals with unrecognised paternity, and in rare cases of unrecognised maternity, the stigmatising surname ‘X’ replaced the missing surname such that an individual would be called Juan X García or Juan García X, respectively.⁸

⁶ Since families with eight and more children are common in Yapatera, there is nothing unexpected about a large age gap between siblings.

⁷ The consequences of Peru’s law of surnames for illegitimate children has not been lost on legal specialists. The Peruvian Ombudsman has recognised that by application of the aforementioned laws “the illegitimate child appears as the sibling of the progenitor who has recognised him or her” and that this “created a situation in which the individual will publicly be recognised as an illegitimate child, inciting discrimination and stigmatisation against said individual” (Defensoría del Pueblo 2003: 18). The Ombudsman has therefore petitioned for a change to naming law allowing the parent who registers the child to declare the paternity or maternity of the absent parent.

⁸ Following the Peruvian law concerning surname transmission foreigners who apply for ID cards, residency or citizenship are asked to supply two surnames, even if they only legally hold one surname in their country of origin or on their birth certificate. Where a second surname is not easily established, they are simply allocated a duplicate of their first surname (for instance I might become Tamara Hale Hale).

In general, however, unrecognised paternity is a relatively small phenomenon in Yapatera compared to the widespread problem of raising children without the financial support of their fathers. Generally it is assumed that a man will only maintain those children with whose mother he cohabits and only for the duration of that relationship. While men often go to great practical lengths and travel long distances to avoid financial support, on the whole, nowadays, they will gladly give their surnames to the children they father.

The use of double surnames is not only deemed to be grounded in nature and law, but it is also considered a matter of practicality. As Gata explained, ‘Without this you cannot do your research! Take me for example, I am walking through the street and I see this person. Through my surname I realise: we are family!’ While the use of two surnames in Peru often strikes foreigners as cumbersome, villagers in Yapatera see the practice as inherently useful. In societies with notions of hereditary descent, surnames can be ‘good to think with’ in the sense that they allow for the categorisation of individuals by their kinship affiliations. Double surnames, from the perspective of villagers in Yapatera, are quite simply twice as practical.

With a population of almost 3,000, living in just over 700 households, Yapatera is large enough for there to be people one does not know well personally. At the same time, until recently, the village has been largely endogamous, such that most surnames come from a much smaller stock of common names, many of them considered native or particular to Yapatera. Knowing someone’s two surnames allows villagers to locate that individual in a mental map of kin relations through two and more lines of descent. My informants were usually able to give at least one surname of an unknown passer-by. In doing so they were engaged in a sort of calculation or logical derivation of that individual’s kin identity, tracing their connection to other known individuals. If they went further, working out the two surnames of an individual’s mother and father, they could link the individual not only to two but to four surnames and four sets of people. If they could do the same with the individual’s grandparents’ generation, they could link them to eight surnames and eight sets of people. The more surnames are known, the more likely it is that one can identify an overlap

of kin relations and chances increase that one can identify the individual as a relative or the relative of a friend, neighbour or acquaintance. Knowing a person's surnames allows one to locate that person in relation to known individuals and kin groups, hence surnames are, in Gow's words, 'a global system of identification' (2007: 202).

The way in which surnames are shared, or linked, illustrates the way relatedness is a better predictor of socially significant practices than, say, race. For example, sharing or not sharing a surname with someone else predicts whether I will attend the requiem mass the other person is hosting, whether that person is likely to feel entitled to cross the threshold of my house or whether instead our conversation will likely take place on the *vereda*, a liminal space between public and domestic (see below). Crucially, surnames are useful for classification but do not place individuals into mutually exclusive groups. Instead surnames are meaningful to the extent that they are connected to other surnames. Villagers are interested in descent not for its depth but for its breadth.

Bilateral descent and marriage

Double surname transmission reflects a bilateral system of descent reckoning. However, bilaterality is not only a system of descent, but also a form of ideology, a perspective on the world (for Andean parallels and continuities see Lambert 1977; various contributions to Bolton and Mayer 1977). In Yapatera, the significance attached to having two surnames follows from the importance villagers place on recognising one's father's kin and one's mother's kin equally.⁹ In addition to surname transmission, various other practices reinforce the notion that paternal and maternal links are of equal importance and that men and women pass on the ties of kinship equally. As prescribed in Peruvian law, inheritance is partible and is divided between children of both genders (Código Civil, Art. 235). In practice, daughters may sometimes inherit a smaller piece of *chacra* (farmland) since it is reasoned that their husbands will already hold some land to

⁹ While kin terms do not differentiate how relatives are related, i.e. whether through male or female ancestors, villagers often attach the terms 'paternal' and 'maternal' to describe such relations.

their name; brothers-in-law often hold neighbouring *chacras* and help each other sow, harvest and irrigate. Illegitimate children sometimes do not inherit any *chacra*, but will usually receive some other form of support instead. Male and female adult children are expected to care for both parents in older age and, after they have died, to pay respect to both fathers' and mothers' kin (chapter IV).¹⁰ For example, sons and daughters are expected to contribute equally to the costs of funerals and requiem masses for their parents and both sets of grandparents.

Villagers nurture and invest in their female and male children equally and both genders are seen as valuable contributions to the family. The ideal household, until recently, was deemed to be made up of a husband and wife and their *coro*, or 'choir', of twelve children, with an even distribution of boys and girls. Due to improving infant mortality rates, the wider availability of contraceptives, and what villagers themselves describe as a cultural shift which pivots on the desire to funnel a maximum of resources to a minimum number of descendants to improve their chances of 'bettering themselves', there has been a radical decline in the number of children per couple (see figure 37). The preference for gender balance remains, however, and young parents stress that the ideal is for a *parejita*, or 'little couple', that is, a boy and a girl. Villagers feel pity for couples that have produced only sons or only daughters. Having only sons risks an impoverished quality of care for the aging parents since daughters are seen as more nurturing to their parents. Having only daughters can mean having to rely on more distant kin or on non-kin to help work on the *chacra* in exchange for money. In both cases, however, daughters-in-law and sons-in-law step up to the task: daughters-in-law care for their in-laws, a reflection of their mothering skills and sign of respectability, and sons-in-law will help on the *chacra* as long as they are not already recruited by the demands of their own, or their fathers' *chacras*.

Marriage practices reflect the ideals of bilateral descent. Elopement is the standard marriage practice and is void of positive marriage rules or even kinship-based preferences. An incest taboo prohibits people from marrying close kin, including first degree cousins. Ideally, villagers say, one should not marry

¹⁰ This also is enshrined in the law: 'The children are obliged to obey, respect and honour their parents'. (Código Civil, Art. 454).

anyone with whom one shares a surname, since it is possible that one is related (compare Isbell 1985: 109 for Chuschi, Peru; Sanabria 2001: 142-143 for Bolivia). Since class differences within the village are minimal actual partner preferences are most likely to be shaped by friendships, mutual attraction and opportunity.

The act of elopement is known as the *robo*, or stealing (for similarities with ‘stealing’ in Andean marriage practices see Harris 2000: 155-158).¹¹ The *robo* follows a near identical pattern every time. It begins with a young man and young woman who initiate a secret courtship without any public display of intimacy. Occasions such as a *fiesta*—concert, dance, patron saint festival, mango harvest festival or even a funeral—are accompanied by less surveillance and generate the commotion necessary for the couple to escape unnoticed. The young man arranges to pick up the young woman in the middle of the night, usually from the animal corral at the back of the house. Fear, disbelief and outrage ensue when the young woman’s parents discover that their daughter is missing. Everyone, especially the parents of the couple, denies knowledge of any romantic relationship. For three days the young couple hides out with an empathetic, secrecy-bound relative of the young man, often outside the village. It is assumed that the couple will have their first sexual intercourse during this hiding period. In the meantime, the parents search for the missing children. The first reaction of the young woman’s father is often to declare that his daughter has been kidnapped and for him to press charges at the police outpost in Yapatera against her alleged ‘kidnapper’, if his identity is known. Virginity is upheld as an ideal for girls, and anger is directed at the ‘robber’ for stealing her virginity. After three days have passed, the couple re-emerges for the ritual of the *arreglo*, or ‘fixing’.¹² This occurs behind closed doors;¹³ hence my description is based on the accounts of my informants, which were practically identical. The parents of the young man arrive with the young couple at the house of the woman’s parents. They are often accompanied by the young man’s godparents, an uncle or older

¹¹ Elopement is also described by saying that a man ‘has come into the possession of a wife’ (*se ha amujerado*); this is a practice found throughout the Alto Piura valley (Harman 1990).

¹² Villagers explain the term by saying that, ‘it is necessary to fix the damage’ (*hay que arreglar el daño*).

¹³ However, neighbours may suspect what is happening.

brother, or one of them may go on his behalf, especially if they have a good relationship with the young woman's parents. Sometimes, if the anger is especially inflamed, the young couple stay outside, waiting until they are asked in to the house.

If the young woman is present, she kneels before her parents crying and asking for their forgiveness. If he can muster up the courage, the young man also asks for forgiveness. More often than not, the parents are still furious and refuse to address the couple directly and may slap, whip or scold them. The young man's representatives vouch for him, for his good intentions and affirm the consensual nature of the couple's union. The young woman will declare that she went of her own free will and was not tricked under false pretences. The 'good intentions' include the young man's promise to treat his wife well, specifically not to be physically violent and to provide for her and their future offspring. His parents also promise to take care of the young woman as if she were a daughter of their own, especially if the couple is to live with them temporarily. Everyone, especially the young woman, is dressed in new clothes for the occasion to prove that she will be well taken care of. Good intentions also often include the promise to formalise the union through civil marriage and to sanctify it through a church wedding in the future. Eventually, the parents' anger gives way and they 'pardon' the couple, hence the ritual is also known as the *perdón*. The young couple, and the parents and relatives of the couple, reconcile and seal the ritual with alcohol. Regardless of whether the promises to formalise the union via civil or religious marriage ever materialise, the couple are referred to as husband and wife from this point on.¹⁴

The language of 'stealing' might suggest that women are the property of a kin group (as is the case in the Andean *ayllu*). However, in Yapatera, where there are no corporate descent groups, it is the parents, not a kin group, that are deprived of what belongs to them. Mothers and fathers are thought to have exclusive claims to their daughter due to their investment in making (*engendrar*),

¹⁴ Increasingly, such plans are indefinitely put off. 34% of Yapatera's population over the age of twelve currently co-habit in common-law marriages; this is slightly above the national average of 25%. 22% are currently married, slightly below the national average of 29%. 44% of villagers are currently separated, widowed or single. The increase of common-law marriages is consistent with national trends over the last 30 years (INEI 2007).

nurturing and raising (*criar*) her.¹⁵ It is this claim which is violated by theft. The woman is not acquired by a kin group (hence she does not change her surname) but often becomes a temporary member of her husband's household. Elopement is usually followed by a short period of virilocal residence but the couple usually set up their own household, usually by the time a second child is on its way. While temporary virilocal residence is more common, sometimes men move in with their in-laws instead. Marriage through stealing is continuous with Andean practices of 'trial marriage' (e.g. Carter 1977; Price 1965), since, if the relationship does not work out the woman can return to her parent's home.¹⁶ Female villagers often object to the language of 'stealing' and state instead that they 'go' with their husbands. An ongoing joke, especially between married men and women, is that in reality it is the wife who stole the husband.

Villagers explain the crime of 'stealing' and the reconciliation through 'fixing' in Christian and moral terms. In relation to stealing, villagers point out that the ten commandments say that one must not steal from one's neighbour. In relation to 'fixing', they say that the church teaches that one must have forgiveness for sinners and that one's own sins will be forgiven also. Men, in particular, explain that they are forced to steal women because if they were to ask the parents for permission they would surely say no. Furthermore, according to villagers, men steal women because they cannot afford to 'pay' for them. The more civilised way of getting married, they explain, involves formally asking a woman's parents for her hand in marriage and getting engaged. But this is an expensive affair requiring feasts, gifts, new clothing, the maintenance of the bride-to-be during the period of engagement and a church wedding.

While stealing does imply the control of husbands over wives, it relinquishes the control of parents and other relatives over their children. What stealing does is precisely to transform children, who are property, into adults, who are no one's property (other than perhaps their spouse's). It transforms

¹⁵ It is not coincidental that young women are 'stolen' out of the corrals in the back of houses, much like cows, goats and sheep (see below). Defending private property is the most important rallying cry in Yapatera and it is with the protection of livestock in mind that Yapatera formed its *rondas campesinas*, or peasant patrols, in the 1970s (see Starn 1999).

¹⁶ In the past this was looked down upon because the woman's virginity was now damaged and her prospects of remarrying were diminished. Today it is more common for women who have returned home to later remarry.

children from being the product of their parent's reproduction into reproductive beings themselves. 'Stealing' emphasises the free will of the young man and woman, and it ultimately denies parents their claims over their children. Although some parents express the wish that their sons or daughters marry someone 'better educated', and sometimes someone 'whiter', they always affirm that they have no control over whom their children elope with. Parents stress the inevitability of these elopements, stating that they have no influence on their children, on where their love will fall (*donde caiga su cariño*), and that ultimately they cannot 'know the thoughts of their children'. Therefore, they rarely attempt to reclaim the 'stolen' daughter since they emphasise that sooner or later she will follow her heart. Nor do parents return an unwanted daughter-in-law since the young man will simply steal her again. Elopements in Yapatera disregard the alliances or hostilities that exist between households and they instead forge new alliances via the new couple. In terms of overall preferences for 'whiter' individuals, the *robo* ensures that even the darkest-skinned individuals find partners.¹⁷ My neighbour Evaristo told me that when he went to 'fix the damage' with his wife's parents, her mother rejected him at first and threw a bucket of water with bleach at him in an attempt to whiten him. Evaristo often told me that despite the initial rejection they eventually came around to him and he was now their favourite son-in-law.

Classic anthropological discussions saw elopements as instances of 'love marriages' which were necessarily rare in societies structured by unilineal descent and by positive marriage rules (for an overview see Hirsch and Wardlow 2006: 1-34; also De Munck 1996). By contrast historians and sociologists have seen romantic love as a Western cultural artefact associated with industrialism, capitalism, Christian ideas about the self and individualism (Giddens 1992; Macfarlane 1987). The fact that elopement is the standard form of marriage cannot be taken as evidence that romantic love is unconstrained or endorsed in Yapatera. Nor is it a sign of unbridled individualism. If love between two individuals were unconstrained, elopement would not be necessary.

¹⁷ Of course, young people are not immune to such preferences, but according to villagers they tend to disregard them 'in matters of the heart'.

Elopement has a structural effect by undermining the existence of kin groups because it privileges the married couple as a new, separate unit independent from the families of origin, rather than incorporating sons or daughters-in-law into existing groups. In this way elopement reinforces the broad, inclusive notion of relatedness created by bilateral descent. To characterise these marriages as exogamous would be misleading since, strictly speaking, there are no descent, class or other significant exclusive social groups in Yapatera. However, they are exogamous in the sense that ideally individuals refrain from marrying kin with whom they share a surname. They can also be thought of as exogamous in the sense that the husband and wife are thought to be made up of different ‘bloods’ and ‘races’ (chapter II: 89-96). As Bodenhorn has recently noted, marriage, by definition, crosses categories, and in a general sense all marriage can be seen as ‘intermarriage’; it is because of this that marriage has the capacity to encompass relations that defy easy definition (2013: 151).

Elopement puts emphasis on the married couple as the centre of gravity or point of orientation of ideas about how people are related. This, in turn, is symbolised and embodied by the physical structure of the house. The ideal is for new couples to set up a new independent household or, as the Peruvian idiom says, ‘once married one requires a house’ (*el casado casa quiere*). Lévi-Strauss has been interpreted as seeing houses as a hybrid, transitional social form in the trajectory from kin-based to class-based social orders (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 9-10). In houses, which objectify human relationships, the tensions between conflicting principles of descent and alliance, property and residence, exogamy and endogamy are partially resolved (see various contributions in Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995). Echoing Bloch’s description of Zafimaniry house-building in Madagascar (1995), in Yapatera houses are seen as a material manifestation of the married couple which grows, hardens, is improved and subdivided as the household matures and expands (see also chapter VI: 232-235; for Andean parallels see Leinaweaver 2009; Mayer 1977).

The spatial organisation of the house also creates a series of spaces that link the private, domestic kin domain to public village life. The *vereda* is a liminal area between public and private, a concrete platform or porch that

extends from the house into the street; it is the prime space for socialising. Villagers sit on the *vereda* in the late afternoons and evenings, talking to their neighbours and visitors and calling out to passers-by. Inside the house, guests who are invited into the house rarely make it beyond the *sala*, or living room. This may be the only room that is painted and decorated, often with a portrait of the married couple. Behind the *sala* are the bedrooms, which only kin have access to. Finally, the most intimate space is that of the animal corral at the back of the house, which is also where the cooking is done and where the outhouse and bathing area are located. The corral is only accessed by very close kin, or trespassed by animal thieves, witches and those who steal daughters. How far individuals are welcome into the house depends on their degree of closeness to the family, with maternal and paternal links being equally valid. Reflecting the bilateral transmission of surnames, houses are homes to people with multiple surnames: a minimum of four if they contain only the married couple and their sons and daughters, six if they include a son- or daughter-in-law and the grandchildren, and so on successively. My host family's house, which was not unusual, included people with nine different surnames: two grandparents, one daughter and her son, a daughter in-law and her daughter, and two grandsons from two different fathers of a daughter who lived in Lima.

Both houses and double surname transmission emphasise the married couple as the significant kinship unit. By extension houses also emphasise the sibling group, which is the product of the married couple, as a significant unit (for cross-cultural comparisons see various contributions in Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995). Similarly, surnames encode the individuality and unity of sibling groups (for Amazonian Peru see Gow 2007: 202), because siblings are (ideally) the only individuals who share identical surnames and are considered the closest relatives. In Yapatera households are often referred to, and distinguished from each other by the combination of the paternal surnames of the husband and wife, in other words by the surnames of the children. For example, a household formed through the marriage of Juan Moncada Zapata and Maria Cruz Suluco, is referred to as 'the (*los*) Moncada Cruz'. This helps to differentiate it from other

households that share one of the surnames, e.g. from the Moncada Ramirez or the Cruz Benites.

Carried in the heart: bilateral ideology and logic

Bilaterality is an aspect of the system and practices of descent in Yapatera; however, the kinship ideology of bilaterality is wider-reaching, affecting marriage practices, ideas about gender relations, ideas about relations to the state, and ideas about procreation and physiology (see chapter II). Double surname transmission reflects the ideology and practice of bilaterality at the level of relationships between parents and children. However, to remind the reader, if one ‘zooms’ out to view double surname transmission over several generations, the practice is patrilaterally skewed (where ego’s maternal surname is not transmitted to ego’s children). Indeed, while drawing kinship diagrams, I discovered that maternal surnames were more at risk of being forgotten; for example, some informants found it harder to remember a maternal grandmother’s maternal surname than her paternal surname.

One might ask why, if the bilaterality of kinship is so central in Yapatera, villagers limit themselves to two surnames. Indeed, other societies with bilateral descent display an even greater interest in, and knowledge of, potentially infinite, cognatic links. Astuti has shown how Vezo ideas of relatedness posit that all people are related in life as *longo* (1995: 80-86). If all maternal and paternal ancestors (parents, grandparents, great-grandparents etc.) were to be equally recognised in surname transmission, villagers in Yapatera would have to have four, eight, sixteen or more surnames. If confronted with such a prospect, villagers would raise a simple objection, namely that it would be very impractical—for starters, all these names would not fit onto ID cards and introductions would be far too lengthy. They would also point out that one’s primary obligations are to one’s parents and that, given a chronic lack of resources, one must first take care of one’s closest relatives, in the hope that one’s distant relatives have children, grandchildren or nieces and nephews to care for them. However, villagers are also first to admit that it is regrettable that they cannot remember all their kin, meaning primarily their deceased relatives (as we

shall see in the next chapter, the fear over forgotten kin, and the fear of being forgotten by one's kin, forms a central part of religious remembrance practices). Double surnames are therefore shorthand for the most important bilateral links, and they strike a balance between the impossibility of remembering all kin and the desire to stress broad, 'horizontal' interrelatedness. It is also the case that where broad, horizontal relatedness is emphasised, one runs the risk of running out of potential marriage partners, since everyone would end up being reckoned as kin (Astuti 1995; Gow 2007, 1991). Hence some degree of 'forgetting' (Astuti 1995), or other ways of retaining a sense of differentiation (Gow 2007: 206), is required in order to allow marriage to happen (see also Bodenhorn 2013).

As I have discussed earlier, on the whole, people in Yapatera are not particularly interested in genealogical depth and few are able to trace their ancestors more than three generations back. Most of the time, therefore, the system of surname transmission does 'look' fairly bilateral. Villagers, nevertheless, admit that surname transmission, as a system, is biased toward paternal surnames and they reflect on this by lamenting that 'with daughters the surname loses itself' (*el apellido se va perdiendo*) and 'the surname distances itself' (*el apellido se va alejando*). However, the use of the gerund, or present progressive, verb form (literally, 'is losing itself', 'is distancing itself') suggests that this is a gradual, ongoing process rather than a completed loss. Similarly, the use of reflexive verbs with reflexive pronouns (-se),¹⁸ which expresses that an action is performed by subject on itself, seems to absolve the daughters from their responsibility in this loss. Instead, agency and blame are placed on the surname itself, which sneaks capriciously away. The statement that female descendants let surnames slip away, made most frequently by older men, is more an observation than a real complaint against daughters—after all, they are the ones who arguably benefit most from the care of their daughters in old age. They also recognise that they benefit from the addition to their families of individuals with new surnames: daughters-in-law, sons-in-law and grandchildren. Patrilineal

¹⁸ Vernacular Spanish from the state of Piura, known as *dejo piurano*, is characterised by a penchant for the idiosyncratic use of the gerund and reflexive verbs, including what linguist Arrizabalaga Lizárraga (2010) calls the 'concomitant periphrasis' resulting in common phrases such as, *está que llueve* ('it is that it rains', meaning, it is raining a lot right now) or even, *está que se baña* ('he is that he bathes himself', meaning, he is bathing himself right now).

skewing in surname transmission is not of great concern because it merely obscures the greater underlying bilaterality of kinship, rather than impinging on it significantly.

Tío Checho shed light on this during a conversation in which we were comparing naming practices in Peru and Europe. I had explained that in Germany and the UK, customarily, married women lose their ‘maiden’ name and replace it with their husband’s surname and that, as a result, children take only the surname of their father. Tío Checho listened to my explanation with great interest. Having previously objected to the singularity of my surname, this time he observed a similarity in our naming systems. Reflecting on the displacement of maternal surnames over time (a more immediate loss in the case of Germany and the UK, a more gradual distancing in the case of Peru), he observed: ‘One name remains covered [*tapado*]; it stays in the shadows [*queda en la sombra*]. But well, at least one carries it here,’ and he patted his chest where the heart is. Tío Checho was expressing how certain surnames, even though obscured, are still present ‘in one’s heart’. At the same time the kin relations that are marked by these surnames are not forgotten but are merely concealed from immediate view.

While the sharing of a surname is an indicator of a kin relationship, kin relations do not require a common surname. As Evaristo explained, ‘I have relatives with whom I don’t share a surname of any sort—nevertheless, we are family! We consider them equally.’ Indeed, the absence of a shared surname can be compensated for. There is frequently a special relationship between maternal grandparents, especially maternal grandmothers, and their grandchildren, the closest relatives who do not share a common surname. When daughters remarry or migrate, their children from a first relationship are almost always handed over to the exclusive care of her parents, either permanently in the scenario of remarriage, or sometimes more temporarily in the case of migration.¹⁹ Many single women also return to their parental homes and their children are raised jointly with the children of the woman’s parents. Other parents with large numbers of children often give what they call a ‘spare’ child to maternal

¹⁹ For more on practices of child circulation in Peru see Leinaweaver (2008b).

grandparents for company. Villagers frequently mark this special relation by calling maternal grandmothers by the affectionate nickname *mamita*, or ‘little mother’, which is almost always a maternal grandmother. Villagers also often tell stories about children being raised by their maternal grandparents who, despite their usually illegitimate status, become favourite grandchildren and are given lavish attention—often provoking feelings of jealousy in the child’s siblings, half-siblings or cousins.

Bilaterality is not only of concern to villagers in Yapatera, but posed a puzzle for descent theorists. Cognatic descent, that is the principle of tracing descent through males and females (of which bilateral descent is a particular type in which there are no descent groups), posed a problem for anthropologists studying kinship in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s (Keesing 1975: 91-96). How could cognatic societies limit the tracing of their kinship relations (Radcliffe-Brown 1950: 13) and in the absence of such kin groups, what non-kinship institutions would fill in to organise social life, religion, the economy, and politics (Fortes 1969: 122)? As Gilbert reflects for Peru, ‘Logically, a cognatic membership rule applied consistently would not produce the discrete descent groups associated with unilateral systems. Each person would be a member of an indefinite number of potential descent groups. It would make little sense to speak of “groups”, particularly in a corporate sense.’ (1981: 742) Keesing argues that cognatic descent is only a problem in an abstract, theoretical sense; in practice most societies with cognatic descent systems end up emphasising some affiliations over others, and may add other markers, such as residence, to determine salient relationships (1975: 93-94).

Gilbert (1981) writes about bilateral descent among upper-class Peruvians and their use of double surname transmission. They confront two sometimes conflicting desires: one is to maintain wealth, status and power within the family and limit access by outsiders, and the other is to stress affiliations to important ancestors. Bilaterality, in this case, poses both a problem and a solution. Unlike villagers in Yapatera, the upper-class Peruvians in Gilbert’s account display deep bilateral genealogical knowledge, and in order to stress links to important ancestors (founders of estates, companies and politicians), they manipulate the

naming system, creating double-barrelled names to emphasise certain links and dropping disadvantageous names to de-emphasise others. In effect they recreate corporate kin groups using certain bilateral links and dropping others. Gilbert writes, 'Ultimately, a cognatic system can work because individuals choose among the descent group affiliations open to them. These choices are likely to be shaped by the relative economic and social positions of the "competing" kin groups.' (Gilbert 1981: 744)

Villagers in Yapatera have neither the incentives nor the means of their upper-class compatriots to manipulate the legal naming system. The problem of limiting one's kin affiliations is small compared to the benefits of emphasising interconnectedness. Villagers do not ask themselves how individuals can stress certain loyalties while excluding others in the domain of kinship; instead they make much of the fact that a person's ties are always multiple. Double surnames themselves remind villagers that each individual belongs to two sets of kin in the first instance, and to multiple kin sets beyond that. One is only a member of one set of people as much as one is also a member of another set. In other words, while names are discrete, sets of kin are not. For example, I may be related to all other Barranzuelas in the village by virtue of one of my surnames, but those other Barranzuelas are also related to individuals who are unrelated to me by virtue of their other surnames. Therefore, the extent to which people with a specific surname belong to one set or category is always relative and situational.

This way of thinking about relatedness helps prevent a monopolisation of status or power by a specific set of kin. This was made clear to me when I attended a parents' meeting at the secondary school led by Flavia, the headmistress, and my host mother. It was the start of a new school year and time to form a new parent-teacher committee and Flavia asked the parents to nominate candidates for president, secretary and treasurer. She announced that in the interests of avoiding nepotism the nominees could not 'be Acaro or Gomez', which were her own surnames. One father raised his hand and said he wanted to nominate someone who was 'Gomez, but through his mother's side'. Flavia reprimanded him, 'But he is still Gomez, isn't he?!' She was drawing attention to

the fact that while the individual may have had a different paternal surname, he was equally related to anyone by the name of Gomez.

Bilateral personhood

Ideas about personhood in Yapatera involve both principles of bilaterality and individuation. Surnames, as well as personal names, are central to the notion of a proper person. While surnames are crucial in linking persons to paternal and maternal kin, first names are crucial to creating individuals. The choice of personal names reveals a need for individuation. Older generations chose their children's names using a booklet called the Bristol Almanac, naming children after the saint on whose feast day it was born.²⁰ Today's generation of name-givers strive to find unique, innovative and modern names, often inspired by North American cinema, television and popular music. However, these personal name choices are also shaped by kinship practices. Children are often named after living or deceased relatives, although the fact that they, by definition, have different surnames ensures that they do not duplicate the identity of the deceased.²¹ In addition, personal names are usually chosen by godparents, who are often also biological kin.

The notion of the individual is firmly rooted in Christian, and specifically Catholic ideas. Villagers differentiate between temporal bodies, and souls, which have a longer, though uncertain existence (see chapter IV). A sequence of rituals throughout the life-course, many of which are found in other Catholic societies, ensure the proper constitution of the person, including via the conferral and the utterance of personal names and surnames. These rituals begin at birth, with the rite known as the *Agua del Socorro* or more commonly, *el echarle el aguita* ('the sprinkling of the water'), a simple informal baptism performed by the chosen

²⁰ A pamphlet published annually in Spanish by a New Jersey soap-making company and distributed widely throughout Latin America since 1883, similar to the North American Old Farmer's Almanac.

²¹ There is one exception to this: children are often named after a sibling who died in infancy. In effect they have the same names as the deceased sibling; parents said that they did this in order not to 'waste' a name (for more on this form of necronymic naming, both historical and contemporary practices, see Layne 2006: 39-41). Infants born dead often receive the middle name *ahogadito/a*, 'drowned'.

godparents with the aid of some blessed water a few days after birth. The sprinkling of water, which accompanies the conferral of a personal name, ensures that, should the child die before its church baptism, its soul will become an *angelito*, or little angel, and that, free of sin, it will proceed straight to heaven (see Harris 1982 for a near identical ritual in the highlands of Bolivia). The godparents chosen for informal and church baptism and for other rites of passage²² are often paternal or maternal uncles and aunts, such that ritual kinship reaffirms bilateral descent links (from the perspective of the baptised) and links between affines (from the perspective of the parents and godparents). Hence, for example, parents and their children's godparents will address each other as *compadres* and *comadres* (co-fathers and co-mothers). Both personal names and surnames become a vehicle for prayers, blessings and communication between the living and the dead via their use in remembrance rituals. Remembering and uttering the names of the deceased in proper fashion is an essential kin duty, for all close bilateral kin, and these practices are necessary for turning the deceased into proto-saints (see chapter IV).



Figure 13. The ritual of Agua del Socorro.

²² Such as the first hair cut (for boys), confirmations and weddings.

Animals are thought to differ from humans for their lack of personhood. This lack of personhood is reflected in the fact that they are not given personal names, but are instead generally called simply by the name of species to which they belong: ‘cat’, ‘cow’, ‘donkey’ etc. Animals also lack a form of knowledge which humans have, namely, knowledge of one’s kin relations. It is said of animals that, ‘they do not know their blood’, meaning that they do not recognise ties of paternity, maternity, filiation and broader bilateral relatedness. Villagers often explain that they do not name most of their animals so that they do not develop affection for them (*para no encariñarse*), thereby denying them a bond of relatedness that can develop through love. The exception to this norm are dogs, which are the only animals that regularly receive personal names. The fact that dogs do receive personal names is linked to their ability to ‘do’ and ‘think’ through kinship, which distinguishes them from other animals. Like humans, dogs normally live in the house,²³ rather than in the street, *corral*, *chacra* or wilderness and, like humans, dogs fall in love, marry and even elope.²⁴

Proper persons belong not to one, but two sets of relatives. Double surnames mark these dual aspects of a person, allowing individuals to see themselves as related to paternal and maternal kin. Lacking one surname is an anomaly that is difficult to accept since it implies a missing relationship to one parent and their kin. If one includes the names ‘carried in the heart’, and the kin relations that are obscured or forgotten over time, a person is linked to multiple sets of kin. This notion of personhood as composite echoes Sahlins’s notion of kinship as a ‘mutuality of being’ (2011: 13). The notion of personhood as bi- and multilateral also bears some resemblance to Strathern’s notion of the ‘dividual’ in Melanesia where, ‘far from being regarded as unique entities, Melanesian individuals are as dividually as they are individually conceived. They contain a generalised sociality within. Indeed persons are frequently constructed as the plural and composite site of the relationships that produce them’ (1988: 13).

²³ Cats also live in the house; however, most villagers regard them with mistrust since witches like to turn into cats to infiltrate the homes of those whom they wish to cause damage to. Therefore, one can never be sure whether one’s own cat is not a witch.

²⁴ Dogs’ position of privilege in human-animal relations and the partial extension of ties of relatedness to dogs puts them at risk of becoming victims of retaliation or witchcraft. When two households are engaged in a dispute or feud, one household’s dog is often poisoned, burned or otherwise mistreated, allegedly by the other household (or a witch acting on their behalf).

However, by contrast to the Melanesian *dividual*, personhood in Yapatera is premised on an opposition and hierarchical relation between society and individuals (Strathern 1988: 13-15).

‘Bilateral race’ in Yapatera

Bilaterality informs how villagers in Yapatera think about kinship, names, marriage, and personhood. As a means to think about human categorisation and human relationships, it also informs villager’s ideas about race. In the previous chapter, I discussed how the local folk theory of race is linked to ideas about procreation and physiology, and I showed how the theory posits that persons are made up of multiple racial essences. According to this local knowledge, because of the fact that individuals are always made up of several races, ‘race’ is useless as a meaningful marker of social group membership. I am proposing that this local folk theory of race is informed by bilateral descent practices and bilaterality as a kinship ideology. Bilateral descent and the ideal of bilateral relations and personhood provide a template for thinking about what race is and how it works in the local context. Persons are related to both their mothers and fathers, and their bodies and physiology are a reflection of this. Race is an aspect of physiological relatedness and follows the same rules as descent and naming: it is influenced by the contributions of both mother and father and, beyond that, by other more distant maternal and paternal kin. Race, like kinship, is never singular, even at the level of the individual person. Instead it requires the contribution of mother and father, creating dual links, and maternal and paternal kin, creating further links.

The recognition of the complementary role of mothers and fathers, and of maternal and paternal kin, has cross-cultural salience. It can be found even in societies characterised by unilineal descent, as in Fortes’ notion of ‘complementary filiation’ (1953: 33; Leach 1973), which he saw as crucial to emotional and personal well-being. People everywhere may have implicit understandings of cognatic links; however, what people make of these ideas and to what degree they are articulated or muted varies cross-culturally. In Yapatera

bilaterality is seen as the default form of relatedness, placing bilateral relations, and the very idea of bilaterality, at the centre. Furthermore, the explicit link between the graded nature of kinship and the graded nature of race has particular cultural relevance here.

Occasionally villagers make a more direct link between surnames and races. Sometimes they refer to specific surnames as ‘races’. Villagers sometimes talk of the race of the Suluco, the race of the Ortega and so on. Furthermore, some surnames have specific racial associations, for example people with the surname Carrasco are thought to be more likely to have darker skin colour. However, such notions of surnames as quasi-lineages are abstract and idealised. Actual phenotypical characteristics are never the product of one surname ‘stock’ alone, but are always the result of the mixing of different kin contributions. Hence, when villagers attempt to label themselves using racial terms, they will refer to any number of bilateral ties. For example, Gata remarked that, ‘If I am *negrita* [a bit black], it’s the fault of the Otero. My father was Antaro Cruz Otero; his mother was Rosa Otero Cienfuegos, who was black like black coffee!’ Plácida similarly explained that,

My father has *cataquense* [from the town called Catacaos] race, he is *cholo*, and through his mother he is Castillo, he has *serrano* and Ecuadorian race, because his mother was Castillo Dominguez. That is why my papá has come out lighter, more yellow. And all his brothers too, but there are some brothers who have also come out more brown like the colour of my grandfather.

While certain surnames are associated with darker skin and others with lighter skin, they are also associated with other less racially linked physical characteristics such as height, body shape and so on. Having a certain surname makes one more likely to have a certain phenotypical trait, but the historical process of mixing (chapter II: 101-104) has diluted such traits and weakened the link between surnames and specific traits. One informant told me that, ‘the Barranzuela were very black in the past. Like Eleuterio, that’s how they all were, but not any more!’ Furthermore, as we saw in the previous chapter, kinship necessarily involves relations between people with different surnames and of different races.

One difference between race and other bilateral aspects of kinship, such as the surname transmission practices which I have highlighted here as

particularly illustrative of this bilaterality, is that race is unpredictable, individual and primarily physiological. Double surname transmission is heavily regulated by moral norms and by the law and produces fairly predictable outcomes; the paternal and maternal contributions are, usually, equal. By contrast, in the case of ‘race’ the maternal or paternal contribution may be stronger or weaker in ultimately determining the racial composition of the offspring.

As one of the quotes above illustrates, surnames are also linked to place. The notion of Yapatera as a physical place is linked to the existence of a stock of surnames and of a set of interrelated families (for similar linkages between bilateral descent, surnames and place, see Strathern 1981). Certain surnames are considered native to the village, others to the Alto Piura valley, to the Piuran highlands and to the state of Piura.²⁵ When visitors, for example evangelical missionaries, come to Yapatera, villagers repeatedly ask for their two surnames and where their parents were from, in an attempt to establish their degree of outsider-ness and to link unknown surnames to familiar places. Within the village, people differentiate between surnames that are common among the descendants of the *hacienda* employees, which are considered foreign names from the Bajo Piura valley, and the surnames of the descendants of the *hacienda*’s former workers, which are considered more autochthonous. Within the village, surnames also provide a mapping function (see also chapter VI: 234). Villagers refer to neighbourhoods through the surnames that are clustered there: the *Calle de los Carreño*, or ‘street of the Carreños’, *Donde los González*, or ‘where the Gonzalez are’, and *Las Ortegas*, using an augmentative suffix to mark the area as ‘full of Ortegas’.²⁶ This clustering of specific surnames in certain areas is due to the patrilateral skewing in surname transmission and to temporary virilocal residence patterns. But villagers are quick to point out that such named zones are extremely porous, for there are probably as many or more non-Ortega surnames as there are Ortegas in Las Ortegas.

²⁵ Villagers are not particularly interested in the deep historical origins of particular surnames. In many societies slaves took the surnames of their owners (e.g. Benson 2006 and for more on slavery and naming practices), and surnames such as Carrasco, León, which villagers consider native to Yapatera, are found among the *hacienda*’s colonial owners. Afro-Peruvian activists have claimed that other surnames are African in origin, including Caramantín and Acaro, although they are more likely of Italian origin.

²⁶ As in *cuchara*: spoon, *cucharada*: spoonful.

Throughout Peru, surnames can be powerful local indicators of power, wealth and status (Gilbert 1981). The fact that a person with the surname Barranzuela from Yapatera stands a poor chance of becoming president of Peru compared to someone with the surname Belaúnde from Lima is not lost on villagers. For some surnames to correlate with wealth and status they must be indicative of more exclusive, endogamous kinship and marriage strategies and ideologies. By contrast, within Yapatera, where people have no wealth or elite status to protect, kinship practices are more inclusive.

Villagers' view of kinship as mixing recognises that heterogeneity is central to kinship. But it also recognises that underlying the apparent multiplicity of kinds and categories is an equally important sameness or relatedness. Valeriano reflected poignantly on this one day as he sat on his rocking chair in front of his house, surrounded by his son, son-in-law, grandson, two nephews, a granddaughter and me, all sitting at his feet. We were resting, drinking *chicha* (maize beer) after having spent the morning helping shell maize from his *chacra* in the cruel December sun. Someone was talking about an acquaintance and in order to ensure that everyone knew who was being talked about, his identity was established through his paternal and maternal surnames. This prompted Valeriano to ask, in his playful way,

There are so many surnames. Now there are many, many surnames. But how can it be? How can it be if, as they say, we all came from Adam and Eve?!...And why is *this*: they say we all come from Adam and Eve... but how is it possible that there are whites and blacks—if we all come from Adam and Eve?!

Everyone laughed. His question had no answer. But underpinning Valeriano's rhetorical question was an ontological observation, namely that diversity emerges out of an initial sameness.

Conclusion

Surname transmission practices reflect cultural and social changes and the strategies of different social groups to cope with these changes, including through struggles over status and legitimacy, especially in Latin America. In addition to the example of Peruvian upper-class families discussed by Gilbert, the following contemporary examples are illustrative of how different

populations have put the same naming practices to different ends. Kaur (2005) shows how some Guatemalan *ladinos* (the rough equivalent of *mestizos*) think about surnames as a form of social capital invoked to conceal indigenous ancestry and to emphasise status and wealth via an idiom of ‘purity of blood’, both in the physiological and the religious sense. In Amazonia, Gow describes how for people who see themselves as being ‘of mixed blood’, ‘surnames encode processes by which originally separate peoples come together through intermarriage to form a new people.’ (2007: 206) In the case of the Cocama, who see surnames as markers of corporeal substances transmitted patrilineally, he describes the process by which girls change their surnames from low status Cocama names to higher status Brazilian names, not to disguise their indigenous ‘identities’ since they can still be read off their bodily features by others, but to signal that they have abandoned their kin ties to other Cocama (2007: 204). Through this process they become ex-Cocama.

Sanabria (2001) has written about a shift in surname transmission among highland Bolivian peasants spawned by revolution and agrarian reforms in the 1950s. A dramatic decline in illegitimate infants carrying their father’s surnames reflected a new importance attached by both peasants and church officials to legitimate birth status and its coupling with genealogical reckoning. The decline in allocation of paternal surnames to illegitimate children reflected the need to limit claims to land and inheritance in the context of agrarian reforms (2001: 147-149).

In Yapatera, I have not observed any shifts in surname transmission nor are individuals, to my knowledge, engaged in changing their surnames. Nevertheless, how villagers think and talk about surnames, and about bilateral descent and marriage more broadly, reflects their historical position and a specific kind of struggle for legitimacy. Surnames are not used to emphasise notions of superior status, or whiteness (although it is recognised that certain surnames do have such connotations). Instead, the historical mixing of people, encoded in the mixing of surnames, has put ‘blackness’ firmly in the distant past. The emphasis is not on the connotations of specific surnames themselves, but instead on the very mechanism by which such surnames are transmitted, namely

by mixing. By emphasising bilateral links, which cut across race, and by using ‘bilaterality’ as a template for thinking about race, villagers are able to deny the exclusivity and linearity sometimes associated with descent. By extension, they downplay the potential ethnic and racial distinctiveness of individuals, families, and the village as a whole. Villagers invert the more common association between surnames and ethnic belonging, and use surnames to think about mixture, both kin mixing and racial mixing. Kinship here does not help to naturalise or legitimate the existence of ethnic groups but to delegitimise them. Ideas about relatedness do provide a biological language for ideas about race, but this idea is that of fundamental mixture. This chapter contributes to the literature on *mestizaje*, kinship and race in Latin America by suggesting that villagers in Yapatera think through bilateral descent, personhood and marriage to make sense of, and engage in, ongoing processes of local mixing.

Chapter IV. Keeping their tombs warm: Remembrance practices, sociality and the saint-like dead

Negros veletos: fanciful blacks

De la Cadena has used the term ‘silent racism’ to describe the way in which ideas about racial difference and racism itself in Peru are disguised by other discourses, particularly discourses about ‘culture’ and ‘education’ (de la Cadena 2000). Silent racism has received less scholarly attention in relation to contemporary religious practice in Peru. However, I found local Catholic clergy a major source of such silent and more overt racism during my fieldwork.

As there was no priest resident in Yapatera, most of the villagers’ religious needs were met by three priests working from the Diocese of Chulucanas.¹ These priests visited the village to hold masses on important religious occasions—especially Easter, All Saints, Christmas, and the festivals of

¹ This chapter is written to reflect the practices of a Catholic majority. 95% of villagers identify as Catholic, 2% identify as Evangelical, while a further 2% identify as ‘other’—they are presumably members of a local Jehovah’s Witness congregation of about seventy members—and less than 1% claim no religious identification (INEI 2007). Most villagers consider themselves Catholics ‘by birth’ even if they never attend mass, openly criticise the priests and even reject the veneration of saints. Catholics stress that Catholic baptism cannot be undone and that Catholic beliefs and practices cannot simply be overturned or unlearned. Both priests and lay Catholics in Yapatera refer to Evangelical conversion sarcastically as ‘de-baptising’ and ‘baptism in the river’ as opposed to Catholic baptism which takes place in the sanctity of the church, through the divine authority of the priest and using blessed holy water. In Yapatera, being Catholic is patriotically equated with being Peruvian and the use of the word *cristiano*, to mean human, assumes a universal commonality as children of a Christian God (chapter II: 99). The notion that the ‘new religions’ (or simply, ‘the religions’) are a foreign element, is still widespread in many small villages like Yapatera, but is increasingly hard to sustain in urban centres where conversion is vast and highly visible.

those saints who are venerated in Yapatera's church—and to conduct funeral masses, baptisms and weddings. I came to know each of the priests and the principal catechist fairly well and interviewed them independently of each other in the diocesan offices. They each portrayed Yapatera as a village that was disproportionately lacking in proper Catholic fervour.

Presiding over the Maundy Thursday mass, Padre Tomás asked for twelve adult men in the congregation to participate in the re-enactment of Jesus washing of the feet of the twelve apostles. Faced with a church full of women and children, and less than a handful of old men, a disgruntled Padre Tomás asked some of the women who lived nearby to go home and convince their husbands or sons to come into the church. When this failed, the increasingly frustrated priest forced a few reluctant primary school-aged boys to substitute for the absent men. After the mass, Padre Tomás turned to me and, for all to hear, asked, 'Why is there so much disharmony in the village?!' Several months prior, in a private interview, I had asked Padre Tomás whether villagers' supposed lack of participation in public masses might be due to the fact that there was no regular Sunday service, and he replied:

I think that it could be something cultural, no? Well, every village has its particularity; [Yapatera] has its particularity, it has its history also. What I mean is, as a village, in the past, it had something to do with the issue of slavery, the issue of the blacks, right? It has its history as a village and this means that it also has repercussions for people's way of thinking.

Another priest, Padre José, made a more overt reference to race:

Yapatera is a phenomenon all of its own; it is very problematic. Here the discord is much more than in other villages. There is no organisation. Why, you ask? It has to do with the fact of being black. They feel bad; they say to themselves, 'Why must I be black?' It is in their collective unconscious; they don't have self-esteem.

When I asked why, given the comparatively large size of Yapatera compared to other villages, there was no resident priest, Padre José, somewhat annoyed by my question, told me that the parish had to serve forty villages with only three priests, and then added, 'No one in Yapatera has ever asked for one. They want a television, not a priest!'

In an interview with the third priest, Padre Jacinto, we were talking about some popular Catholic practices that were neither sanctioned nor prohibited by

official teachings. Although the practices were widespread throughout the province and the state of Piura, Padre Jacinto told me, ‘These are their idiosyncrasies. Yapateranos are religious, but they aren’t so interested in theory—they like practice!’

The priests’ lament over a lack of interest in religion and declining participation in proper ritual was not necessarily unique to Yapatera. Many Peruvians consider a decline in Catholic practices to be a symptom of wider societal and cultural shifts. They link declining religious practice to processes of family disintegration, a weakening of moral values, and the malaise of *machismo* and *facilismo*, or the attitude of ‘wanting something for nothing’, of wanting things the ‘easy way’. In addition, many see the growth of ‘new religions’, meaning Evangelical churches, as contributing to and capitalising on such a decline. Nevertheless, all three priests made a causal connection of such symptoms in Yapatera to race or ethnicity, by associating the defects in religiosity with the notion that this was a village of blacks or *morenos*. Padre Tomás blamed social history for the problem, while Padre José explained the religious deficit in psychological terms, acknowledging the existence of racist discrimination, which he thought impaired villagers’ ability to participate properly. Padre Jacinto was more forgiving in attributing religious belief to villagers, but saw them as lacking interest in church teaching. The principal catechist of the diocese was a strict older woman by the name of Maria. She was much more blatant in drawing a moral divide along racial lines to exclude people from Yapatera when she told me that, ‘They are a closed people, difficult to communicate with. They cling on to their customs and it is difficult to get through to them. Because of slavery they are *gente morena* [brown people] from Africa. These people have always felt resentment!’

The priests and the catechist had another, more specific, criticism of religious practice in Yapatera. They frowned upon the emphasis villagers placed on rituals surrounding death and remembrance of the deceased, specifically the provision of feasts which priests often referred to as ‘parties’. On one occasion, the church was packed for the requiem mass for Plácida’s husband: in his youth he had been a very popular football player in the village. Padre Tomás asked for

all those who would receive communion to raise their hands, but only seven did. Breaking the solemn tone of his sermon with crude sarcasm, Padre Tomás asked, ‘Now raise your hands those who will participate in the *compartir* [feast] at the family’s house after the mass...all of you, right?!’ In a similar vein, during a mass held for the Passion of Christ, Padre José reprimanded the congregation for its slim attendance by saying, ‘But we do like parties don’t we?!’ At a baptism I participated in, the godparents were told by one of the priests: ‘You know, *compadres* [the godparents of one’s children/parents of one’s godchildren] aren’t just drinking buddies!’ On another occasion, Maria, who always led the singing before mass, chastised the congregation by saying, ‘For the *misa de difuntos* [requiem mass] you look for the fattest turkey, the freshest *chicha*, you come out nice and elegant, and you get drunk—so drunk that you end up in a fight with the deceased!’

These criticisms tap into pan-Latin American stereotypes about blacks being prone to living beyond their means, being frivolous, vain, materialistic, carnal and gluttonous, and are reflected in the insult *negro veleto*² —‘capricious’ or ‘fanciful’ black—and in the saying *a los negros les gusta la pompa*, or ‘blacks like pomp’. Such criticisms also construct villagers as disorganised, anti-social, and lacking in civil and moral values. They bear a striking resemblance to colonial stereotypes about people of African descent, particularly slaves. For Peru, Wood finds that blacks, both enslaved and free, were cast as unable to perform useful social or public functions (2004: 291); O’Toole writes that people of African descent in Peru were imagined to lack solidarity, to be pathologically docile and subservient (2012: 46-47). As O’Toole argues, such stereotypes helped legitimise slavery, and assuaged fears about slaves organising and rebelling against their slaveholders (O’Toole 2012: 46-47). Individuals of African descent were also constructed as idolatrous and resistant to Christian conversion (see various contributions in Bryant et al. 2012; Wade 2009: 83-88, 101-107).

Despite the criticism by priests that religious life in Yapatera is a sign of disharmony, lack of morality and a lack of understanding, this chapter

² On the meaning of *veleto* in Piuran Spanish, see Puig (1995: 227).

demonstrates that practices concerned with death and remembrance emphasise and maintain sociality, mutual obligation, exchange, and community cohesion. By maintaining and nurturing the ties between the living and the dead villagers engage with, and attempt to overcome, the uncertainties of Catholic teachings about the afterlife. These practices, as villagers and priests themselves concede, have more to do with preserving the sort of ties of kinship and relatedness that matter equally to the living and the dead, than with doctrinal ideas about resurrection and salvation (for cross-cultural comparisons of the relation between relatedness and remembrance see Carsten 2008). However, by performing these practices in the domain of religion, villagers enact broader moral values that contradict the narrow interests stereotypically attributed to them.



Figure 14. Father teaching his son how to *velar*

Engaging with uncertainty

Ideas about the afterlife in Yapatera are ill defined. This is partially because Catholic teachings, especially about purgatory, are themselves vague. As Millones points out, the concept of purgatory is not even explicit in the Bible itself (2010: 54). Villagers state that after death individuals face God's

judgement of how they have lived. When they die most adults need to be cleansed of their sins in the state of purgatory, a site and time of moral purification and temporal punishment, after which they may ascend to heaven. Hell awaits those who closed themselves to God's saving love through malice. However, the living can never be sure where their deceased loved ones are (in purgatory, heaven or hell) at any given time and where they will end up. A way to deal with this uncertainty is to assume that they are in the in-between state of purgatory. The Christian soul is usually referred to using the term 'spirit' (*ánima*), a term which by definition indicates a soul in penitence or in purgatory (Real Academia Española 2001). But purgatory is itself a place of uncertainty, especially because no one knows how long the dead souls remain there, and because entry into heaven is not guaranteed. When I asked villagers where the dead are, I always received a question in return: 'Where might they be?' (*Dónde estarán?*)³ Whenever villagers do say that souls 'go to heaven' or 'are in purgatory' they always add the qualifier *dicen*—'they say'—which has the power to turn any statement into a vague rumour, the veracity of which is ill established, and hence dismissible. Instead, villagers emphasised the impossibility of knowing the whereabouts of the deceased, frequently adding that the priests' explanations were as good as any person's guess, for example by saying, 'Jesus himself didn't know, so how should we?', or 'We read the Bible but only God knows where they go!' and 'Well, we say they go "to heaven"; you know that's what we say, don't you?! But we don't really know. We finish there [*Allí terminamos* i.e. we die and therefore we don't know]!'

While the afterlife is characterised by uncertainty, villagers stress the inevitability of death. Following the announcement of a death on the *emisora*, the community radio, the phrase uttered by many is 'There was nothing that could be done about it...!' An under-stocked health post stationed in Yapatera and serving fourteen surrounding villages, the remoteness of hospitals, the pressures on state healthcare and the costs of private healthcare mean that many villagers seek medical help only in the direst circumstances. One landmark study suggests that the rate of chronic illness among heads of household is higher for Afro-Peruvians

³ By contrast, when I asked them where the deceased 'go', the answer was always clear: they go to the cemetery.

compared to *mestizos* and indigenous people, and that the rate is higher in Yapatera than in other Afro-Peruvian communities (Benavides et al. 2006). The high rate of individuals with high blood pressure is linked to the prevalence of cardiovascular disease, strokes and diabetes. Villagers jokingly play on the similarity between the sounds of the words ‘pressure’ (*presión*) and ‘prison’ (*prisión*) by saying, ‘We are all “pressioners” here!’ (*Todos somos ‘presioneros’ por acá!*)—insinuating that they are prisoners both of the disease and of death itself.

Death is seen as a social levelling mechanism. As Cipriano once put it to a visiting Evangelical missionary, ‘They say that one time a rich man went to buy life from God. But neither rich nor poor can do it!’ In death, so villagers often stress, rich and poor, black and white, stand on equal grounds before God (this is also emphasised in Cipriano’s parable, chapter II: 86). Death frequently appears as a mythical female figure who tricks her unknowing victims into her arms, similar to La Llorona in Mexico (e.g. Lomnitz 2008: 26); at first seductive and beautiful, she often turns grotesque. Fernando Barranzuela, a local poet, reflects humorously on his temporary escape from the *vieja chancletuda* (old, scruffy poor woman, literally, ‘sandal-wearer’), in the following *cumanana*:

Tell death
Stop being such a bitch
Stay away from the villages
And leave Yapatera alone

One day she came to my bed
I knew she was death
But she alone with me
Said, ‘Embrace me tight
I want you to be my husband!’

And she threw me to the corner
With the first push
And her underwear stank
That old condemned woman

I had to make love to her
Now I wash day and night
She said: ‘Thank you, Sir
I’ll be back next year!’

While the death of the sick or elderly is seen as inevitable, and death in an abstract sense can be dealt with through humour and joking, some deaths cannot

be normalised in this way. In particular, the death of young people in the prime of their lives often causes rumours that such deaths are a ‘curse’ or a ‘punishment’ for the bereaved family. Punishment may be divine in origin because of a committed sin, or its cause may be malevolent witchcraft, in retaliation for an offence against another individual or family.

Death can have traumatic physical consequences for those left behind. Many villagers who suffered from chronic illnesses attributed the onset and even the cause of these to *susto*,⁴ or ‘fright’ illness, triggered by participating in funeral processions. Funeral processions usually last several hours and take place during the hottest time of the day. It is very common for close relatives of the deceased, both women and men, to break down or faint during these processions, particularly at times of heightened anxiety such as when the lid to the coffin is closed when it first leaves the house of the bereaved family, or when it arrives at the cemetery and is about to be hoisted in to the tomb; in both instances the bereaved will throw themselves at the coffin in an attempt to prevent it from being closed or removed.

Susto can also be triggered by visions or dreams of the deceased. Many villagers spoke of dreams and visions of their deceased spouses, parents and children. Such dreams and visions are considered problematic since they indicate that the deceased is a soul in penitence (*alma en pena*), which, unable to ascend to heaven, wanders the earth retracing the steps he or she took in life, causing trouble or fear among the living. Villagers frequently talk about the dead, but Catholics mention their names only in conjunction with the epithet *el/la finado/a*, (or in its diminutive *el finadito/la finadita*) ‘the deceased’. This epithet marks the rite of passage from living to dead and helps create a boundary between the living and the deceased. Uttering the epithet, as well as the invocation ‘may he/she rest in peace’ (*que en paz descanse*), after a deceased person’s name prevents their soul from being disturbed and is mitigation against the risk of disturbed souls coming back to harm the living. Many villagers state that, ‘If you forget the souls, they punish you. That’s why we remember them, so they don’t do anything to us!’ Villagers stress the importance of remembering not only kin

⁴ *Susto* is found throughout the Spanish-speaking Americas and has been well studied by medical anthropologists (e.g. Rubel et al. 1984).

but also those who are not closely related but have no family to remember them. At the village cemetery Domingo pointed to the thirty-odd simple, unmarked wooden crosses of children and adults whose families could not afford proper tombs, and to a few abandoned tombs, with crumbling paint, erased names, and without anyone to light candles (*velar*) or to adorn the tomb with flowers, a practice referred to as ‘crowning’ (*coronar*). He explained:

These are lost, thrown-away souls. They don’t have family; they have nobody. It’s like being a foreigner who goes to another republic and dies there, no one will remember them! But in your case, let’s suppose you die here: we will bury you, on your grave we’ll put your first name, your two surnames, when you were born, when you died, which republic you came from and we will go to ‘crown’ you.

Villagers pride themselves in having a cemetery with above-ground burial in concrete wall tombs, which is regarded as far superior to the more rustic below-ground burial common in the countryside. They pity those who are buried ‘in the dirt’ and who risk being stepped on, kicked or otherwise disrespected in their graves.⁵

The work of remembering

Villagers do not reject the veracity of the priests’ criticism of their lack of participation in religious rituals, but they do not link this to ideas about race. Villagers lament a decline in church weddings and baptisms, and a declining participation in saints’-day processions. They contrast a morally degenerate present to a past characterised by greater piety, harmony and respectability. They talk with pride of a by-gone era in which Yapatera’s patron saint, San Sebastián, or Chabaquito, as he is affectionately known, drew in thousands of pilgrims from far-flung places. Today Chabaquito’s miraculous powers have weakened, in particular his ability to bring on the much-needed rains after months of drought.

⁵ Wall tombs (called *nichos* or *bovedas*), were introduced to Peru during the mid-nineteenth century at Lima’s Presbítero Maestro cemetery, as a means to maximise space for a growing population, to offer lower-class subjects decent Christian burial and because they were considered more hygienic (Silverman 2002). The top and bottom levels of such wall tombs are usually the cheapest, the former being difficult to access and the latter being too close to the ground. The middle levels are the most desirable, and hence the costliest, because they allow the easiest access for relatives wishing to ‘crown’ the tombs, burn candles or otherwise communicate with the deceased.

Villagers also speak with admiration of the more pious mourning practices of the past and the series of taboos around Easter. Echoing the views of many villagers, Digna exclaimed one night:

We are Catholic but only in name! When they announce on the radio that there is a mass in the village, we don't even hear it. Or we forget we heard and afterwards we say: 'What? There was a mass?! I didn't know...' But when they invite us to a requiem mass [*fiesta de ánima*], 'so-and-so has invited me!' then, yes we go. We get up early in the morning and we get everything done so that we can go to the requiem mass. We even walk all the way to the other end of the village. And when the priest is talking, we say, 'he's been going on for ages!' In other words, we want to go eat! And after eating we leave with our souvenir [*recuerdo*, see below] and we say, 'It was nice! Wasn't the food tasty?' We even take food home for our families.

In spite of narratives about religious decline by both priests and villagers, rituals around death command high numbers of participants, and require thorough organisation and considerable expenses. I attended almost a dozen funerals during my fieldwork, the smallest of which saw several hundred participants and the largest of which was attended by over a thousand. Death is followed by a wake and the *novena*, or nine days of prayer, led by the prayer specialist, the *rezadora*. Requiem masses, called *fiestas de ánimas* or *misas de difuntos*, are performed at regular intervals to mark the anniversary of a loved one's death.⁶ These masses are found throughout the Catholic world; usually they mark the first anniversary of a death and with it kin often fulfil their ritual obligation of holding requiem masses, hence they are often referred to as *cabo de año*, 'end of year' masses (for Bolivia, Harris 1982; for Mexico, Lomnitz 2005; for Afro-Ecuadorians, Whitten 1965, 1975; for Afro-Colombians, Arocha and Lleras 2008; for Iberian practices, see Brown 1981; Cátedra 1992; Christian 1989; Pina-Cabral 1986: 223). In Yapatera, however, these masses are held, at least in theory, *ad infinitum*, so long as there are people to remember the dead. The first requiem mass I attended was held for a woman who had died 25 years earlier leaving behind a husband and twelve young children. The requiem mass was attended by her now grown sons and daughters, their children and their children's children. Requiem masses constitute by far the most frequent religious event in Yapatera and exceed the occurrence of baptisms, religious weddings and

⁶ On the link between requiem masses and suffrages and indulgences for the souls in purgatory see Lomnitz (2005: 102-106)

saints processions; thus, when people mention a ‘mass’ (*misa*), they usually mean a requiem mass. These masses command up to two hundred participants and are planned and saved for over several years. Because of the costs associated with a requiem mass, families often tag other celebrations (baptisms, confirmations or weddings) onto the requiem mass, in order to ‘have just one expense’ (*hacer un solo gasto*). However, the focus is always the requiem mass for the deceased.

Similarly, All Saints and All Souls (1st and 2nd of November), or the Day(s) of the Dead, as they are commonly known throughout Latin America, are so well attended that they feel almost like a second National Independence Day. The two-day festival, known in Piura as *velaciones* with reference to the profuse burning of candles (*velas*) and to the act of holding vigil (*velar*) over the dead (compare Hocquenghem et al. 1986; Velásquez Benites 2008), incurs the upheaval of thousands of migrants residing in Lima who return in busloads to northern villages and cemeteries for the occasion, frequently causing dramatic bus fare increases for the sixteen-hour journey. Funerals and remembrance practices also fuel the local economy and employment because of the requirements for huge amounts of candles, flowers, paper decorations, food and drink, invitation cards, requiem mass souvenirs, and transportation; and for local craftsmen to make or decorate tombstones, musicians and speaker systems, photographers, cameramen and entrepreneurs who film funerals and requiem masses and capture them on DVDs, and ritual specialists (both priests and lay *rezadoras*).



Figure 15. Man burning candles to remember his mother

Remembrance practices in Yapaterra have come under threat, at least in theory, by the slow growth of a Jehovah's Witness congregation in the village as well as the increasing influence of Evangelical missionaries who have succeeded in converting some villagers.⁷ Jehovah's Witnesses, in particular, express harsh criticism of Catholic funeral and remembrance rituals, which they consider idolatrous, since Catholics attribute an invisible, powerful agency to their deceased, and they refer to such practices as 'throwing parties for the dead'. Jehovah's Witnesses maintain that the dead cannot hear or see the living, and that they lie sleeping in 'cold' tombs awaiting the arrival of a divine kingdom on

⁷ Funerals, in which Catholic, Jehovah's Witness and Evangelical individuals can all be involved, frequently trigger serious disagreements and estrangement. Many deceased Jehovah's Witnesses and Evangelicals are still given Catholic funerals, *novenas* and requiem masses by their families, despite their expressed wishes. Because of the social pressure to participate in these remembrance rituals many Jehovah's Witnesses and Evangelicals sit in on Catholic wakes, *novenas* and requiem masses, although they frequently leave before food is distributed and do not respond to the *rezadora's* call to prayer. Many Jehovah's Witnesses and Evangelicals also appear at the cemetery during *velaciones*, but they only 'crown' tombs with flowers and do not participate in actual candle-burning.

earth. Jehovah's Witnesses insist that the destiny of the deceased cannot be influenced by the actions of the living but that it is up to God's judgement alone.

The challenge presented by Jehovah's Witnesses makes Catholic villagers reflect more explicitly on the motivations behind their own practices and seems to have invigorated their importance. Many villagers stated that the prohibition of these funeral and remembrance rites by the 'new religions' were the main reasons they could not convert, despite the fact that many agreed with the emphasis on internalised beliefs, moral values, personal biblical study, and a decreased role for religious specialists. I happened to visit Pedro and his father Cipriano one day as they were receiving the visit of three Evangelical missionaries who were offering prayers for Pedro's healing after a grave illness. Pedro, a humble farmer and father of three, gave the impression of being a weak man, albeit in recovery, and he received their words of comfort gratefully, listening intently and nodding his head. But after the missionaries left Pedro said to me:

If were to convert, and someone in my family died, I wouldn't cry, I would just bury our dead one and that would be it. I would forget about it all. I wouldn't pray the *novena* and give coffee and bread. I wouldn't wear black for two years. I could never do that! Therefore, I'll never convert!

Cipriano added, more bluntly, 'To forget my dead—never!' Later that year Cipriano buried both Pedro and another son. Despite the dire financial circumstances he faced, he was able to hold a proper funeral and *novena* because relatives and neighbours pooled their money to cover the costs.

Velaciones, celebrated at the cemetery on All Saints and All Souls, provide a time and space where criticisms by Catholics against Evangelicals and Jehovah's Witnesses can be aired more openly since attendants are, in theory, all Catholic. Moreover, since it is a collective ritual, unlike a funeral or requiem mass, criticism can be formulated abstractly without offending a particular family or person. Commenting on the lack of participation of Jehovah's Witnesses and Evangelicals, people at the cemetery say things that go the heart of the remembrance practices, such as, 'They do not love their dead!', 'They do not want the souls of their deceased!', and 'How can they forget mother and father?!' Many make explicit comparisons suggesting that, 'When we think of

the dead, we cry, we feel. The Jehovah's Witnesses? They feel nothing, they are happy! For them the dead, once buried, do not exist!

To Catholics forgetting the dead is tantamount to a denial of love for them. Remembering the dead, through funeral and remembrance practices, is likened to the act of loving and caring for the living. Remembering is a filial and kin obligation, which is continuous with the care provided to one's parents, siblings and other relatives while living. Caring for one's parents is a way to reciprocate their efforts in raising and nurturing one as a child (see Leinaweaver 2013: 570). In this way, remembrance practices are continuous with a cycle of nurture, love and care that begins in childhood and continues beyond death. A particularly feared criticism among villagers is the accusation of neglecting one's parents, children, spouse or siblings.⁸ During the wake or funeral, the bereaved will pre-empt such potential criticism by wailing phrases such as: 'I did what I could for you... but it was not enough. You wanted to go!' Words spoken by the priest before the funeral procession, the songs played during the procession and the words people speak at the tombs of their deceased during *velaciones* extol the virtues of kindness, humility, and parental love and are a reminder to the living to reciprocate the love and care that was shown to them by the deceased.⁹

Those who forget their dead risk being forgotten themselves, for one of the motivations for participating in these rituals is that one will later be remembered by one's kin, friends and acquaintances. Standing by the tombs of their deceased, villagers will ask each other, 'Who will remember us?' and some worry, 'Our grandchildren will remember us, will 'crown' our graves but not our great-grandchildren!' Villagers stress the importance of teaching children and

⁸ Indeed, the harshest criticism by Jehovah's Witnesses is that Catholics show more love, care and nurture for their relatives once they are dead than when they were alive.

⁹ Take for example the lines from the song 'To the shadow of my mother'/'*A la sombra de mi madre*' by Leo Dan (1964) which is played for all women: 'Everyone has a mother/But nobody has one like mine/She burns like a light/Keeping me company/If you could see her in my shack/As humble as she is/And her little eyes go out/Like the glow of a star/And I ask God praying/That my mother shall not die/That she live in my shack/At least like a picture/If ever, little mother/You go from me to heaven/ Take me with you, little mother/Don't leave me, don't leave me/I love you/But her shadow reaches me/Like divine blessing/It is the guardian angel/Of my wayfaring life'. A popular song for men's funerals was 'My Old Man'/'*Mi Viejo*' by Piero (1969), which praises: 'He is a good guy, my old man/He walks alone, waiting/He has a long sadness/From so much walking/I am your blood, old man/I am your silence and your time/His age came upon him/Without carnival, without masquerade'.

teenagers how to remember. I was told that ‘This is a custom which our ancestors taught us: they took us to the cemetery and said, “Here are your grandparents, your uncles, your aunts ... so that when I die, you don’t forget me.”’ Similarly, they emphasise the need to set an example through their own actions; hence I was told, ‘He who doesn’t continue with the custom; his children won’t do it either. They won’t even leave a bunch of flowers; they forget. He who forgets, his child will come out the same!’

Anxiety over being forgotten is linked to the recognition that parents have no influence on the religious choices of their children, and grandchildren, especially once they have passed away. Many hope that even if some of their children convert to ‘new religions’, the remaining children will continue to hold remembrance rituals. Domingo, whose wife, daughters and daughter-in-law were Jehovah’s Witnesses, called himself a Jehovah’s Witness ‘sympathiser’. During *velaciones* I encountered him burning candles and putting flowers by the tombs of his parents. When I asked him whether he thought he would be ‘*velado*’ after his death, he responded, ‘We cannot know these things. We have sons, we have daughters, but we don’t know their thoughts!’

Remembering is not simply something one does in the privacy of one’s thoughts, as the common usage in English suggests. Instead it is also a collective experience, and a form of individual and collective physical and social action which includes organising, hosting and participating in funerals, *novenas*, requiem masses and *velaciones*, burning candles, ‘crowning’ tombs with flowers, looking at pictures of the deceased or watching DVDs of funerals and masses, speaking of the deceased and saying their names, and saying prayers out loud or in one’s mind. Remembrance practices are also a form of mental work. Astuti has argued that:

We can assume that everywhere the transformation of a corpse into ancestor, ghost, spirit or whatever, will have to take place as much in people’s minds as it does on the burning pyre, underground, in the sky and so on. Quite simply, for the dead to survive, people must keep them alive *in their minds*. (2007: 228)

While this mental work often takes the form of forgetting the dead, in order to turn them into ancestors or spirits, and of loosening the ties between the living and the dead (e.g. Taylor 1993; for a Catholic context, see Cannell 1999: 137-

164; 2006b: 145), in Yapatera the emphasis of such mental work is on remembering the dead and transforming the relations between the living and the dead. *Velar* is not only the name given to the practice of holding burning packets of candles up to the tomb of the deceased, but it is also the name given to the act of thinking of the dead in one's mind. Villagers remind each other of the necessity of remembering the dead and during *velaciones* people talk in self-reproach about their failure to remember the dead enough. As I was taking in the sight, smell and heat of hundreds of people burning candles at the tombs of their deceased at *velaciones*, one man said to me, 'After this we will forget them [the deceased] until next year!'

In Yapatera, not only do villagers remind each other explicitly of the need for this mental work but the dead themselves explicitly ask to be remembered. The notion that the dead want to be remembered is illustrated in inscriptions on the envelopes of funeral and requiem mass DVDs and on the DVDs themselves, which frequently feature phrases such as, 'I beg of those who remember me with affection: don't cry for me. Because I have not died. I will only die when I no longer live in your memory.' Being remembered is a way of gaining a continuity of existence through the thoughts and actions of those who live beyond one's death, in particular one's kin, friends and acquaintances.

Specific visual practices and material objects aid this mental, physical and emotional work of remembering: funeral and requiem mass DVDS, requiem mass souvenirs, flowers and candles. The use of funeral and requiem mass DVDs is continuous with post-mortem photography in many societies. DVDs allow families to relive the experience of the funeral or requiem mass and they permit family members who cannot be present at such events to participate in the work of remembering. What struck me about the filming of the funerals, which contrasted with my own reluctance to take photos at funerals (despite villagers urging me to do so), was that the cameraman does not stay respectfully in the background. Instead cameramen will climb up fences, and on top of the walls of tombs, to zoom in on the bereaved mourners' faces, especially when their grief climaxes in sobbing and wailing and when they throw themselves at the coffin. Indeed relatives (especially affines and second-degree relatives) of the directly

bereaved encourage the cameraman by gesture or verbal cues to capture these displays of intense grief. They also invite him to film the bereaved next to the coffin in a family portrait. When watching the DVDs at family gatherings years later, viewers can relive these emotions. These DVDs always begin with a screen that shows a picture of the deceased and their name, which is invariably followed by a long scroll of names of the bereaved spouse, children (including illegitimate children), grandchildren and often siblings, nieces and nephews. What reads as the ‘cast list’ in the life of the deceased helps remind those who are named of their responsibility in remembering.

Another aid in the remembering process is the distribution of *recuerdos*, literally ‘memories’, which are souvenirs such as small charms given at the end of a requiem mass as gifts from the host family to the participants. They resemble baptism or wedding souvenirs and bear the name of the deceased, a photograph and dates of birth, death and requiem mass. These gifts range from key chains to small, framed pictures, wall clocks or other ornaments. *Recuerdos* are desired as objects in themselves because they make good decorative material for otherwise sparsely-adorned living rooms. Few villagers have access to cameras and, as a result, family photographs are few and far between, so that these souvenirs are often the only pictures many villagers have. The *recuerdos* are considered aesthetically pleasing and, made on simple image-editing software, feature a cropped photograph of the deceased against a brightly-coloured background template of green fields, flowers, and waterfalls. *Recuerdos* are often put in prime places, close to refrigerators, televisions or stereos or on the household saint’s altar. By placing these objects in their homes, villagers see them on an everyday basis and they say that gazing at the image of the deceased causes them to remember them.



Figure 16. *Recuerdos* on the wall, on a household altar and near a television

Beyond its role in obligations between kin, the need to remember is crucial to human relations in general. I was often reminded of my responsibility to remember those who had helped me and those with whom I had formed friendships. Whenever I left the village, even for brief periods of time, and returned, my informants commented that they had believed that I had left for good without saying goodbye and that they thought I would never return again, having forgotten them. Many evenings after a particularly lengthy conversation, my informants would comment that eventually I would forget them while they, on the other hand, would never forget me. I was often reminded that I had indebted myself by asking questions, by eating food offered to me, and more generally by ‘sharing’ (*compartir*). Most of my visits to someone’s house and most conversations were finished with a reminder ‘not to be ungrateful’ (*no seas ingrata*) and to repay my debts—by visiting or sharing again. Once I left the field and could no longer participate in this self-perpetuating cycle of reciprocity by paying for my visits with more visits, it was made clear that I would still be responsible for remembering my informants. Orlove writes about similar demands by his informants (near Lake Titicaca, Peru), for him ‘not to forget them’ (2002: 1-6). To be ungrateful (*ingrato*), by forgetting, he writes, is a form of betrayal, a denial of the value of that which is given to one and a denial of shared humanity (2002: 8-12). Leinaweaver has suggested that ‘gratitude’ is central to Andean ideas about kinship as relations of exchange and reciprocity (2013: 558-559), and that accusations of ‘ingratitude’ can reveal tensions within

kinship and other relations where duty and obligation are contested (2013: 568-572). Orlove considers the anxiety of becoming a forgotten *pueblo* ('village' or 'people') a particularly Andean dilemma and highlights the fact that those who are characterised as inferior, vulnerable or marginal (in this case indigenous peasants) are at a particular risk of being forgotten (2002: 13-15). Practices of remembrance, and the reciprocity they entail, both in relations with the dead, and in broader human relations, might be considered what Lambek calls 'ethical acts' because they involve 'acts of bestowal, reception, initiative, and the affirmation of responsibility for oneself and on behalf of others' (Lambek 2011: 11; see also Leinaweaver 2013: 560-561).

Exchange and sociality

Remembrance practices create relations of reciprocity between the living and between the living and the dead. These exchanges bind individuals and families together, and dictate behaviours that are considered neighbourly and respectable, and that are seen as creating a sense of social cohesiveness. Countering the stereotype of blacks as anti-social and disorganised, remembrance practices emphasise sociality. Against the stereotype of blacks as wasteful, feasts and material expenses and displays in remembrance practices have important spiritual and social returns. Here I focus on three aspects of exchange: the notion of 'accompanying', commensality, and light as a vehicle for exchange.

The notions of 'accompanying' (*acompañar*), and social obligation (*el compromiso*) which are important moral values in village life more generally, are also central to death and remembrance rites (for Iberian practices, see Pina-Cabral 1986: 225). The closest relatives, friends or *compadres/comadres* of the bereaved are responsible for helping to organise the wake, funeral and *novena*, carrying the coffin, comforting and physically supporting the bereaved, especially on the long, slow walk to the cemetery. They also restrain the bereaved when they cling on to the coffin. Neighbours, more distant relatives, acquaintances and other villagers join the funeral procession, dressed in their best clothes, behind the bereaved family. Their presence alone signals respect for the deceased and support for the bereaved, and it is not expected that they keep the

melancholy tone of the front of the procession. Instead the atmosphere gets less and less sombre the further one is from the coffin: vendors take advantage of the heat to sell home-made popsicles, mothers stop to breastfeed their children and men joke. Participants talk about how many people accompany the coffin, the more the better, and when families watch the videos of funerals and requiem masses years later they comment extensively on how many people participated, who attended and who did not. People in the procession frequently commented to me that, ‘We accompany them so that the day we die, they too will accompany us’.

After accompanying a coffin on its procession to the cemetery, attending the nine nights of prayer of the *novena*, or attending a requiem mass, villagers say to themselves and each other: ‘now we have fulfilled our obligation’ (*yá cumplimos con el compromiso*). *Compromiso*, ‘commitment’, is the name given to any date, meeting or appointment in Peru. In Yapatera villagers say they have *compromisos* with the dead and with the bereaved. Timoteo explained:

This is very important because it comes from antiquity. For us moderns, we carry the same regulations; that’s why we are the way we are. We have this agreement with the deceased. We have an agreement to come and ‘crown’ the tomb once a year. Everyone has to come here. That is, he who has the regulations, the usage; he who doesn’t, forgets. He has forgotten his *compromiso* forever.

Not to attend a funeral or *novena* of a relative or neighbour and especially not attending a requiem mass that one is invited to is unforgiveable. At the same time, villagers are aware of the high costs of organising such rituals, particularly requiem masses (around \$360), where the distribution of food is especially costly, and resources are pooled well in advance. In conversations about death middle-aged and older people frequently told me that they had strictly instructed their children not to hold expensive requiem masses after their passing. Upon hearing these utterances adult children who had until then been staring at the television, gazing into the distance or hidden from view inside the house, would butt into the conversation, countering sternly that they had every intention of holding these masses and not sparing any expense. Children rightly feared ‘what people might say’ (*el ‘qué dirán’*), in particular the potential accusation that they did not bury or commemorate their parents properly, demonstrating a lack of care.

The provision of food and drink, in funerary and remembrance feasting, is a way of thanking the participants for fulfilling their *compromiso* and for ‘accompanying’ the deceased and the bereaved. *Novenas* and requiem masses, and in the past, funerals themselves, would conclude with the distribution of food, an act known as *el compartir*, ‘the sharing’. In *novenas* families may simply distribute coffee and bread, while requiem masses demand more elaborate feasts and alcohol. In requiem masses, after the mass is said and after the ritual known as the ‘raising of the Christ’ (see below) participants patiently await the distribution of food which is considered especially luxurious, usually *cabrito* (baby goat), rice, beans and a treat such as a *tamalito verde*, *papa a la huancaína* or *empanada*. Participants drink *chicha*, fermented maize beer, from the communal cup called a *poto* that is passed around; in addition each individual receives a plastic cup of *chicha morada* (a sweet beverage made of purple maize) or a soft drink. The plates of food are piled high and I noticed that while men finished their plates, women almost always merely nibbled at theirs and took half or more of the food home to children, grandchildren, spouses and parents who did not attend. Food from requiem masses is eagerly received at home and often fought over since it is considered tastier, richer and more interesting than everyday food. The family hosting the mass, including the spouse, children, grandchildren, parents and close affines, do not themselves consume the food offered; instead they remain behind the scenes, preparing the food and ensuring that it is distributed in equal measures.

Offering food is not only a way of thanking the participants for remembering the deceased but it is also a way of symbolically feeding the deceased loved one. Villagers liken the requiem mass to a birthday party, and also refer to it as a *fiesta*—feast or party—for the spirit of the loved one. They frequently state that they celebrate it to please (*agradar*) the deceased. The food chosen for such an occasion is usually the deceased’s favourite. The notion that the dead can be fed through the living becomes clearest in the ritual for deceased children known as *angelitos* (little angels), celebrated on the 1st of November, All Saints Day. Baptised children are thought to die untainted by sin and ascend straight to heaven: hence they are known as little angels (for highland Bolivia,

see Harris 1982; for urban Brazil, see Scheper-Hughes 1992; for Afro-Ecuadorians, see Whitten 1965).¹⁰ On the day of *angelitos*, in much of the state of Piura, mothers who have ‘little angels’ go to the cemetery or main square of the village, in search of living children that are roughly the same age as their children at the time of death. They feed them baked sweets, sweet breads and candies in bright shapes and many colours; in this way mothers are thought to feed their deceased children via the mouths and stomachs of living children (Hocquenghem et al. 1986: 5-6; Millones 2010; Velásquez Benites 2008). Commensality within the context of *novenas* and requiem masses can similarly be understood as an act of feeding the dead via the participants’ collective surrogacy on behalf of the attendants who eat for the deceased adult (compare Lomnitz 2005, on banquets for the Day of the Dead in Mexico). Puig, in his *Dictionary of Piuran Folklore*, writes that the epithet *finado* (see above) is also the name given to bread and sweets which are offered to an individual who resembles the deceased (1995: 105).



Figure 17. Woman and her children serving the food for the *compartir*

¹⁰ Children who die without baptism are often referred to as ‘Moors’ (*moros*). Because of the risk of infant death before church baptism, villagers perform an informal baptism at home with godparents within a few days of birth (chapter III: 141-142).



Figure 18. The *compartir* outside the house

In addition to the practices of ‘accompanying’ and ‘sharing’, light is an important medium for exchange. Light is a vehicle for communication and for the exchange of prayers, protection and blessings between the living and the dead. I had the opportunity of observing and participating in *velaciones* in two consecutive years. In the first year Edson, the mayor of Yapaterra, failed to install electric lighting at the cemetery for the two-day festival, for which he was severely chastised by villagers. Facing dire prospects of re-election in the subsequent year, Edson arranged for the lighting to be installed in the nick of time for *velaciones*. Rather than having *velaciones* cut short by nightfall, villagers were now able to remember the deceased at their tombs until the next morning and it was felt that the electrical lighting added a more civilised and orderly tone to the celebrations. *Velaciones* shares many characteristics with Day of the Dead practices in Mexico and the Andean highlands: tombs are decorated with bright flowers, musicians play for the deceased, food is shared, families are reunited and people gather at the cemetery to visit with the dead. In Piura, the tone of the celebration is quite introspective, in part due to the practice of burning a candle, or better yet, a whole pack of candles while holding them up to the tomb of one’s beloved deceased in silence. A tremendous heat is given off by the collective

burning of hundreds of candles between walls of tombs, and layer after layer of molten wax covers the ground, the tombs and the hands and arms of participants.

In preparation for *velaciones*, the cemetery buzzes in anticipation. Tombs are prepared by young boys called *limpiatumbas*, ‘tomb-cleaners’, inscriptions are repainted carefully by hand and families gradually upgrade tombs over the years by tiling them with pastel pink or blue bathroom tiles, including a picture of a saint that the deceased was a devotee of, or a picture of the deceased themselves, and finally, a metal gate to safeguard vases and flowers from thieves. During the burning of the candles people gaze quietly into the flames and talk, either aloud or in their thoughts, to the deceased. ‘Now you have left me alone, poor little me’, says a woman to her dead sister. Poldo explained the sort of interior conversation that might take place in the following way:

You go with devotion; you go with love to ‘crown’ your little mother. Maybe you say something like: ‘little mother, now that I can’t see you anymore, here I am looking at your name, and here you are buried.’ If possible you say a prayer, for example, you say, dear God, hold her in Glory for me. Or you say an Our Father.



Figure 19. Woman ‘crowning’ the grave of her grandson.



Figure 20. *Velaciones* aided by electric light

The light of the candles burnt during *velaciones* connects remembrance practices to rituals of baptism, and to the notion of resurrection. It also creates a link between the dead, Christ and the saints (for Spain, see Cátedra 1992). In masses, the priests who visit Yapatera explain the use of light as a symbol of resurrection by referring to biblical passages such as John 8-12: ‘Jesus said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”’ The meaning of light is explained especially during baptisms, for example in the words of Padre Tomás to the godparents of a little girl: ‘Now you have the responsibility of caring for her life; a candle is easily blown out by the wind—you must keep it alive. Jesus says I am the light, life and the way.’ The lighting of candles for saints is also known as *velar* and Padre Jacinto explained during another baptism, ‘Why do we light candles for the saints? The light is the light of Christ, that which illuminates the way for us. Let us pray to God that this girl will be the light of Christ and that she illuminates the world through her good works.’

Light is especially salient during Easter and on Holy Saturday; a fire is lit outside the church, and the villagers light candles and parade into church after the period of Easter Vigil. In contrast to priests, villagers more commonly suggest that light provides protection for the dead in purgatory and on their post-

mortem journey: ‘We do it to illuminate them. So that nothing can happen to them.’ Similarly, I was told, ‘We do *velaciones* so that the dead can find their way. Who knows to where? To heaven or hell or wherever they are going.’ While light symbolises life and fire is purifying, there is also a danger in too much of it. With the introduction of electrical lighting, many villagers have given up *velaciones* with candles, because they say that ‘too much fire is bad’ for the dead. Villagers do not burn candles for the recently deceased because, as was often explained to me, they are too ‘fresh’ (*fresquitos*) and it harms them.

Remembrance practices, which require feasts, drinking, flowers, candle burning, and gifts, are central to ideas about neighbourliness, respectability and broader sociality. As Harris argues, *fiestas* especially for saints and ancestors, are themselves forms of relatedness (2008: 287-288). They have historical importance too, since, as Harris argues, in both Mesoamerica and the Andes, social units combining commoners with elites were historically defined, especially through religious and ancestral cults which, after conversion to Christianity, translated into the worship of patron saints (Harris 2008: 287-288).

The saint-like dead

Remembrance practices are a way to provide a continuity of care for deceased kin and a form of risk mitigation against dangerous thrown-away souls. However, they also obligate the deceased to return favours of protection and blessings to the living. Padre Jacinto, during a mass at the cemetery during *velaciones* explained the difference between All Saints Day and All Souls Day by highlighting the distinction between saints and the deceased souls. Saints, he said, can intervene on behalf of the living to talk to God in their favour. The deceased souls, by contrast are not yet ‘holy’ because they are still in purgatory: they require the living to ask God to forgive their sins and to accept them by his side. But by asking the dead for protection, villagers in Yapatera behave as if the deceased were already saints (for Iberian associations between saints and the deceased see Brown 1981: 69-85; Cátedra 1992: 286-339; 45; Christian 1989: 93-95; Pina-Cabral 1986: 226-238).

Remembrance practices and the worship of saints have many parallels. The deceased are dressed in robes that resemble those worn by figures of saints or of Christ. The framed pictures, plaster or plastic figures of saints and of Christ are commonly found on domestic altars and inside the church (see figure 16). If the deceased was a devotee of a specific saint, he or she is dressed in the colours specific to that saint.¹¹ Coffins, like the statues or images of saints, are carried on the shoulders of those who feel closest to them. Both are paraded around the village in a procession. For the deceased it is their first and last procession; saints are celebrated annually in this way. The dead are taken from their home in life to their home after death, that is, to their final resting place at the cemetery. Saints are taken from their home in the church to a family's house where they are hosted for a night and the next day they return to their place in the church. Coffins and saints are both made to stop and 'bow' (*hacer la venia*), to pay their respects to significant people or places. Since *venia* can also mean 'pardon' (Real Academia Española 2001), this can also be taken as a sign that the deceased or saint is forgiving the party for any wrong-doings and releasing them from potential punishment. The dead in their coffins bid a final farewell in this way to their home and to the homes of relatives, ritual kin, and friends and to the church. Saints bow to the church and the main benefactors of the procession. Children in white dresses throw confetti at the coffins and at the saints. Music, usually popular Catholic songs, as well as *marinera* and *tondero*, accompanies both coffins and saints. Walking behind either a coffin or a saint is referred to as *acompañar*. The nine days of prayer after death and the requiem mass end in a *compartir* in which the participants eat in the name and on behalf of the deceased. Saints' processions end in a *compartir* in which the participants dance to bring the saint joy. Saints are venerated, especially on their feast days, through the practice of burning candles and 'crowning' with flowers, just as the deceased are honoured in *velaciones*.

The deceased are also Christ-like: Christ's resurrection is re-enacted at the end of the *novena* and the requiem mass, in a ritual known as the 'raising of Christ' (*levantamiento/alzamiento de Cristo*) which involves the adoration of a

¹¹ Purple, the colour of the Señor Cautivo of Ayabaca in the Piuran highlands, is particularly popular.

Christ figure or crucifix by all the participants. A ‘burning chapel’ (*capilla ardiente*), consisting of a black curtain, candles, and flowers surrounding the coffin, is erected in the living room during the wake and resembles an altar to a saint or to Christ. Once the coffin is gone, the ‘burning chapel’ remains for the nine days of prayer and now resembles the stripped chancel in a Catholic church on Maundy Thursday, representing Christ’s physical and spiritual absence from the church before Easter. During requiem masses, a ‘burning chapel’ is also erected, but a Christ figure or crucifix takes the place of the coffin, standing in for the deceased. Once the Christ has been ‘raised’, participants have fulfilled their ritual obligation and the food is distributed to thank them. The participation of kin, friends and neighbours in the ‘raising of the Christ’ is implicitly thought to help the deceased achieve salvation.



Figure 21. Members of the religious fraternity carrying a Christ figure out of the church

Ideas about personhood construct individuals as modelled on saints. Traditionally the names of newborns were chosen according to the saints calendar (chapter III: 141) and people’s birthdays are still referred to as their ‘saint’s day’, even if they are not named after a saint.¹² Conversely, requiem masses are often likened to

¹² Compare Gudeman on Panama: ‘The cultural idea of the individual is marked in several ways by the saint system. According to this date of birth an individual is placed within a category

birthdays and *velaciones* are likened to birthdays, Mother's Day and Father's Day. As Arocha and Lleras suggest for Afro-Colombian Catholic practices: 'the deceased is considered a saint, in the same way the saint is considered a deceased' (2008: 69). In the neighbouring state of Lambayeque the villagers of Eten have a religious brotherhood for the souls of the purgatory as if they too were saints (Millones 1999; for sixteenth-century Spain, see Brown 1981: 143; for modern Iberian practices see Pina-Cabral 1986: 226-238; for Mexico, see Lomnitz 2005: 99-140).

Villagers express 'having devotion' (*tenerles devoción*), for their deceased relatives using the same language they use to talk about being devotees of a particular saint. Conversely, villagers speak of forming intensely personal, kin-like and reciprocal relationships with the saints and Christ, and with figures or images representing them. These relationships often begin at birth or in infancy when children are 'promised', by their parents or grandparents, to a saint in exchange for protection. Devotions to a saint are often passed down between generations from parents or grandparents to a child or grandchild. Villagers speak of having a special affection for their figures (*tenerles cariño*), which resembles the love one develops for family (compare Cannell 1999: 183-200 on the kin-like relations with, and nurture for, a Christ figure in the Philippines). Saints' pictures and figures serve to 'keep them in mind' (*tenerles presente*), and they are often compared to photographs of deceased kin. For example, Virgilia told me:

Venerating the saints and having a picture of them is like looking at a picture of a deceased relative; what you do is remember them, remember good memories, their lives, the times you had with them. That's what I think when I look at the picture of San Martín and Señor Cautivo. It is as if you remember him, you have him present in your mind, what he did for you.

Similarly, Tio Checho said:

It is like a picture of your father who you never knew, through the picture you come to know him and they tell you: that was your father. That's how it is with the saints. When Jesus was on earth, he left images of himself. God left these images so that we can know him.

bearing the name of a saint; this link between person, name, and date continues until the day of final judgment on November 2.' (1976: 723)

Most importantly, the deceased are thought to have similar powers to saints and Christ. Saints are widely treated as intermediaries necessary to access divine power (on Latin America, Gudeman 1976: 726-727; on Spain, Cátedra 1992 and Christian 1989). Many villagers say that, ‘Saints are like lawyers before God for us. They make requests for us [*ellos ruegan por nosotros*]’. During funerals, those close to the deceased will often cry out for the deceased to ‘pray for us over there!’ and during *velaciones* they say, ‘We pray for them and hold vigil because surely, they too, from over there ask for protection for us’. Funeral songs allude to the way in which the deceased become guardian angels and protectors, much like saints (see above). *Recuerdos* are also placed near the images of saints in family altars (see figure 16) and villagers pray to the deceased for protection, blessings and miracles. Tomasa explained, ‘I go to the cemetery to talk to my father. Little father, sweet father, I love you. I am going on a trip, ask for me before *Diosito* [‘little God’] so that he brings me home safely’. Genara told me that she often prayed to her mother:

And just when I need it, the help is there. How do you explain this? Suddenly I realise I only have five *soles* left for the next day and I ask myself, how are we going to eat? And then it’s as if she helps me. I don’t know. At that moment one of my children sends me some money and I am ok again. How else is that possible?!

However, it is precisely in treating the deceased as if they were proto-saints or saint-like that villagers’ remembrance practices look problematic for both Jehovah’s Witnesses and for the Catholic priests. Attributing higher powers to the deceased (both the power to bless and do miracles, and the power to curse) is considered idolatrous by both the Catholic priests and Jehovah’s Witnesses. Jehovah’s Witnesses require prospective converts to burn or destroy their saint figures and images. But it is because of these close, kin-like bonds to the saints that this process is agonising for converts. Tomasa, who had recently begun receiving Bible study lessons, was typical in putting the task off for several months, until finally she ordered her daughters to remove the images in her absence. But, unable to bear the thought of having the figures burnt, she arranged for Catholic neighbours to adopt them. What is striking is that when these figures disappear from the houses of new converts, so too do the *recuerdos* and even photographs of deceased relatives and neighbours, although it is not explicitly

required by the Jehovah's Witnesses. This is evidence for the strong link between the dead and the saints.

But these local remembrance practices are also problematic in the eyes of Catholic priests who are firmly the product of the Second Vatican Council reforms, and liberation theology.¹³ They see themselves as guiding their congregations towards a life-affirming Christian message celebrating life, reconciliation and love, toward a personal relationship to God and Christ, without the need for intermediaries, and they emphasise an interiority of belief and personal transformation.¹⁴ The priests regard local remembrance practices as too gloomy. As Padre Jacinto reminded participants in a mass during a funeral: 'She is not dead, she is alive. Because our God is a God of the living, not a God of the dead. We cannot give her food or a gift. But we can give her something: we can live united.' What is most problematic from the perspective of the priests is the blurring of boundaries between the domains of kinship and religion in local remembrance practices. An ongoing tension exists between, on the one hand, families who wish to hold funeral masses and requiem masses in the privacy of the family home and, on the other, priests who wish to make these masses public events held in the church and thereby focus attention on broader Christian messages of resurrection, the importance of belief and the community of the church. However, on the whole, priests opt to turn a blind eye to these local remembrance practices and to dismiss them as superstition and as 'custom' rather than labelling them as outright idolatry. This strategy of tolerance, in order to subsume the local practices within Christian practice or to transpose a Christian

¹³ Vatican II removed the need for saints as intermediaries (Christian 1989: 182-187) and emphasised a less hierarchical form of pastoral authority (Cannell 2006: 25). Liberation theology's 'preferential option for the poor' held a privileged place for the disadvantaged majorities of Latin America and challenged elitism (Gutierrez 1973). However, much like Marxism, by which it was inspired, it did not address inequality along racial lines or challenge racism overtly (e.g. Vuola 2006: 142).

¹⁴ These teachings have had some impact: membership of saints' fraternities has declined drastically and many villagers now distinguish between 'honouring' (*adorar*) the saints and the deceased, which is acceptable, and full-fledged 'worshipping' (*venerar*), which is considered idolatrous. While 'crowning' tombs or altars with flowers is linked to honouring, and hence acceptable, the burning of candles, through *velar*, is linked to worship, and in the eyes of many should be reserved for Christ. Many villagers no longer practice *velar* for the saints, but most still do it for the deceased, even if they say they should only 'crown' their graves. This suggests that the dead are perhaps more saintly than the saints themselves, or that the dead have come to take the place of the saints.

message onto local practice, has been used by the Catholic church in Latin America since the Spanish invasion particularly to resolve tensions between ancestor worship and Catholic doctrine (for Andean Peru, see Gose 2008).

Funerary rituals in societies organised by unilineal descent often turn persons into ancestors. After death persons are often stripped of the cognatic, affinal and more open-ended relations made in life, in order to purify or distil out the ancestor and restore the unity and exclusivity of the unilineal descent group (for example, Bloch 1971; Jackson 1977; Le Vine 1982; Mosko 1983). Even in societies that emphasise cognatic or performative links and downplay unilineal descent during one's life course, persons may be reabsorbed back into discrete groups as ancestors after death (e.g. Astuti 1995: 89-92). In the absence of unilineal descent groups in Yapatera, there is a pronounced link between bilaterally conceived persons (see chapter III: 140-143), individual ancestors and the saints. Whitten, examining the relation between Afro-Ecuadorian funeral rites and the 'kindred' argues that 'the ceremonies of death dismiss the ancestor from the world and from any significant role in the kinship system. Homage is paid to the dead on the basis of siblingship and filiation to the dead parent, without reference to descent line—real, ritual, or fictive.' (1965:147) Remembrance practices in Yapatera, rather than re-affirming the existence of exclusive descent groups, emphasise diffuse bilateral links. Funerals and requiem masses activate sets of people to come together to remember a specific person; in an important sense, those who are considered family (and, to a lesser degree those who are neighbours and friends) are those people who come together to remember a specific individual. However, funerary and remembrance rites in Yapatera do not dismiss the deceased from the affairs of the living as in Whitten's example; on the contrary, both the living and the deceased are involved in an ongoing cycle of exchange and obligation. Each ancestor requires the living to remember them, not as part of a kin group, but as an individual—via food, light, prayers and thoughts of remembrance. In turn, the living ask for protection and blessings from individual ancestors as if they were saints. Such remembrance practices generate sociality by maintaining a sense of cohesion and solidarity.

Conclusion

Remembrance practices in Yapatera engage with the fundamental uncertainty of what happens to the deceased after they die, and villagers counteract this uncertainty through the physical, material, mental, social and emotional work of remembering. These practices focus on the idea of ‘accompanying’ and social obligation between the living, and the exchange of prayers, protection, blessings between the living and the dead. The sociality generated by such practices provides a sense of temporal continuity through webs of relatedness and friendship, which forms part of the broader moral obligation ‘not to forget’. However, in treating their deceased as proto-saints, villagers engage in behaviour that looks idolatrous to the local priests (and other Christians). Nevertheless, casting themselves as behaving in a respectable, morally sound, Christian manner through these remembrance practices, villagers implicitly defy stereotypes of blacks as ‘uncivil’, ‘anti-social’ and ‘capricious’.

The practices described in this chapter bear striking resemblances to funerary practices of Afro-Ecuadorians and Afro-Colombians, as described by Whitten (1965) and Arocha and Lleras (2008), respectively. This similarity may be interpreted by some as evidence for a specific ‘black’ take on popular Catholic practice. However, the practices described in this chapter are not specific to Yapatera but are found throughout the Alto Piura valley, the state of Piura, and some of them are found throughout the country. The remembrance practices discussed here bear the equally noticeable imprints of Andean, Iberian and pre-Columbian funerary practices and ancestor worship. These resemblances across ‘ethnic’ lines can be understood in light of my argument that villagers seek to downplay the potential ethnic distinctiveness of their village and instead to blend in with national and regional forms of belonging and that they are engaged in practices which are ethnically ‘despecified’.

Colonial ideas about *casta*, the kinds of people that inhabited the world, were grounded in faith-based taxonomies of *limpieza de sangre* that exalted religious purity and which necessarily excluded black slaves (see chapter I: 39-40). However, Peruvians of African descent have acted as mediators, specialists and guardians within popular, syncretic Catholicism since their arrival in the

New World. Even while the colonial church and religious ideologies constructed blacks and slaves as ‘other’, such as by constructing them as religiously deficient, Peruvians of African descent used Catholic practices to present themselves as civilised subjects and loyal Christians (O’Toole 2012: 124; 139-140). Seeking Catholic conversion and enacting their rights as Catholics allowed them to resist some of the abuses of slavery (Bryant et al. 2012: 16). Peruvians of African descent were founders of important religious fraternities, including *El Señor de los Milagros*, the Lord of Miracles, who is now considered the national patron saint of Peru (e.g. Rostworowski 1992). A freed *mulato*, Martín de Porres, became one of just two Peruvian saints.¹⁵ Wood’s analysis of hagiographies of two black nuns in seventeenth-century Lima (2004) shows how the women overcame *casta* stereotypes and transcended their position at the bottom of the colonial hierarchy, via their vocation as nuns. Garofalo (2006) has highlighted the role of sixteenth-century Peruvians of African descent in adapting Iberian and Catholic traditions to the Andes and, by the seventeenth century, becoming ritual specialists in the blending of Catholic and Andean practices which even the Inquisition failed to suppress (see also Silverblatt 2004).¹⁶

Harris has argued that ideas about conversion in Christianity have always served to exclude, as well as offering a means for inclusion (Harris 2006). Examining Laymi rituals surrounding the annual return of the ancestors to conquer over, battle with, and be defeated by a Christian God in highland Bolivia, Harris writes that ‘a concern with the incompleteness of conversion is a leitmotif of Christianity in a much more general sense.’ (2006: 72) The remembrance practices of villagers in Yapaterra can be interpreted in the light of this dynamic tension between exclusion and inclusion. Outsiders may construct

¹⁵ Using the hagiography of San Martín de Porres, Garcia-Rivera (1995) argues that *mestizaje* has an evangelical message.

¹⁶ Contemporary Peruvians of African descent also continue to play an important role in the funerary rituals of Lima’s white, upper-class as the preferred pallbearers, and funerary parlours charge a premium for them. White-gloved, dark-skinned pallbearers, like black waiters, and black doormen in high-end hotels and casinos, are traditionally seen to lend an air of prestige, elegance and exclusivity to the funerals of the elites. In 2010, the Minister of Women’s Affairs and Social Development publicly declared this hiring practice discriminatory. The owners of funeral parlours countered that this simply reflected clients’ preferences and that the state was unduly encroaching on the free market. Some commentators accused the parlour owners of reverse discrimination by paying black pallbearers more than non-black ones.

them as religiously deficient and may use race, together with culture and history to explain villagers' moral, social and religious shortcomings. But by fulfilling their duties as Catholics, as kin, as neighbours and as friends, when they engage in 'remembering', villagers are acting as moral agents, counter-acting some of the localised forms of silent racism. Villagers worry about the deceased because exclusion looms for those who are forgotten. In the hopes of securing the ultimate inclusion for the deceased, entry into heaven, villagers work to turn them into proto-saints; in return they seek protection and blessings for themselves, the living.

Chapter V. Sugar Ruins and Rotting Mangos: *Hacienda*, agrarian reform and becoming peasants

Historical ruptures

Peru's so-called Dirty War, beginning in the 1980s and lasting until the 1990s, is rightly seen by most Peruvians as the most significant historical rupture in the late twentieth century. Terrorism and state violence were accompanied by processes of economic downturn, and torrential rains accompanying El Niño in 1997/98 caused widespread misery, especially in northern Peru. Today's economic boom and relative political stability is seen as a recovery from those disruptive and tumultuous decades. An unintended consequence of the internal conflict was that it broke new ground for indigenous movements and for the concession of rights based on ethnicity.¹

A different historical rupture has been overshadowed and displaced from the national imagination: General Velasco's military coup in 1968, which was followed by agrarian reforms.² Promising to unsettle the power balances of the past through expropriations of the old estates and *haciendas*, agrarian reforms ultimately failed to undo social inequalities (Kay 1982; Mayer 2009; Seligmann 1995; 2008: 340-341). It is thus not entirely surprising that agrarian reforms have become something of a non-subject, compared to the Dirty War, both in academia and in the public sphere. In Peruvian academic circles the details of

¹ For Afro-Peruvian activists the transatlantic slave trade and the abolition of slavery are also important ruptures for defining a sense of collective understanding.

² The two historical events are related: as anthropologists have shown, the failure of agrarian reforms facilitated the expansion of Shining Path terrorism in the highlands (Poole and Rénique 1992; Seligmann 1995).

this war and its aftermath are still being unpacked and they spark lively debates about ethnicity, indigeneity and racism in academia and sometimes in the public sphere. By contrast, as Mayer writes in his book *Ugly Stories of Agrarian Reform*, the ‘public cultures’ officially promoted by the regimes of Fernando Belaúnde, Alan García and Alberto Fujimori have done their best both to undo Velasco’s policies and to erase his memory (Mayer 2009: 8).

The archives of the Regional Agrarian Directorate (Dirección Regional Agraria, DRA) in the state capital of Piura symbolise this erased memory. After having convinced puzzled bureaucrats and overcome red tape to allow me access to the archives, I arrived at a destitute hall in an unsavoury industrial neighbourhood near the central market in the city of Piura. Just outside the hall, within the crumbling concrete fence, stray cats roamed amidst old machinery and broken tractors. The hall was full of row after row of metal shelves stacked up to the ceiling with giant cardboard boxes. These were crammed with brittle, yellowing paper wrecked by water damage, termites and the dry desert climate. The boxes, organised haphazardly by the names of the extinct co-operatives formed during the agrarian reforms, contained payrolls, accounting records, and other legal documents. If the boxes pertaining to the co-operative ‘Sinforoso Benites’ of Yapatera are anything to go by, the paper records are chaotic, incomplete and seemingly unimportant, at least in the eyes of the state.³

Despite this erased memory and taboo surrounding Velasco and his government in Peru, in rural northern villages the agrarian reforms are still the most significant historical rupture for ordinary people. The Dirty War certainly had an impact, and villagers in Yapatera experienced its effects second hand; but removed from the hotspots of violence it does not have the same everyday significance as the agrarian reforms.⁴ This chapter explores villagers’ historicity, their sense of the past, present and future and how these are related to ideas about

³ Some farmers from Yapatera have visited the archives of the DRA in hopes of collecting evidence to prove that they worked on the co-operative, in order to claim state pensions. Given the dismal state of the records, many have instead sought the former plantation owner’s help in proving that they worked on the *hacienda*, and by extension, were co-operative members. Many farmers have been involved in decades-long bureaucratic battles and most are unsuccessful in gaining access to state pensions.

⁴ The agrarian reforms also have everyday significance for another group, namely the former plantation owners, whose constructions of the past and their claims to compensation for the expropriations of their property are not explored here.

work, land, freedom and dependency. These ideas are structured by a before—the *hacienda* period— and an after—the post-agrarian reform era. Villagers from Yapatera do not use the past to create a sense of ethnic belonging in the present and future, for example using slavery to construct themselves as Afro-Peruvian. Nor are they particularly interested in the Spanish Conquest as a myth of conquest to generate an understanding of themselves in the present. Instead, they conceive of their place, both symbolically and physically, as shaped by the process of becoming peasants, a category that is both inherently Peruvian and ‘unethnic’ (Salomon 2002). As a category of lived experience, a prism through which to understand the world, and a vehicle for collective action, the *campesino* (‘peasant’ or ‘farmer’) category provides a sense of being in time and space. But it is marked by deep ambivalence about the past, present and future and provokes feelings of pride and sadness, hope and resentment. By seeing themselves as *campesinos* villagers reflect on their own historical agency and also on how that agency is shaped by changing economic circumstances.



Figure 22. Farmer bringing mangos home from the *chacra*.

Sugar ruins and rotting mangos

The ambivalence with which people in Yapatera think of the past, present and future is poignantly captured in two images that form part of everyday life in the village. The first image is that of the ruins of the sugar cane factory, symbol of the era of the by-gone *hacienda*, which came to an end in the late 1960s with the agrarian reforms. The second image is the sight of enormous piles of rotting mangos by the roadside. They are an emblem of the contradictions inherent in the present that villagers have arrived at, as small landholders producing fruit for export and other produce for local markets, and a sign of what the future holds for them.

The remnants of the sugar factory (see figure 23) are a monument to the grandeur of the Hacienda Yapatera. Beside it stand two large, fairly intact chimneys (see figure 24) providing a striking landmark beyond the lush rice fields and against the green backdrop of the northern Andean foothills; they can be seen far in the distance from the only road which leads into the village. In its modern history the *hacienda* saw the cultivation of rice, cotton and tobacco, and briefly, but most famously, the plantation of sugar cane when there was a profitable refinery just outside the village. The *hacienda* is remembered as a magnet of employment attracting men, and some women, from neighbouring villages, provinces and states and word of its wealth is said to have spread far and wide. Today's villagers see themselves as the inheritors of the *hacienda*'s symbolic wealth: their sense of pride in what Yapatera once was is channelled into visions of a future in which Yapatera's former glory is restored in the form of a jurisdictional 'district' title (chapter VI). But today the sugar factory is reduced to ruins; it is an empty shell of crumbling brickwork and white paint with gaping holes for windows. The ruins serve only as a habitat for snakes, while in the shade of a nearby tree a woman sells *chicha* (fermented maize beer) to passing farmers on their way to their *chacras* or farms.⁵ The ruins symbolise

⁵ Some villagers distinguish between *chacras*, a term they use to refer to land rented under the *hacienda*, later owned and passed down through inheritance, and *parcelas*, which are the product of the dissolution of the co-operative. Usually, when the distinction is made it is by men who were members of the co-operative who use the term to differentiate between their different plots of land. In keeping with the common usage, I refer to all agricultural land as *chacra*.

wealth and status, but this is a wealth that was never in the hands of ordinary people and which is no longer within reach.

The sight of ripe mangos is a more ephemeral, but more sensory image, inspiring different emotions. Varieties which range between green, yellow, orange and red with a ‘blush’ (*chapa*) of scarlet, are lined up neatly in their crates, stacked and transported on donkey carts, motorcycle rickshaws and large trucks and stored in houses, living rooms and on *veredas*. Mangos are the most significant export product in Yapatera; they represent the natural fertility of the soil and the viability of an agricultural livelihood. They also stand for the modern era of land ownership, in which farmers are accountable to no one but themselves. *Mango criollo*, ‘creole’ mango, one of the oldest varieties, is the last to ripen in the Alto Piura valley and villagers, who anticipate its harvest for months, consider it the sweetest and tastiest fruit. Too small, too fibrous, too delicate of skin and too late in season for export, most of the *mango criollo* is consumed locally and its abundance is cause of much neighbourly generosity and conviviality. Afternoons are spent on the *vereda* eating a dozen or so fruits in one sitting.⁶ But in its abundance lies its problem. By the time it is harvested, markets are saturated and villagers cannot consume the whole crop. The sight of mountainous piles of mango rotting on the field or by the side of the road, and the sickly sweet smell of the decomposing fruit, are cause of deep sadness—many villagers say that the sight makes them cry. When ripening, mangos are a source of hope; when rotting, they become a source of despair.

Memories about the *hacienda* and about the co-operative, which replaced it, formed the greater part of my initial conversations when I arrived in Yapatera. It was a subject most people could and wanted to talk about, and something that affected all of my informants, since almost everyone had either worked on the *hacienda* or co-operative, or had parents who had done so. Conversations about *hacienda* life, and life during and after the co-operative also revealed a much wider range of experiences and opinions than conversations about other subjects.

⁶ Villagers in Yapatera say that mango has a ‘hot’ quality in contrast to, for example, papaya, a fruit that is considered ‘cold’. Those suffering from a fever, or with high blood pressure, should refrain from eating too much mango in order not to overheat the body. When eaten in large quantities mango should be consumed with plenty of water.

Despite the diversity within these experiences, the evidence upon which this chapter is based stems mainly from the recollections of middle-aged and older men. Women had also worked on the *hacienda*, especially in tobacco production, but they were less involved in production after the agrarian reforms. Although they participated in these changing economic and social circumstances, women usually deferred to their husbands, brothers or fathers when I asked about these subjects.



Figure 23. The old sugar factory



Figure 24. Twin chimneys of the factory

The time of the *hacienda*

Villagers referred to ‘the time of the *hacienda*’ or ‘the time of the owners’ (*el tiempo de la hacienda/de los hacendados*) to talk about the time before the agrarian reforms. Unlike the history told by documents, which suggests that the *hacienda* underwent a great many transformations in the hands of many different owners (Schlupmann 1990; 1994), villagers speak of a past which seems to stretch back indefinitely, in an undifferentiated manner. It was often difficult to tell whether a story or anecdote about the ‘time of the *hacienda*’ had been experienced first hand and directly by my interlocutors or whether it had been passed down as part of a collective oral history. The only distinction made was through reference to a named family of owners, the last before expropriation, versus the ‘owners’, as an abstract, anonymous entity, referring to all previous owners, whose names were not remembered.

The success and prosperity of the *hacienda*, one of the most productive in the Alto Piura valley since its establishment in the sixteenth century, leaves

villagers yearning for the days in which prestige was associated with the name Yapatera. Because of the superior access to water from the River Yapatera, the last land-owning family moved the sugar cane factory from the nearby *hacienda* and village of Sol Sol, also part of their property, to Yapatera. Many villagers proudly told me that the Hacienda Yapatera had been home to the only sugar cane refinery in the state of Piura.⁷ With great pride, villagers remember that the *hacienda* had the only telephone line in the valley and a landing strip for small airplanes. They also remember the residential house in which the last plantation owners lived, with its lush gardens, fine furniture, plastered ceilings and wallpapered rooms. Compared to other coastal *haciendas*, however, Yapatera's residential *hacienda* house is extremely modest, the reason being that agricultural elites of the Alto Piura valley generally preferred to reside in the city of Piura, managing their estates from afar. Most remember the last *hacendado* family fondly, as 'good people', referring to them by their first names, and talking about the *chocolatadas*, or parties they held for the children of the plantation workers at Christmas time.

Men, in particular, spoke enthusiastically and in great detail about the technical aspects of large-scale plantation, harvest and production, emphasising the level of organisation, planning and management that the system required. This past division of labour is contrasted with today's agricultural production in which farmers work alone, or with close relatives on their individual or household *chacras*, performing all the required tasks. Villagers who worked on the *hacienda* take pride both in the particular tasks they performed and in the fact that they were involved in the production of sugar: a commodity deemed a basic necessity and widely consumed everywhere. Domingo, who was in charge of keeping the fire going at one of the refinery's cauldrons—'Cauldron number 3!' he exclaimed proudly—told me that sugar made in Yapatera was 'the same sugar we all use, rich and poor!' Villagers talk fondly of pay day on the *hacienda*: 'If only you could have seen what it was like... Every Saturday, it was like a fair [*feria*]: the food, the *chicha*, they even brought in orchestras for dances!'

⁷ This was confirmed by the plantation owner. Primitive sugar mills (*trapiches*) figure in colonial wills and inventories from *haciendas* throughout the state.

Villagers also often speak about the physical expanse of the *hacienda*, incorporating communities that today function independently.

Various physical survivals of the *hacienda* remain, creating a material continuity with this past. The colonial-era *casa hacienda* (hacienda house) was the administrative centre of the plantation under the last owners, and after serving as the headquarters of the co-operative after the agrarian reforms it became the local police station (see figure 25). A second building, which the last owners constructed and inhabited in the twentieth century, became the village secondary school after expropriation, although today a new purpose-built complex has replaced it. Other physical survivals include the canals, irrigation ditches and wells in the fields, roads and footpaths, and the motor which powers the main well in the village (see figure 26). Immaterial survivals include the names given to the sections (*predios*) of the agricultural lands. The *hacienda* also survives in the name of Yapatera's football team, known by its acronym, which stands for Compañía Agrícola Yapatera Sociedad Anónima, the name of the family corporation owning the plantation. But while villagers remember the grandeur of the *hacienda* with some nostalgia, they recognise that the prosperity that it generated, and the level of organisation which it required, relied on deep social inequalities and were accompanied by injustices and abuse.



Figure 25. The old *casa hacienda*.



Figure 26. The old motor powering Yaptera's well.

Abuse and defiance on the *hacienda*

The *hacienda* is remembered as an all-encompassing, oppressive, often arbitrary social and legal system. The totalising authority and power of the plantation owners was often described to me by people saying that 'the *hacienda* was the law' or 'there was no justice but that of the owners'; others said, 'they were the owners of everything, even the water!'

As well as working on the *hacienda*, many households rented *chacras* from the *hacienda* for subsistence, usually plots of land that were of no use to the plantation. Amador, who as a young man had worked in the tobacco harvest, had benefitted from such an arrangement. Anticipating the impending agrarian reforms, the plantation owner offered him a piece of land to help support his young family. Amador described the piece of land as a wild woodland (*puro monte*), covered thickly in carob trees (*algarrobo*) and shrubs; he thus hired his younger brother to cut down the wood, sell it and keep the profit. Today his *chacra*, which stands at the village entrance, close to the old *hacienda* house, has a permanent water supply, and boasts a diverse array of mangos, bananas, rice,

coconuts, and papayas; Amador is one of the few farmers in Yapatera who is able to harvest rice twice a year.

However, villagers often highlighted the inequity of the allocation of rental *chacras* for family gardens, high rents, poor quality of soil, a lack of access to water (since tenants were only allowed to irrigate on Sundays), and the time-consuming nature of *hacienda* work. Accepting a piece of land to rent entailed the risk of the *hacienda* claiming it back once it had been laboriously cleared of shrubs and trees, levelled and tilled. Amador recalled that the plantation owner wanted to give many of the workers land, even with access to a well, but people refused, thinking they would forever be indebted: “‘If I take it, I’ll die with the *hacendado!*” they said!’

Many villagers also recall having to pay taxes on their cattle, goats and sheep, which grazed on *hacienda* pastures. Inspectors could make surprise visits to count the number of domestic animals and many villagers remembered that they were in the habit of imparting unfair punishments. Poldo remarked, ‘if they wanted, they could kill your sheep or your goat, and the worker couldn’t do anything but pick up his dead and bleeding animal and take it home to eat!’ Some villagers also stated that it was prohibited to grow or sell the same produce generated by the *hacienda* and that villagers were thus forced to purchase many staples from the *hacienda*. Several villagers remembered the existence of a general store in the village run by a Chinese man, who held the monopoly for selling food staples and consumer products and would sell on credit. It is likely that prices were inflated and that the store would have been part of a system of *enganche* (labour contracting with an advance on future wages, literally a ‘hook’, Peloso 1999: 42), helping to tie workers into systems of debt bondage (Klarén 1970: 80).

I encountered one story of a plantation owner’s sexual assault of a local woman. Mariela said that her paternal grandfather had been a plantation owner and that most of her eleven siblings had inherited a whiter complexion from this ancestor. In his old age, her father had often exclaimed, ‘It doesn’t matter that he left me nothing but his surname!’ and he disagreed deeply with his children’s romantic liaisons with people whom he described as *morenos*. One night

Mariela, her teenage son, and I lay sprawled on her bed, and she read to us some *cumananas* (poems) she had written dealing with love, sex and domestic violence. One of the poems told the story of an unnamed plantation owner who spots a local woman working in the sugar cane fields. Although she is already promised to another man, the woman seduces him and they make love in the fields. The last verse ends with the woman pregnant. The poem, Mariela said, was inspired by her grandmother, but in reality, she said, her father was not the product of a romantic liaison but of a brutal rape, and she had altered the story out of respect for her grandmother. In real life, her shamed grandmother had left the baby to be cared for by her parents and fled to another village. Now that her grandmother and her parents had passed away, Mariela planned to rewrite the *cumanana*. Despite this rape being at the heart of the family secret, Mariela had chosen to name her only son after the plantation owner.

The plantation overseers (*capataces*) are remembered in particular for their harshness. Overseers were often referred to as the ‘voice’ of the plantation owner: acting as intermediaries, they were in closer daily contact with the workers and they were more prone to be abusive. Most were hired from outside the village to prevent kin ties from getting in the way of their loyalties to the *hacienda*. These men were said to be ‘specially chosen for their fierceness and cruelty: they were like dogs!’ Overseers, as well as plantation owners, were associated with the horses that they rode to patrol the fields (for parallels in the Andean association of Spaniards with horses during the colonial invasion see Gose 2008: 64; 58-59). Peasants, by contrast, are associated with the donkey and the mule, animals that are said to be hardworking, robust and humble. Villagers remembered that if one did not show up for work, the overseers would come to one’s house and burn or knock it down. If a person stole firewood, he was beaten up or imprisoned. If one organised a *chingana* (social get-together), and killed a pig and made *chicha* without permission, the overseers would come and knock over the jars of *chicha* and feed the pork to the dogs. Chelo recounted the following *cumanana* about the infamous overseer Segundo Nunura, who evidently moved with the sugar factory from Sol Sol to Yapatera:

In the Hacienda Sol Sol
One couldn’t make a fortune

Because Nunura, that bandit
Gave two tasks for one!⁸

Amador recalled that ‘there were three of them [overseers] and they would patrol around. They would say: “make me a canal here!” And if it was wrong, if it was not wide enough, then they would trample it down and say “do it again!”’ I was told that after the agrarian reforms the overseers were excluded from becoming members of the co-operative by the villagers themselves and that they were forced to migrate to work for wages and died in poverty. Villagers argue that much of the abuse was due to a chronic scarcity of labour on the plantation (see below). The most common reason for punishment was the simple act of not showing up for work. According to villagers, the sugar factory, in particular, which was in operation 24 hours a day, six days a week, required large numbers of workers.

The most infamous form of punishment was on the *cepo* (stocks), where offenders were confined for hours and days at a time in the cruel sun, and often whipped. Although no one I talked to remembered it being used in their lifetime, parents and grandparents had made a point of passing on their stories about it. Today one of Yapatera’s self-described Afro-Peruvian activists brings a *cepo* (see figure 27) for cultural events and for any interested visitors, as proof of the existence of African chattel slavery in the plantation’s past (see below). The *cepo*, in fact, came from a nearby former plantation where African chattel slavery was not found, suggesting that its use was not reserved for slaves of African descent. In Yapatera, ordinary villagers privately voiced disagreement with exhibiting and thereby celebrating, in their eyes, the instrument of torture with which their parents and grandparents were made to suffer. Dilmar, reflecting this sentiment, told me that the *cepo* was an object of sadness and evil and that the past should be left to rest instead of stirring up painful memories. In the village, local legend has it that a local hero, the grandfather of one of my informants, had done away with the original stocks in a bold act of defiance and irony. One day, so the legend went, the overseer had told some workers to fetch more firewood

⁸ *En la Hacienda de Sol Sol/No se pudo hacer fortuna/Porque el bandido de Nunura/¡Daba dos tareas por una!*

for the sugar factory's cauldrons; the protagonist, a tall, strong and brave man, went away and came back dragging back 'that old piece of wood' (*ese viejo madero*), dismantling it and shoving it in to the fire before the overseers realised that it was the *cepo*.

Apart from this story, however, most villagers insisted that resistance to the *hacienda* regime was futile and that they lacked the knowledge to fight against it. When I asked Benito whether anyone ever fought back against the overseers, he replied, 'How could we?! We didn't know any laws apart from those of the *hacendado!*' But despite villagers' insistence that resistance was impossible, several sources suggest that everyday acts of defiance were probably used to further the workers' interests against those of the *hacienda*. My forays into regional archives found numerous records of small tenants (*colonos*) protesting against high land rents and excessive taxation on nearby *haciendas*. Turner, writing about a highland *hacienda*, writes of the pilfering of crops, livestock and irrigation waters and the nearly imperceptible encroachment on *hacienda* lands and pastures as a form of everyday resistance (1993: 68). Villagers also talked about both organised and individual land invasions before agrarian reforms (compare Arce Espinoza 1983: 146; Fanchette 1984: 46). In the Regional Archive of Piura I also found evidence of criminal charges by the plantation owner against a black slave who was accused of the homicide of a plantation overseer in 1809.⁹ Hence, far from suggesting that in the past workers and tenant farmers had no tools of protest at their disposal, I suggest that in contemporary villagers' eyes, life under the *hacienda* was characterised precisely by a lack of agency and lack of knowledge.

⁹ Archivo Regional de Piura (ARP), Catálogo Cabildo 1587-1820, Legajo 1318.



Figure 27. Children rest on the *cepo* during a cultural event.

Slavery and mixing

In addition to the hierarchical relation between owners, overseers and workers, the *hacienda* created and, to some extent, maintained a distinction between field hands or labourers (*trabajadores*) and employees (*empleados*). The former took up seasonal, unskilled, day wage labour or task-based labour, while the latter occupied more technically skilled and administrative roles, as tractor drivers, mill operators, mechanics, operators of machinery and bookkeepers, and had more predictable salaries. Most villagers suggest that the employees were outsiders (*forasteros*) and *cholos*, of mixed indigenous descent, from Chulucanas, the Bajo Piura valley and even neighbouring states. By contrast, field hands and labourers were, on the whole, local people, the majority of them *morenos*. Employees enjoyed certain privileges which labourers did not: for example many of them lived in *canchones*, purpose-built accommodation, and other houses given to them by the *hacienda* which were in close proximity to the *hacienda* offices. Indeed, employees and field hands/labourers historically inhabited different parts of the village; the former settled around the *hacienda* house, and the latter clustered in a settlement in the *hacienda*'s pastures (see chapter VI). Despite this

residential separation, the *hacienda* is also seen as one of the drivers of racial mixing through ancestral intermarriage (see below).

The term 'slavery', *esclavitud*, was often mentioned in stories about the abuses of the *hacienda* system. However slavery, as understood locally, is not an ethnically-specific experience, nor do villagers have in mind chattel slavery. Instead, villagers in Yapatera invoke the term to mean the excessive degree of control of the *hacienda* over all its workers (employees, field hands and labourers) and, in particular, the obligatory nature of work.¹⁰ According to this local definition, slavery was experienced by all *hacienda* workers, regardless of 'racial' or 'ethnic' characteristics. This form of slavery did not end with the abolition of chattel slavery in 1854, but with the agrarian reforms in the 1960s and 70s.¹¹ Chelo explained that slavery meant that,

One worked just for food, and for whippings [*la veta*]¹²... Slavery means that some tried to dominate over others. It ended in the 70s when General Velasco came with the Law of Agrarian Reform. Slavery is like Hugo Chávez in Venezuela or Fidel Castro in Cuba; it means that nobody can leave the country!

This notion of slavery as oppression is linked to nation-building projects and is echoed in Peru's national anthem *Somos Libres* ('We are free') which refers to the enslaved Peruvian shaking off his chains of servitude to Spain, the coloniser, and declaring his freedom.¹³

The local understanding of slavery is intimately linked to the notion of ancestral intermarriage and racial mixing. Even while the division of labour on the *hacienda* was framed in quasi-racial terms, the *hacienda* also created the conditions for racial mixing. The *hacienda* period, villagers suggest, was characterised by under-population and a severe scarcity of labour. This scarcity of labour generated a gravitational force drawing in migrant labourers from other

¹⁰ Compare De Genova (2005: 189-196) for a discussion of the use of the term slavery to mean oppressive, exploitative and coercive labour conditions among Mexican-American factory workers in Chicago.

¹¹ Rocca Torres (1985) reports a similar use of the term slavery from the town of Zaña, in the neighbouring state of Lambayeque.

¹² The term *veta* likely harks back to cattle-raising; villagers use it frequently to describe physical punishment including the punishment parents give to children. *Veta* can refer to a 'belt/band taken from entire skin of a cow. Twisted and dried it serves to tie up the cattle and restrain them' (Real Academia Española 2001).

¹³ The anthem is sung in Yapatera at all public schools on Mondays and Fridays and at every public celebration.

valleys in Piura, the highlands and neighbouring states. These migrant labourers and their children, most of whom were not *morenos* but *cholos* and *serranos*, married the locals and settled in the village. Most family histories in the village therefore begin with the marriage of a migrant labourer or his child, a *cholo* or *serrano*, and a *morena* or *moreno* from Yapatera. These stories of marriage, mixture and the proliferation of generations are also linked to ideas about the social, physical and moral consolidation of Yapatera into a proper and decent village (see chapter VI: 232-235). Poldo, for example, told me that his father had come from Sullana, a city in the Chira valley because

In the old times people came from other places because there were hardly any people here. The majority here worked in the *hacienda*, but Yapatera was sparse. The overseers took the workers out of their houses, dragged them to work, hit them because there were so few people in the village. They were obliged to bring people from over there, from Sullana, they contracted them and they even brought people in from other places. My father for example was whitish, a little bit of colour [*colorado, un poquito de color*], he was a womanizer... because he was an employee, he would go to the *hacienda* and take advantage of the women over there... the women looked at him more sympathetically. Little by little this village became bigger because of the people who were invited to come here. Because of the ones that came and married the *morenitas* here. Their children came out cinnamon-coloured, *mestizos*.

One generation closer, Cayo, who was born in Chulucanas and was considered 'whiter', had eloped with his wife, a *morena*, whose family was from Yapatera. His mother-in-law pleaded with Cayo that they move back to Yapatera, reasoning that she needed to teach her under-age daughter the skills of cooking and washing she would need as a wife. Cayo agreed and took up work as a seasonal worker in the maize harvest on the *hacienda*, settling permanently in the village.

From peons to owners

According to the local definition of slavery, its antithesis—freedom—is understood as liberation from the obligation to work and abuse, and the prospect of autonomy, ownership of the land and the means of production. Villagers say that freedom arrived with General Velasco's coup in 1968 and the ensuing agrarian reforms. These reforms sought to nationalise agriculture and industry

and to put the former *haciendas* and estates into the hands of those who had previously been subjugated.

Villagers, like most Peruvians who benefited from the reforms (see Mayer 2009), see these reforms as having been necessary, legitimate and lawful. Farmers frequently recite Velasco's mantras: 'The land belongs to those who work it' (*La tierra es de quien la trabaja*) and 'The boss will never eat from your poverty again' (*El patrón nunca más comerá de tu pobreza*), as well as referring always to the Law of Agrarian Reform decree number: 17716. Although in material terms these reforms ultimately did little to bring them prosperity, villagers make much of the motivations underlying the reforms. Indeed many took Velasco's motivations as personally directed towards them, stressing that he was born in Piura and had designed the reforms with his fellow countrymen in mind. Francisco, one of the former presidents of the co-operative told me, 'Because he was a *piurano* [person from Piura], *el finado* Velasco said: "I declare my land a zone of the agrarian reform!"' Common reference to Velasco as *el finado*, an epithet for the deceased which prevents their resting soul from being disturbed (chapter IV: 157), marks the former president as an esteemed, close acquaintance.

Ideologically, Velasco sought to remove Peru's 'Indian problem' by transforming the Indian into a *campesino* (peasant) who would contribute and participate in a modern, industrial Peru. To give an example of this discursive transformation, the Day of the Indian, 24th of June, was renamed the Day of the *Campesino*, and the Ministry of Hacienda became the Ministry of Agriculture. In Yapatera, which was devoid of easily classifiable 'Indians' but populated by non-white plantation workers, Velasco's emphasis on the *campesino*, and the implicit banishing of ethnicity, resonated with villagers' emphasis on the irrelevance of ethnic and racial categories due to racial mixing. This new state policy also gave an official legitimacy to the villagers' downplaying of ethnic distinctiveness, tying them into a broader nation-building project. Moreover, it offered an idiom and a category—namely class and peasant—which locals seized on in an unprecedented way.

With agrarian reforms the white plantation owners were displaced, the non-white majority rose to take over the *hacienda* and, as villagers say, ‘then everyone became an owner.’ The state agency that was sent in to the former *haciendas* to set up co-operatives was called SINAMOS (National System for the Support of Social Mobilisation, by its Spanish letters, but also *sin amos*, ‘without masters’). The former Hacienda Yapatera was converted into a Co-operative for Agrarian Production (CAP) by SINAMOS in 1973, and was named by state functionaries after the deceased socialist and unionist Sinforoso Benites, who had been a poor peasant and a *cholo* of mixed descent born on a *hacienda* in the Alto Piura valley, and an ally of the *yanaconas* (serfs) on Piuran *haciendas*. Any man who had worked on the *hacienda* in any capacity, and was of age at the time was eligible to become a member (*socio*), of the co-operative. Distinctions between those who were previously employees and workers were thus abolished as all members worked alongside each other. The president and governing board of the co-operative were democratically elected by the members. It can thus be said that the agrarian reform and the creation of the co-operative helped foster a sense of collectivity, a new shared status and a sense of equality within the village based on being members of the co-operative and the joint inheritors of the *hacienda*.

Even before the co-operative was set up by SINAMOS and before agrarian reform was decreed, villagers had organised a series of invasions of the *hacienda* lands. The invaders included former sharecroppers, peasants, workers and tenants, who had seized land and machinery. Both the state of Piura and the Alto Piura valley saw an especially high number of invasions and there are records of some of the earliest invasions happening at the Hacienda Yapatera (Collin-Delavaud 1984; Rubin de Celis 1977). Many farmers recalled that once the decree had been issued, former labourers and employees alike organised invasions and seized the land before the workday started. When the plantation owner arrived, together with his overseers and closest employees, the invaders would not let them onto the land. Some villagers stated that the plantation owner called the army in for protection, but that the authorities defended the invaders instead. According to villagers, with the agrarian reforms the law now sided with the peasants and justice was served. As *campesinos*, people in Yapatera saw

themselves as participating in, and contributing to a broader regional and national transformation of society. Hobsbawm writes that Peruvian national flags were ubiquitous by the 1960s and became the symbol of agrarian ambitions, especially in Piura where they were made specifically for the purpose of land invasions (1974: 127).

Yapatera's 'ugly stories'

Despite the promises of equality and prosperity for peasants under the reforms, villagers all agreed that the co-operative model that ultimately failed to deliver on those promises. Memories of the co-operative model triggered a spate of 'ugly stories' (Mayer 2009) about its failures and the internal difficulties that it created.

Villagers usually spoke of SINAMOS and the agrarian bank as almost separate from, and counter-productive to the reforms of Velasco. Former members of the co-operative complained that they had not been equipped with the necessary materials, machines, social and financial capital to run the co-operative. Many complained that agricultural prices were not protected by the state and they criticised the agrarian bank for failing to give loans for machinery, tools and seeds. Many stated that they had inherited the *hacienda* together with its debts but not the capital to pay it off. Former members of the co-operative also accused the state-hired engineers and technocrats of corruption and stealing from the co-operative. Infuriated, Domingo said, 'The engineers would arrive at the co-operative on foot, and they would leave by taxi. There was so much robbery!'

Some villagers blamed the newly made co-operative members themselves for the failures. Many of my informants lamented that as former 'peons' (*peones*), they lacked the knowledge and skills to administer such a large business. Some argued that certain members were not capable of working for the collective good. Instead the fact that 'now all were owners' bred laziness, greed, nepotism and inertia. Many co-operative members voluntarily left, especially when wages were not paid for weeks or even months at a time. Fino, whose father left the co-operative five years before its dissolution, explained:

Velasco made a mistake. Well, not him, but those who came to be the owners of the land, they didn't have the capability to be able to work a piece of land, you understand me, right? They couldn't do it economically, or technically. The *hacendado* had capital; he had access to resources. He could ask for a loan, he mastered the technical path. But the real owners of the land [the peasants], got themselves into debt and the agrarian bank didn't give them a loan, and the members of the co-operative didn't have the skills to administer. Here there are a ton of people who have five, six, up to eight hectares... enough to be able to work well, but they don't work it because they don't know how to administer it.

What was the failure of the co-operative, you ask? It's because they themselves were the administrators, that is, the same workers from here were president, secretary, treasurer, and worker: everyone treated everyone as an equal ... and nobody obeyed anybody! The workday was to arrive at 8 in the morning and leave at 3 in the afternoon. But because they on their own were owners of everything, some arrived at 7.30, and at 9 or 10 in the morning they were leaving already. They did nothing. In the end, they ended in ruins... For many, even having five hectares, through the co-operative, they would prefer to be with the *hacienda*. They didn't know how to work the land, they sold everything and now they have nothing. Or they have the land there like that, barren, pure dirt, without a single plant. Señorita Tamara, we Peruvians are lazy, you must have noticed. There are many of us who don't like to work.

Paulino, a former employee as a tractor driver on the *hacienda*, told me,

Velasco turned the land over to the peons. Sometimes the people were shrewd [*la gente era viva*]. Others didn't know how to work. There were people who entered the cooperative who had never worked on the *hacienda*. On the contrary, SINAMOS picked them up somewhere along the road and made them join. And others, they just invaded the land.

In particular, former labourers on the *hacienda* often lamented that the co-operative in fact reproduced the *hacienda*'s distinction between former employees and labourers. They suggested that those who had enjoyed a better standing to begin with benefited most from the co-operative. For example, the positions of managers and directors in the co-operative were seized by the better-educated former employees. Chelo explained,

We were shovellers [*lamperos*]¹⁴ in the time of the boss, and we ended up as shovellers. When they came to speak about the changes that were going to happen with the co-operative they put up a picture: on a blackboard they drew a group of people shovelling [*poniendo lampa*] and one man mounted on a horse. Then they said: 'this man mounted on the horse, he is only there one year; the next year he gets down from the horse and one of those shovelling comes in and takes over.' But by the time it became a co-operative, he never got down from the horse! He stayed! Who would force him to get down from the horse? Those who took charge [*los que agarraron*] were the ones who knew how to read. The same people who worked with the boss in the office, the same ones took the positions [as managers and directors]. I don't know how to read to carry a position...!

¹⁴ From Aymara *lampa*, shovel. Here it is used to mean the most physical but also least skilled and least esteemed task. Whenever I asked to help in the *chacra* I was doubtfully asked, 'Do you know how to shovel?' (*¿Si sabes meter lampa?*); on the few occasions I was permitted and did not make a fool of myself I was approvingly told, 'Yes, you do know how to shovel!' (*¡Si sabes meter lampa!*).

Some former employees, by contrast, insisted that it was the former labourers who did not 'know how to work'. Beto, a former tractor driver, had arrived in Yapatara in 1946 to support his single mother and two sisters in Chulucanas. He told me:

SINAMOS said, 'The *patrón* will never again eat from your poverty, from your efforts.' But it wasn't like that. They came to sign people up saying, 'Now there is no more boss, no more employees, nothing'; they said that we were the owners of the land now. But in any case, there had to be someone in charge because the way we were, all alone, we couldn't work. We say, 'in came the cats and the dogs' [anybody and everybody], and one couldn't work. Because those who did work, that was us, the former employees. For example: me, I was a tractor driver, then I became a mechanic. The peasant didn't know how to take advantage [*no supo aprovechar*]. They all drank themselves to the bottom of the beer bottles, drinking every day, beer by the truckload. There were some of us who took care of our money, we ordered ourselves to work. The others ordered themselves to drink.

The co-operative also created new forms of exclusion. Those eligible to become members were married men over the age of twenty-one, who did not hold land through inheritance and who had been 'stable' workers on the *hacienda*. It excluded men who were underage, single, seasonal or temporary workers and all of those who could not prove that they had worked on the plantation. In old payroll documents dating to the 1980s, which I studied in the archive of the DRA, I found numbers oscillating around 152 *socios* (members) and 117 *eventuales* (non-member workers). The latter did not reap the profits of the co-operative or the social benefits of regular pay, pensions, health and life insurance and access to a small family garden (*huerto*). Many depended on irregular wage labour in the co-operative and often continued to work on old *chacras* (those of their parents, grandparents or in-laws) with poorer access to water, and frequently competed with other siblings for resources. Many of those who were excluded complained that the rules had been bent to allow certain ineligible individuals to enter the co-operative, such as sons, nephews or godchildren of members or, more legitimately in their eyes, young men who were orphaned and without access to land.

Many of those excluded from membership of the co-operative staged organised invasions of the co-operative land, while others seized it quietly as individuals (see Arce Espinoza 1983: 149-185; Fanchette 1984: 84; Rubin de

Celis 1977: 65). Some of these invasions were tolerated when the invaders were relatives, or ritual kin, or co-operative members (Arce Espinoza 1983: 149), or when the individuals were illegitimate or orphaned men and only when the invaded plots were not being used by the co-operative. However, some of the *invasores* (invaders) were perceived with hostility as outsiders. One particularly large wave of invasions happened during 1978/79 during which *invasores* infamously burnt the Peruvian flag at the co-operative's administrative headquarters in the old *hacienda* house. Former members recall that the *invasores* were triumphantly kicked out and those who were rumoured to have participated today deny their involvement. Many former members stated that the *invasores* had been 'foreigners' (*forasteros*), from Chulucanas, the Bajo Piura valley, Frías in the Piuran highlands and other places. Beto cast them in a quasi-racial manner as 'other': 'the invaders were *serranos* [highlanders], lazy, thieves... they didn't pay attention to what was going on. Where the hell were they from? We didn't know them!'

Several dozens of eligible villagers also voluntarily opted out of becoming members of the co-operative when it was formed. I was told that those who refused to join did so out of distrust: 'They said, to work for the co-operative will be like working for the *hacendado!*' and 'It will be like slavery but for the state!' Adalberto and Emérita were a brother and sister in their seventies; their father had not rented a *chacra* from the *hacienda*, which Emérita remarked on resentfully by saying, 'he preferred to work on *chacras* that weren't his [*chacras ajenas*]. That's how they lived: happily in their poverty, he left us nothing!' But while Emérita's husband joined the co-operative, Adalberto chose not to. Now he regretted it deeply: 'How could I not have wanted to be a member?! Oh, now at least I'd have my little piece of land [*mi tierrita*]!' Today his wife's three-quarters of a hectare of land are barely enough to subsist on, so his brother-in-law lets him sow rice on a little part of his own *chacra* and to take advantage of the superior water supply of his former co-operative land plot. Many of those who were young unmarried men at the time of the formation of the co-operative, and who therefore could not become members, migrated to

Lima and other coastal cities for work, forming the first significant migrant communities of Yapateranos.

As co-operative productivity declined, debts rose, and wages went unpaid, many members decided to abandon the co-operative only to find that it was dismantled soon after and that they no longer had claims to the plots that resulted from its division. Under President Alberto Fujimori in the mid-1980s, the majority of Peru's co-operatives were dissolved, dividing the lands into small plots distributed among former members. In Yapatera, former co-operative members stress that they were the drivers of this dissolution, referring to the process by saying 'we made ourselves individual' (*nos hicimos individuales*). Domingo explained this by saying:

And who asked for the distribution [*repartición*] of the co-operative? It was us. We all came to an agreement, we asked and we broke the co-operative—that there be no more collectively held property but only individuals [*que no hubiera sino individualmente*]. A commandant, a general, from the army came to ask why we were asking for the distribution. 'Because twelve years we've continued and the co-operative never has anything, it never makes a profit, only debt and more debt!'



Figure 28. Farmer with his organic mango trees

Freedom means drinking on Mondays

This dissolution of the co-operative brought about widespread individual land ownership for most of the plantation's former field hands, labourers and employees. However, as mentioned earlier, even prior to agrarian reforms, men and women had been engaged in struggles to gain access to rental *chacras* for subsistence farming. The desire to emancipate themselves from parental homes, marriage and the birth of children were motivations for renting *chacras*, which were acquired either by negotiating with the plantation owner or by invading unused land. Although rental use of a *chacra* did not constitute legal ownership and rental lands could be taken away at will, tenants could pass on rights to the *chacra* to their children. *Chacras* represented a means for villagers to provide for their household's basic needs and any produce was property of the farmer, not the *hacienda*. In this way, through managing their rental *chacra*, villagers gained a perspective on an alternative to wage labour and created connections to the land.

Today, *chacras* and their most important export product, mangos, symbolise the present and all that was gained in a transition from the *hacienda* to individual farming, via a relatively brief co-operative period. Early mornings in the village begin with the slow trickle of men on their donkeys or mules out to their *chacras*, a half hour to hour-long journey for most. Farmers go alone or with their fathers, sons, nephews or sons-in-law. Mangos embody the end point of a long historical process of economic transformation. They also reflect the individualisation of production because the fruit requires little by means of machinery, water or processing, and is sold to middlemen. These middlemen, who often provide the field hands to harvest the fruit, re-sell it on to merchants in Piura, Chiclayo, Lima and beyond, or take it to packaging or processing plants, often to be transformed into juices, jams and dried fruit. Mangos can also be taken to symbolise the independence of men who are no longer accountable to an overseer, plantation owner or fellow members of the co-operative, and who are free to work whenever and as much or little as they choose. Through gaining ownership of their land, the majority of villagers transformed themselves from peons into the employers of peons, hiring extra help during harvests. Freedom,

people in Yapatera often explained to me, means being able to rest or to drink and be drunk on any day of the week if one so chooses. It is for this reason that most men spend Mondays nursing a hangover from Sunday excesses, or continuing their drinking in the company of other men. Mondays are therefore affectionately known as ‘little Sunday’ (*domingo chiquito*), and villagers often point out that anyone working for a boss does not enjoy this freedom.



Figure 29. Men enjoying a *domingo chiquito*

Chacras are a physical space in which men, and some women, can express their creative potential and where they derive satisfaction from transforming the land. Perhaps due to the fact that we were far away from the humdrum of village life, my conversations with my informants on the *chacra* were always freer, more reflective and more passionate. Men enjoyed talking to me and to friends, neighbours and relatives about tricks to improve cultivation, for example in the cross-breeding of mango trees, discussing how to insert the sapling of one variety into the trunk of another to combine the best attributes of each, making more resilient trees with superior fruit. Farmers also engaged in conversations about the profitability of new crops, such as soy, and old ones, such as the *zarandaja* bean, asking my opinion about whether these would succeed as export products. These conversations were not simply driven by economic motivations, but also by a desire to innovate and continually transform previously dry, mountainous or

overgrown ground into fertile and diversified agricultural land. Farmers spoke with pride and affection of their *chacras*. Domingo told me:

Now that we work individually, for me, I feel happy. Mango for export! We approved the mango! The plants, I love them as if they were babies... How could I not love them, these *ñanas* [Quechua, 'little children']? This year, they have started to bear fruits for me, the babies. How many *ñañas* I bought, I talk to them like that. And they produce for me. I treat them well. Anyone who sees me might say, this man, who is he talking to?!

Fino also stressed the care and nurture he invested into the *chacra*, yielding positive results in the face of adversity:

With just one hectare, one little piece, almost nothing, in the decades of the 80s and 90s we did better than those former co-operative members who had five hectares. Why? Because from when we began, we 'put our shoulder into it' [*metimos el hombro*], without anything, we put plants, we sowed, we sowed, we sowed. We grew what was fashionable then: limes. They made more money. One hundred and eighty plants, full of fruit [*bien llevaditas*]. We never hired a peon, we never said to the merchant, 'you harvest it'. We harvested ourselves, with great care...

Others spoke of the *chacra* as a protected space for male bonding and the exchange of knowledge for example between fathers and sons, grandfathers and grandsons. Goyo told me, with tears in his eyes, 'My father he loved me so much. He always told me, "if there is something important we have to talk about, let's talk here in the *chacra*!"' And that's what he did, he would bring me there.' Men and women emphasised that the *chacra* had an almost magnetic hold on men and that if they stayed away for a few days because of a family occasion, illness, or if they went to visit their children in Lima, the *chacra* would call them back home and they would become anxious to go work on the land. Idealised notions of neighbourliness and generosity were expressed in the notion that although villagers were poor, no one in the village went hungry because it was always possible to grow something on the *chacra* and even if one did not have land, someone would always give you a little rice, a sweet potato or a plantain.



Figure 30. Campesino shelling maize with the help of sons and nephews

Through their agricultural activity, and their insertion into regional, national and international markets, villagers see themselves as participating in wider imagined communities. They talk of being in competition with mango producers in other parts of Peru and countries including Ecuador and Brazil. Villagers take pride in the fact that the elite chefs who are spearheading Peru's so-called 'gastronomic revolution', can be seen on television stating that only a lime from the Alto Piura valley is fit to make the best *ceviche*. Aware of Peru's growing impact as a global exporter of fresh produce, they discuss how grapes, asparagus, avocado and mango from Peru feed the world, stressing their role as 'producers' (*productores*) and often incorporating globalised discourses about environmental sustainability and the perceived benefits of organic farming.

In an attempt to harness the symbolic potential of mango to bring progress and development to Yapatera, in 1999 migrants settled in Lima raised funds and set up the annual mango harvest festival in their home village. Timed to coincide with the patron saint festival in late January (chapter III: 158), and marking the beginning of the rainy season, the festival celebrates community cohesion, fertility, abundance, beauty and youth. Between Christmas and late January the village almost doubles in population with the influx of migrants returning home during the long school summer holiday, as well as local tourists.

The festival features a brightly decorated fair on the main square, major music concerts, culinary competitions, arts and crafts, and crowded *peñas* (taverns) and homes, where beer and *chicha* are made to flow freely. A beauty pageant culminates in the coronation of ‘Miss Mango’ and local football teams compete in the finals for a prize cup. These weeks see a flurry of baptisms, marriages and confirmations, and young people take advantage of the commotion in the village to elope (chapter III: 129-134). Although mangos are not a native fruit to Yapaterra or even Peru, and most men remember it being introduced by the last plantation owner, they are nevertheless thought to stand for the viability of small-scale agricultural production.



Figure 31. Miss Mango Festival, Winner of the Gold Mango, Miss Morropón Province, and the Winner of the Silver Mango, 2011.

Beggars sitting on a bench of gold

Villagers often cite an idiom, penned by nineteenth-century geographer Antonio Raimondi, which states that ‘Peru is a beggar sitting on a bench of gold’: abundant in natural resources but underexploited. Peasants in Yapaterra see themselves as productive, as extracting this wealth through their engagement with the land. However, they see the true capacity, both of the land and of their labour, as lying dormant. Moreover, they see themselves as dependent on

government both to materialise the potential of the land and to provide for the security that their livelihoods cannot.

Before migrating to Lima to work as a security guard, Neto told me that he wanted to publish a book on the history of the Mango Festival and asked for my help in editing it. He showed me his writings compiled in a pocket-sized notebook, filled densely with his neat handwriting. His introductory essay captured both the plight and the hope that villagers saw in smallholder farming activities:

OBJECTIVES: For the authorities of the highest level to hear the agonizing clamour of our Yapaterano agriculturalists, to rescue our qualities, to make them sustainable and, in this manner, put an end to the migration of the young generation of this village. To promote the export of our improved products by municipal authorities, to make them conscious about the need for the decentralisation of the economic resources of the province of Morropón.

Much of the Alto Piura valley's mangos ripen too late for an international market already saturated with produce from Brazil, Mexico and other countries. The reliance on middlemen means dismal prices for local producers and the fuller exploitation of other produce is plagued by a chronic lack of water, and the absence of loans and micro-credit for machinery, seeds and fertilizer. The recurrent natural weather phenomenon El Niño periodically brings devastating torrential rains, followed by years of drought and soil erosion. Although Peruvian agricultural export is experiencing a boom, state-led development of infrastructure (including for example the Alto Piura Irrigation Project, PEIHAP), tax incentives and laws benefit medium to large agribusiness corporations leaving small-scale producers to fend for themselves. In the last few years, even the awards for the best 'Golden', 'Silver' and 'Copper' Mango in Yapatera's Mango Festival have been won not by small local producers, but by entrepreneurial merchants from Chulucanas, who have a heavy hand in provincial politics.

Some villagers look with envy to the neighbouring village of Sol Sol where a private corporation has bought up the lands of the former members of Sol Sol's co-operative, and has created a successful, modernised plantation for mangos, grapes, avocados, red peppers and other produce. As in *hacienda* times the villagers are again working for small but regular wages and many young men

in Yapatera have found work there. Perceived as ‘outsiders’, the company is often called ‘Chilean’ or ‘German’ (even though it was founded and headquartered in Peru and is managed by Peruvians). Even Francisco, the co-operative’s last president, conceded:

The Law of Co-operatives, was one of the best laws in Peru. It’s just that we, the peasants, didn’t know how to thank Mr Velasco for what he left us with. What would Yapatera be like now if we had?! We would have an academy, a university! Look at Sol Sol, there are six or eight hundred souls working there. Fruit trees, cacao, mango... Everything is in order there, well organised, well respected. It’s prohibited for the workers there to arrive on their donkeys—that looks ugly. They come by bicycle, nice and orderly. And when they leave, the guards check their backpacks, to see that they haven’t stolen any produce. Everything is for the company, you see? They even have a canteen inside—they give them food! And when the owner comes, he mustn’t find even a fly... In Sol Sol the *hacendados* are back... We peasants have been too idiotic [*demasiado cojudos*]!

Some villagers, mostly older former members of the co-operative, have secured membership in a Chulucanas-based association of organic mango producers and are able to export their produce collectively at more favourable prices to Europe and the USA under fair trade conditions. They aspire to build a factory for turning the fresh fruit into jams, juices and dried fruit and exporting it collectively, while still retaining ownership of their land.

But efforts such as these are hardly enough to stop the flow of Yapatera’s young men and women, disillusioned by the prospects of agriculture, migrating to Lima and other cities in search of better prospects. Because of partible inheritance (chapter III: 128) and, until recent years, a high birth rate, existing *chacras* are progressively splintered into ever smaller pieces, with most households working on one to two hectares of land. Some individuals manage to cobble together various pieces of land, through inheritance or by purchasing them, but they are often in remotely different locations. Disputes over inheritance are common, but frowned upon, and can involve accusations of ‘doing damage’ (*hacer daño*), a euphemism for witchcraft. Consequently, many adult children choose to migrate rather than engage in *chacra* farming and some forfeit their inheritance, selling it at a low price, renting it or giving it to siblings or other relatives who remain in the village. Older men, especially, lament that the young want nothing to do with agriculture and disdain getting their hands dirty. At the same time, however, these same men encourage their children’s migration by

emphasising the importance of education to ‘better oneself’ or ‘get ahead’ (*mejorarse* or *superarse*) and aspiring to blue or pink-collar jobs for their children.¹⁵ The youngest sons or sons-in-law are often older men’s last source of hope for someone in the family to continue working on the *chacra*, since older children will often have migrated already. In fact, migrant children often subsidise their parent’s meagre income from agricultural activities with monetary remittances.

Migration and mixing

Emigration results in the absence of free family labour within the household, and farmers must now increasingly hire their own peons (for around \$5 per day) or opt to rent out their entire *chacras* for six to twelve months at a time (for around \$300 for six months). Peons are often local boys or young men, but increasingly they are *cholos*, from neighbouring villages, and *serranos* (highlanders) from the Piuran highlands. The torrential rains produced by the El Niño phenomenon of 1982/3, and most recently 1997/8, unleashed a trickle of *serrano* migrants down into Piura’s coastal valleys. Many of them are paid to take care of *chacras*, or rent and live on the *chacras* in simple huts or on the outskirts of the village in cane shacks. Villagers look down on this and consider it something they themselves did in the ‘uncivilised’ past (chapter VI: 232-235). The high debts in irrigation water payments that the new migrants owe to the irrigation committee are a testament to their poverty. *Serranos* are often stereotyped as backward, drunkards, wife-beaters who ‘speak funny’ and are quick to draw a knife in an argument. Differentiated by their lack of land ownership, highlanders often become subject to insults which cast them as servile and lowly, such as *adulón* (‘brown-nose’ or ‘arse-licker’), and ‘*serrano* who takes care of what doesn’t belong to him’ (*serrano quien cuida lo que no es suyo*).

However, despite this discrimination many new migrant families have successfully established themselves in the village, accessing the bureaucratic

¹⁵ For Peru, compare Leinaweaver (2008a) on the links between ‘improving oneself’, kinship and education in Arequipa. The notion of ‘bettering oneself’ is a striking and understudied pan-Latin American narrative and practice.

services provided by the municipality, using the village health post and sending their children to the village schools. My host mother Flavia had a close relation with her peon Vicente, who had come from Frías with his mother and brothers in 1998. Despite his inability to stay sober for more than a few days at a time, after which he would simply disappear and his mother would take over the care of the *chacra* until his return, and despite his apparent talent for getting into fist fights with the irrigation committee representative, Flavia kept him on. She explained to me that she trusted him and that after her husband died it was Vicente who taught her about agriculture and who defended the *chacra* against the encroachment of her husband's siblings. Many villagers also admire *serranos* for being more hard-working, frugal and entrepreneurial compared to *costeños* (coastal people). Seeing this migration in a positive light is probably a good thing, since new generations of villagers are increasingly likely to be the offspring of young couples where one is *moreno*, *zambo* or *cholo* and the other is *serrano*. This new wave of 'mixing' is continuous with a pattern of ancestral intermarriage due to 'slavery' under the *hacienda*, and due to the dismantling of social distinctions driven by agrarian reforms.

In addition, new waves of mixing are spurred by villagers' migration to urban centres for work. Migrant children are likely to marry migrants from other parts of Peru, especially highlanders. In particular, young women often migrate to Lima for work and have romantic liaisons with *serranos* from central and southern Peru. Many subsequently move back to the village or bring back their children to be cared for by their maternal grandparents. The growing number of such children has resulted in the influx of non-native surnames in the village, including traditionally highland surnames connoting a sense of 'Indian-ness', and contributes to what locals consider a 'whitening' of the village (chapter II: 101-104).

Conclusion

Depending on the economic and demographic circumstances, the Latin American *hacienda* has been seen in the literature as either the site of rural acculturation, with an emphasis on its coercive nature, or as a reservoir for ethnic reproduction

and sites of resistance (Turner 1993). Turner argues that the *hacienda* was a ‘micropolitical field of force’ where historical struggles to establish and contest rural hegemony were inherently contradictory (1993: 69), and that peasants’ memories of such a past are by nature ambiguous, differentiated and often detached from the present (1993: 75). Roseberry, in a critique of moral economy theorists, writes that

We need to view a movement from a disordered past to a disordered present. With such a starting point we can assess the contradictions inherent in the development of working-class consciousness and appreciate that the past provides both experiences that may make the transition seem positive and experiences that may make it seem negative. (1986: 151, cited in Turner 1993: 75)

In Yapatara, memories of the *hacienda* as a time and place are inherently ambivalent: a site of social differentiation and racial mixing, a time of stability and instability, a symbol of wealth and source of poverty. It is out of this history that the ambivalent category of the peasant emerges, a category that provides a legitimate existence, a sense of agency, a source of hope, but also a sense of despair: a sense in which the future of the peasant is doomed. Moreover, while the peasant is inherently and deliberately an ‘unethnic’ category, the process of becoming peasants ultimately sustained some old social inequalities, whilst also creating new ones.

Official national histories in Latin America posit the Spanish invasion as the most significant moment of historical rupture for nation-making. By contrast, anthropologists have demonstrated the diverse and alternative ways in which ordinary people conceive of historical rupture and the specific ‘before/after’ they choose to invoke. Harris (2006) argues that for the Laymi of Bolivia the arrival of Christianity and its triumph over the pagan ancestors and devils is the most important historical rupture. Gow (1991) argues that for Amazonian Piro, rupture was brought about by the arrival of rubber barons in the early twentieth century, disrupting a pre-historical state of separate and ‘pure’ tribes, and unleashing the mixing of which today’s Piro are the product. In Yapatara, the most important historical rupture, that which is thought to have tangibly transformed ordinary people’s lives is agrarian reform.

Despite the near erasure of Velasco’s agrarian reforms from official history, Mayer argues that ‘the agrarian reform has strengthened the peasantry, a

social class that Marxists and development specialists of the West had seen as a class doomed to disappear' (2009: 230; on the vanishing of peasant studies in the anthropology of Peru, see Seligmann 2008). What the Peruvian case illustrates, and what has not been emphasised sufficiently in studies of agrarian reforms in Latin America, is that 'the fact that land ended up predominantly in the hands of smallholders was not by design of the reformers, but by the autonomous actions of its beneficiaries' (Mayer 2009: 231). In Yapatera, agrarian reform is imagined as the crucial rupture which marked a transition from a period characterised by villagers' lack of agency to a period where villagers, as peasants, were able to organise, act collectively and participate actively, especially in economic production, and in which they gained land ownership and a sense of autonomy and freedom. This is tied to their sense of being producers and agents in the transformation of barren soils into fertile agricultural land. Velasco's ideological transformation of 'Indians' to 'peasants' was aimed principally at highland communities. But it also had a discursive effect on coastal *haciendas*, as the case of Yapatera illustrates. In Yapatera, agrarian reforms were seized on by villagers to reinforce local ideas and practices of mixing, which downplayed Yapatera's potential ethnic distinctiveness and 'blackness'.

With reference to the debate over the relation between class and race in Latin America, the evidence presented here suggests that for rural Peruvians of Afro-indigenous descent the class-based category of the poor peasant continues to be more salient than forms of ethnic identification such as those put forward by ethnic activists, both as a vehicle for social and political action and for everyday experience. This is not to say that race is irrelevant in local historicity. *Hacienda* distinctions between employees and labourers simultaneously disguised and perpetuated a distinction between people of darker skin and more African features, namely labourers and field hands, and better-placed *cholos* who, although not white, were nevertheless further removed from both blackness and indigeneity. Agrarian reforms officially did away with the labour distinctions that had marked these quasi-racial differences. However, the co-operative period also reproduced old divisions marked not so much by race but by distinctions between literates and illiterates, 'lazy' and 'hard-working' people, as well as

introducing new forms of exclusion, pitting co-operative members versus invaders, land owners versus peons and so on. Throughout the *hacienda* and the co-operative period and in the 'individualised' present, mixing co-existed with processes of distinction. The historical process of mixing is therefore linked to drivers of the political economy: slavery, plantation labour, agrarian reforms and nationalisation of agriculture and industry, global markets, and rural to urban migration.

Chapter VI. ‘Yapatera the future district’: The troublesome process of making one place out of two

A camp of Moors

Raúl-Estuardo Cornejo is a well-known Piuran writer who was born on the Hacienda Yapatera because his father had been hired to operate the plantation’s rice mill. In his childhood memoirs, *La Aldea Encantada*, ‘The enchanted hamlet’ (2007 [1968]) he writes,

Yapatera comes back to me as a double memory, a paradox. Sometimes it is a happy hamlet torn out of a fairy tale and at other times it is a settlement of ignorant and rustic people. Crossing the great ravine, closed in by steep slopes and high hills, a very flat *pampa* [Quechua, plains] housed a settlement of blacks. It resembled, not so much a Peruvian village, but a perfect Arabic encampment [*aduar* from Arabic *duwwar*] or a farmhouse [*zaferia*, from Arabic] identical to an African court. There a village was spread out, divided by a wide dirt street; it was inhabited by several hundred farm workers, almost all of them coloured. In the century before they had possibly been slaves, until the redeeming hand of Marshal Ramón Castilla set them free. (2007 [1968]: 10-11)

Less poetically, Afro-Peruvian activists based in Lima also construct Yapatera as a black or Afro-Peruvian village. In their conferences and campaigns Yapatera is often held up as a poster child of the Afro-Peruvian population. There are several reasons for this. Since Yapatera is located in the distant north of the country it undermines the widespread assumption that Peruvians of African descent are to be found only in Lima and the nearby southern region of Chincha. Second, Yapatera is considered the most rural Afro-Peruvian community, with the highest percentage of people earning a living from agriculture and the highest number of landowners. Closely tied to this is its designation as the poorest Afro-Peruvian

community due to a reliance on small-scale farming, its remote location and lack of infrastructure. Highlighting poverty within an Afro-Peruvian village serves to legitimise demands for recognition from the national government, on the one hand, and for material resources from foreign aid organisations on the other. Finally, it is because of the importance of land ownership and farmers' ties to the means of production (see chapter V), that Yapatera represents an incipient, if weak prospect for the recognition of Afro-Peruvian 'territoriality' modelled after government protection of *Comunidades Indigenas* ('Indigenous Communities'), principally located in Peruvian Amazonia.

In Yapatera itself, the construction of the village as a racially black or ethnically Afro-Peruvian place has had only symbolic success. This includes the simultaneous introduction of a coat of arms bearing the image of a slave breaking his chains and a village flag consisting of three vertical stripes of green, gold and black, which hint at a pan-African ethnic connection. Baudilio, one of Yapatera's few self-ascribed Afro-Peruvian activists, is the inventor of both the coat of arms and the flag and can usually be seen sporting a cap with a Jamaican flag. He described to me his inspiration for Yapatera's flag, which represents 'green for the fertility of the land, gold for its riches, and black for its people.' But the coat of arms is a rare sight in the village, and the use of Yapatera's flag pales in comparison with the use of the national Peruvian flag which is hoisted every Monday and Friday during assemblies at all three village schools, every Sunday on the main square and at every other significant occasion. In contrast to these two external constructions of Yapatera as a racially or ethnically distinctive village, this chapter deals with the autochthonous efforts to become a certain type of place within a national, non-ethnic, non-racial, regime of political geography and in a register of jurisdictional hierarchy.

At the entrance to the village stands a cement sign (see figure 32), sponsored by a regional micro-credit institution, which announces:

Welcome to Yapatera
Delegate Municipality
Future district

This chapter is about the struggle to become the type of place that the sign prophetically announces.

As we shall see, the project to become a ‘future district’ involves practices and ideas that relate to modernity, civilisation, decency, collective status and autonomy within an over-arching national hierarchy and that are performed in registers of nationhood and ‘development’. In Yapatera, practices of place-making lend themselves not to ideas about ethnic territoriality or a sense of ethnic belonging, nor does the construction of boundaries fall along ethnic or racial lines. Rather, the ‘future place’ is one where racial or ethnic differences are overcome. As such, place-making practices such as the ‘future district’ project are the most deliberate practices of ‘mixing’ discussed in this thesis. However, in pursuing such a vision, those actors who promote it continually come up against everyday distinctions and divisions that fall along implicit and subtle quasi-racial lines. In one particularly emblematic attempt to unify the village and to ‘develop’ it via a sewage project, a conflict emerged which pitted former *hacienda* employees and field hands and their descendants against each other in registers of place.

Much has been written about how ideas about ethnicity or race can be expressed in space and how place-making practices help construct ethnic or racial boundaries (see various contributions in Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003). In Latin America racial otherness is often constructed through discourses of spatial distancing (e.g. Rahier 1998) and through ideas about a ‘moral topography’ (Taussig 1987: 253; for Peru compare, Orlove 1993b; for Ecuador, Whitten 2003; for Colombia, Wade 1993: 51-65). Areas populated by blacks and indigenous people are regularly constructed as backward, remote, uncivilised and as different from the hispanicised, modern and white or *mestizo* centre of the nation (Stutzman 1981). Specific spaces can also be constructed as racially ambiguous or can be seen as sites where different racial or ethnic categories collide; such has been argued of Andean markets (e.g. Seligmann 2004: 148-160; Weismantel 2001: 17-29). But far less attention has been paid to place-making as an attempt to eradicate latent ethnically or racially-conceived distinctions. In Peru, cultural ideas about the national geography differentiate ‘the coast’, cemented as the site of modernity, progress, non-indigeneity, from ‘the highlands’, which are conceived of as the land of backward peasants, and ‘the

jungle', the land of marginal savage Indian tribes (chapter I: 58-59; Orlove 1993b). Little has been written about how people who live on the coast negotiate such ideas about modernity and racial mixing in everyday practice.



Figure 32. Welcome sign at the entrance to Yapatera

Yapatera was a district before

An asphalt road connects the village of Yapatera to the town of Chulucanas, the latter being both the capital of the province of Morropón and the capital of the district of Chulucanas to which Yapatera belongs as a jurisdictional annex. Chulucanas draws in surrounding rural populations to its administrative offices, daily market, shops, post office, banks, hospital and medical practices and it connects the province, via long-distance buses, to the state capital of Piura and from there to the rest of the country and abroad. The road from Chulucanas to Yapatera goes past rice fields, lush in the rainy months and arid during the rest of the year, with the foothills of the northern Peruvian Andes rising in the distance. After just 3 km travelling northeast on this road, past two small roadside settlements, one arrives at the southern tip of Yapatera (see figure 3). Instead of continuing on through the village, the asphalt road curves sharply to the northwest here, past other villages, on toward the fertile region surrounding Tambogrande and to the border with Ecuador. It is at this bend in the road, next

to the police station and former *hacienda* offices, that the auspicious ‘future district’ sign stands. The village of Yapatera stretches out, now in seemingly amorphous plains and uneven dirt streets towards the mountains. The southern, upper part of the village closest to the asphalt road is locally known as La Hacienda,¹ while the northwestern, lower lying part of the village, closer to the mountains is known as Cruz Pampa. Historically these were two separate settlements, inhabited respectively by the former *hacienda* employees and their descendants and by the former field hands and their descendants. Since 1990 the two settlements have been unified under the lengthy official title of *Centro Poblado Mayor de Cruz Pampa-Yapatera*, ‘Large Population Centre of Cruz Pampa-Yapatera’, or Yapatera as it is known for short.

The welcome sign at the entrance to the village refers to an actual legislative initiative, launched by a group of dedicated locals in the 1990s, to create a new district by the name of Yapatera, with the village of Yapatera as its capital. Plans to create this future district are motivated by the commonly held belief that ‘Yapatera was a district before’ (*Yapatera, en antes, fue distrito*). The aim of the project is to re-construct or re-incarnate a larger jurisdictional unit of greater authority and greater status, comprising several villages, under the name Yapatera. The autochthonous claim that the name ‘Yapatera’ had previously denoted more than a village was often mentioned to me casually in conversations about the past or about the state of the village in the present and not only by those individuals involved in the legislative project. These claims can be supported via several historical documents including old maps, travel reports, testaments, inventories, court orders and bills of sale. My reading of the historical literature and my forays into some of the regional, national and private family archives of the former landowners of Yapatera identified a variety of precedents and historically related place names, which are evidence of continuity between current-day Yapatera, the future district, and its historical predecessors. In the republican period a ‘district of Yapatera’ existed between

¹ I have used the name La Hacienda for simplicity in order to distinguish this part of the village from Yapatera, which I use to refer to the village as a whole. Locally, villagers, especially those living in La Hacienda will also use the name Yapatera to refer only to La Hacienda and to differentiate it from Cruz Pampa. This particular usage is consistent with national census data, which referred to this part as Yapatera until 1993, just after unification of the village.

1866 and 1937, subordinate to the state of Piura. In the colonial period the ‘*doctrina* of Yapatera’, figures as a jurisdictional unit pertaining to the ‘*partido* of Piura’, within the *intendencia* (or *provincia*) of Trujillo. During this period the ecclesiastical and political territorial organisation is one and the same. The name Yapatera is itself drawn from geographical markers and units dating from the colonial period: the River Yapatera, which flows from its highland source, in the Andean district of Frías, into the River Piura, one of the principal rivers irrigating the Alto Piura valley. It also gives its name to the valley of Yapatera, which comprises numerous villages and settlements. The earliest mention I have found is of the ‘valley of Indians (*Valle de Indios*) of Diapatera’, with 500 Indians (Huertas 1991: 496), found as early as 1549 (Lequernaque 2007: 157). Yapatera appears as a cattle estate (*estancia*) in the map of Bishop Baltasar Jaime Martínez de Compañón in 1785 (e.g. Huertas 1996: 109).

None of these documents are accessible to ordinary villagers, but villagers legitimise the ‘future district’ by referring to general and abstract geographical continuities and the existence of jurisdictional precursors. It would be fair to say that those with the greatest stakes in the project to turn Yapatera into a district were individuals with some local influence, including past and present political and social leaders.² However, while the project had been actively pursued by only a handful of individuals, the ‘future district’ project influences ideas about what kind of a place Yapatera was, is and should be, for most villagers.

The most important symbolic, historical and geographical referent of the ‘future district’ is the Hacienda Yapatera that functioned until the late 1960s (chapter V). In connecting the future district project to the legacy of the Hacienda Yapatera, villagers choose to obscure the abuses of the *hacienda* regime, which they recognise at other times, and instead position themselves as the rightful heirs of the *hacienda*’s regional and national reputation. As a charter myth for the

² This should be taken as a very loose category. These are the kind of people I would often be told to talk to as knowledge authorities within the village, some of whom continue to enjoy power and good social standing and some of whom no longer have much influence. They included former and current mayors, councillors, governors and justices of the peace, also teachers, members of political parties, former board members of the dissolved co-operative, and former and current leaders in various committees and boards, such as the water council, irrigation committee and former *ronderos*, or members of the peasant patrols.

future district, the *hacienda* reminds present-day villagers of the wealth, importance and physical expanse of the plantation that encompassed many communities which function independently today and which drew in workers from many surrounding villages. Villagers contrast the *hacienda* as a pervasive legal, political and social system with what is perceived as a lack of organisation and disunion in contemporary Yapatara. The physical, material and immaterial marks left by the *hacienda* on the landscape and the village itself remind villagers of the high standing of the *hacienda* in the past and of a time where the name Yapatara stood for grandeur. Those markers dating from the *hacienda* and still in use today include the wells, irrigation ditches, canals, dirt roads, foot paths, boundaries between segments of the agricultural land and the names given to different sections (*predios*) of the agricultural land, such as Fénix, El Trigo and La Antonia. Despite the upheaval that followed the agrarian reforms and the creation of the co-operative, such markers are considered a sign of continuity with the *hacienda* era. Other physical remnants of the *hacienda* include several buildings in various states of decay. The former administrative offices today house the police station, but the roof has collapsed. The former residence of the landowning family became the village's first secondary school during the co-operative period, but now stands in ruins. A row of dwellings, called *canchones*, was built during the *hacienda* period for employees and is still inhabited by their descendants (chapter V: 198).

Hoping to restore Yapatara's 'district' status, a specially formed 'civic committee' comprised of village leaders and a secondary school teacher from Chulucanas launched the 'future district' initiative in the late 1980s. The first necessary and so far most successful step in the direction of improved jurisdictional status has been the unification of the two settlements La Hacienda and Cruz Pampa, and official recognition of the 'Large Population Centre Cruz Pampa-Yapatara' in 1990. This involved the establishment of a 'delegate municipality', a democratically elected mayor operating out of a designated building in the village. While this unification and official recognition as a 'large population centre' is seen as a symbol of autonomy, Yapatara's mayor does not

manage a designated budget and the village is dependent, for all matters of governance, on the town and mayor of Chulucanas.

As a result of this dependence, in the view of villagers, Yapatera is in a state of poverty, disrepair, abandonment and even disease and social disarray. This is because villagers believe that, in a climate of insufficient funds, political leaders will direct resources to further their own political interests, often directing them away from those most in need of them, and that leaders cannot or will not serve all their constituents equally. Most villagers agree that the dismal state of Yapatera could be ameliorated if there were more access to money, better roads, a sewage system, running water and waste disposal, better schools and facilities for children, a better-stocked, well-manned health post, and employment opportunities outside of agriculture. In addition, villagers lament the fact that several nearby river-bed quarries are being exploited, without any sort of regulation, for sand and gravel by informal miners who pay or bribe the municipality of Chulucanas, without a 'trickle down' of any monetary compensation for the village. At one public meeting I attended, the mayor of Yapatera declared emphatically that, 'once Yapatera becomes a district, not a single stone will leave here!' It is thought that with the creation of a district and the ability to make decisions at this local level, native resources will be protected and the interests of the villagers will be better looked after. The efforts for a district of Yapatera also reflect a desire for leaders who can be held accountable and who fight for the interests of disadvantaged people.³ As a local demand framed in terms of democratic ideals and decentralisation, the villagers' critique reflects the ways in which state-making and nation-building is not merely a top-down process but one which is significantly shaped at the 'margins' (for Peru, see Nugent 1997).

A further, more symbolic concern lies at the heart of the 'future district' project, namely the claim that Yapatera was deliberately and malevolently dethroned from its district status. This notion is summed up by the phrase,

³ It is relevant here to mention that voting is compulsory in Peru and is enforced by law. This increases both the massive organisational undertaking and the ritualistic aspect of elections and creates the notion that voting constitutes a patriotic obligation; villagers return from their polling booths stating, 'Now we have fulfilled our duty!'

‘Yapatera lost its status’ (*Yapatera perdió su categoría*) and refers to a perceived rivalry with the town of Chulucanas. In the nineteenth century the then owner of the Hacienda Yapatera donated around 50 hectares of land for the expansion of the growing town of Chulucanas. People from the town of Chulucanas attribute the event to the first half of the century, and state that Chulucanas was rapidly developing as an urban and political centre and that it overtook the purely agricultural *hacienda* of Yapatera. Villagers, by contrast, stress that the event happened in the second half of the nineteenth century and that Chulucanas was nothing but a small annex to Yapatera. Chulucanas became the capital of the district of Yapatera in 1866 and political and administrative functions were displaced from Yapatera to Chulucanas in 1913. Subsequently, two rival interest groups of local elites in the region launched campaigns to create a new province, within the state of Piura. One group, representing powerful landholders, large tenants and merchants in Chulucanas, demanded that its name should be ‘province of Chulucanas’, with the town of Chulucanas as its capital. Rival groups based in the town of Morropón demanded that the province be called Morropón, with the town of Morropón as its capital. A consensus was reached in 1937 with the creation of the province of Morropón, with the town of Chulucanas as its capital. In the process, the name Yapatera was relegated to the *hacienda*, which no longer held a privileged position of influence.

These negotiations were made between local political and economic elites, and they form part of a regional history written by those same protagonists (e.g. Orozco Winstanley de Rubio 2005). It is not clear to me to what extent local workers, *hacienda* employees, small land tenants or field hands may have participated in or taken interest in the rivalry. It does appear that the rivalry played out at the level of local, provincial elites without the participation of the plantation owners who were oriented more towards the state capital where they resided and ran the regional economy and politics. Today Chulucanas is a thriving town of almost 90,000 inhabitants, while the village of Yapatera is a small farming community of a mere 3,000. The notion of Chulucanas ‘de-throning’ Yapatera may seem overdrawn to the onlooker and the idea that Yapatera might ever regain a district status may appear far-fetched. Nevertheless,

this territorial reshuffling still stirs up deep feelings of resentment in today's villagers, just as the hope for a future reversal generates a sense of great optimism.

These sentiments are reflected in the unpublished writings of two lay historians in the village. In his piece 'Yapatera: a contribution to the culture of Alto Piura', Octavio 'Taba' Cespedes, an agricultural engineer and youth leader in the village, set out to 'restore the little that is left of Yapatera's glorious past', and wrote:

In the year 1837, when Piura is established as a coastal district, Yapatera is considered one of its districts, decreeing Chulucanas, Charanál, San Martín Huápalas, Chapica, Vicús and others as its respective jurisdictions and hamlets. In the year 1884 Mr Juan Briceño was nominated as the first mayor of the district of Yapatera. However, with the passing of time, the congress divests the name of Yapatera in favour of that of Chulucanas, endorsing the view that our beloved village [*pueblo*]⁴ was a mere agricultural estate [*latifundio*] and nothing more, while Chulucanas was a *pueblo* with more culture.

The second example stems from Neto's handwritten 'history' of Yapatera's Mango Festival (chapter V: 211-212), in which he indirectly links the origins of the festival to Yapatera's past as a district. His introductory remarks include the emphatic declaration that:

We believe that organisation is the fundamental basis of everything: that is why the democratically elected mayor and his board of councillors have decided to celebrate the Mango Festival during the Fiesta of San Sebastián of Yapatera who has announced his procession every year on the 20th of January for hundreds of years, since its unknown and distant origins. These origins have been lost in the millennial history of our beloved, failing and forgotten village but vigorous and valiant [*aguerrido*] in its hopes for development and for a return to its political establishment, at least as a district, because we lost our category on a certain 31st of January of 1937 with the tale [*cuento*] that we weren't an organised population and it was said that therefore our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents did not exist, despite the fact that the *zambos* and *cholos* had been the driving force [*pulmón pujante*, literally 'thriving lung'] who ploughed the land of the great masters [*gamonales*] of that time.

The 'future district' proposal

In the early 1990s, the civic committee pursuing the 'district' status made contact with a geographer at the prestigious National University of San Martín, in Lima.

⁴ *Pueblo*, in Spanish, can refer to a village, town, population or a 'people'. As Pitt-Rivers has suggested for an Andalusian village, the *pueblo* is the concept of a human community expressed in a geographical idiom (1971: 7). It usually has a moral connotation as well as a descriptive meaning (compare Pitt-Rivers 1971: 1-33).

This geographer agreed to collaborate on the project and arrived with a team of three assistants to conduct a survey and spent several weeks collecting historical, geographical, economic and social data in the village of Yapatera and the ten other communities which would constitute the future district, compiling maps and statistics to produce a written proposal in support of the project (Balbín Ordaya 1995). This report, which reflects the motivations of the villagers, is framed in the language of science, rationality and objectivity. It exalts the qualities of the future district, particularly its size, its fertile land, climate, flora and fauna, mineral and forestry resources, whilst also lamenting its lack of infrastructure, and stressing the need for decentralisation. The report mentions the presence of African slaves on the *hacienda* during colonial times, but goes into more detail on pre-colonial and pre-Incan indigenous cultures. Instead of drawing attention to Yapatera's potential ethnic distinctiveness compared to other surrounding villages, it instead emphasises the similarity of 'ways of living within the district'. Indeed, the report stresses the 'DISTRICT OF YAPATERA's morphological and climatic homogeneity and the socio-economic, cultural and religious complementarity, which will guarantee the flourishing of holistic development through local government and with the active participation of the population.' (Balbín Ordaya 1995: 37)

The 'future district' project casts the village of Yapatera as the capital of this new district. A map (see figure 33) included in the report and entitled 'Urban-rural subsystem of Yapatera' depicts the village of Yapatera as the centre of flows and exchanges of people and goods within the 'future district'.⁵ The map emphasises the strategic location of the village of Yapatera as the principal means of communication and trade for ten rural villages connecting them with the town of Chulucanas, the Piuran highlands via the town of Frías, as well as the agricultural region of Tambogrande. The accompanying text extols the future district's 'economic dynamism', its role as an 'axis of support to a larger system and propeller of development', thereby referring to its relation to the state, national economy and society, and its responsibility toward the rural villages subsumed by it. Depicting the various villages and towns as circles of different

⁵ For more on peasant politics and the ethnography of maps in Peru see Orlove (1991, 1993a).

sizes, seemingly proportional to the size of their populations, the map in fact exaggerates the size of the village of Yapatera (despite the inclusion of a scale).

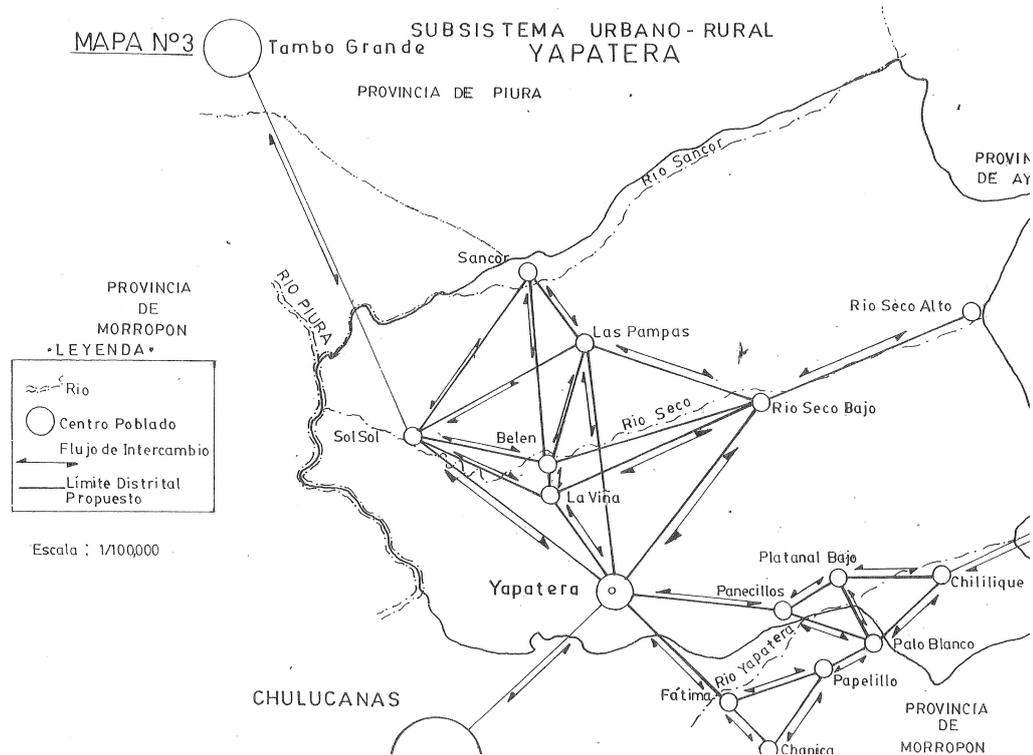


Figure 33. Map depicting the village of Yapatera as the capital of the 'future district'. (Balbín Ordaya 1995; reprinted with permission).

The civic committee presented the project for district status to the Peruvian Council of Ministers (or Cabinet) in Lima in the mid-1990s with the help of the geographer and her contacts in government, a proud moment in village history. But this unfortunate timing coincided with Fujimori's war on Shining Path terrorism. By the time the project had made it to the Council, President Fujimori had already dissolved Congress and reshuffled the state apparatus such that those politicians who had previously agreed to support the project were no longer in power. The district proposal was rejected and after an unsuccessful appeal the civic committee was informed that Yapatera would have to fulfil several requisites before the project could be presented again. The project for district status has since been shelved, awaiting a favourable political climate.

Nonetheless, several improvements have been seen in the village as a result. Since the 1990s the village has acquired electricity, two public telephones, a rudimentary health post, and the installation of a water supply system, which runs for two hours on alternating days between two parts of the village; the main square was improved and a communal building for meetings and public events was constructed. One of the remaining requisites for district status to be fulfilled is the installation of a sewage system.

While the project for district status aims to provide ‘progress’ and development to the village of Yapatera and surrounding villages, it also recognises that such progress cannot be achieved outside of the Peruvian nation-state. Even while a degree of autonomy is sought from the town of Chulucanas, the project recognises the overall hierarchy of national territorial and jurisdictional division and classification. Instead of framing these demands for territorial and jurisdictional recognition, authority and collective status in terms of a separatist ethnic or cultural particularity, the demands make use of the language of geography, and recognise the role of the state in place-making.

Village consolidation

The future district project also emphasised the growing together of the two settlements of La Hacienda and Cruz Pampa into one village, Yapatera. This reflects local history, as told by villagers, as the process of physical, social and moral consolidation. In Cruz Pampa, villagers say that ‘in the time of the ancestors’ [*en el tiempo de los antepasados*], people didn’t know how to *hacer pueblo*, or ‘make village’. They lived dispersed in small, rickety shacks in the hills surrounding a large *pampa*, or plain. Others lived out in the *chacras*, which they rented from the *hacienda* to grow subsistence foods. Little by little, so the story goes, as the ancestors intermarried and the population grew, they realised that the proper and decent way to live was closer together. They moved into the plain and began packing their houses together around a main square. Because the *hacienda*’s donkeys would roll about in the dirt and sand on this plain, the settlement was originally called *Pampa de Burros*, or ‘Donkey’s Plain’. I was told that various Catholic missions to the village in the 1910s and 20s renamed

the village with the more decent ‘Cruz Pampa’, with reference to the wooden crosses which they erected on the hills surrounding the *pampa*. Slowly the village evolved into continuous rows of houses spreading out in streets from the main square where the church stands. One of the key drivers to this process of village-making was intermarriage between families, and especially between migrant labourers and the children of the local field hands (chapter II: 101-104).

The process of growing into a ‘proper village’ reflects a preference for a Spanish colonial model of a *villa*, or town, organised into a grid system with a public square at the centre and public buildings and the church or cathedral at the centre (on the Latin American *plaza*, see Low 2000). The preference for such a grid plan also reflects colonial Spanish policies for resettling native populations for governance and tribute purposes (Harris 2008).⁶ The plaza today symbolically connects the village both to the nation-state and to the Catholic church. It is a quintessentially public space, separated from the domesticity and kin character of individual houses; it sits on a concrete platform raised off the dirt of the street, with wide paths for promenading around it, benches for sitting, and sectioned-off grassy areas. In the middle is a ‘pavilion’, a circular area with two flag masts. The Peruvian flag is hoisted here every Sunday at noon, and public events centre on the square. Funeral and saints’ processions also pay tribute to this space by circling around it before visiting other neighbourhoods and individual houses (chapter IV: 176).

The local story of progressive village nucleation is paralleled by a story of successive hardening of the building materials of individual household’s living structures: the ancestors’ houses were simple cane structures packed with mud and thatched roofs; these gave way to more solid houses made of thick adobe bricks and tiled roofs with dirt or concrete floors which are more able to withstand seismic movements and provide cool relief from the cruel heat. The

⁶ Huertas has described various periods of village ‘nucleation’ in Piura; one particularly important and late one from 1783-1850, driven by ecclesiastical reforms by Bishop Martínez de Compañón, included the building of new churches and the formation of new parishes (1996: 106-113). As well as having economic reasons, including easier taxation and collection of land rents, village nucleation was seen as conducive to a more civil life and there would be celestial rewards for encouraging lonely and desolate souls to lead human and Christian lives by living in *pueblos* (1996: 106-113). He also suggests that the plantation owners often resisted such changes, sensing a threat to their authority, and that populations were often drawn in to support the struggles for independence (1996: 113).

newest and most 'modern' form of construction, villagers maintain, are houses made of brick, with corrugated iron roofs. New houses built of these so-called 'noble' materials require decidedly less maintenance and withstand the rainy seasons better than the adobe and tile houses, although they do not provide the cooling effect and flexibility of the adobe (for parallels with Andean house-building see Leinaweaver 2009: 785-787; on the racial and status connotations of adobe as a building material see Orlove 1998: 217).

As mentioned previously, villagers ridicule and criticise recent migrants, especially highlanders, who often live like the ancestors, in primitive shacks either on the fringes of the village or on *chacras* which they rent from native villagers. Villagers cannot understand how these new migrants could want to live so far away from the village where true social life happens, where kinship relations are maintained, religious and political events occur, where children attend school and where one conducts one's administrative dealings. But village-making is an incomplete process even for native villagers. The old and those who are childless or widowed often still live in primitive cane shacks; few families can afford the new construction materials and instead live in adobe houses. Hardening is an ongoing process and it is only little by little, especially with the help of migrant children, that villagers update, add to and replace their buildings as needed with newer, harder materials. Furthermore, while the village is grid-like at the centre, it spreads amorphously and loosely at its edges.

The disjuncture between the future Yapatara—one that is fit to be the capital of the future district—and reality is illustrated in the difference between its 'urban plan' and the image of Yapatara on the ground. The urban plan is an idealised schematic map of the village drawn up by urban planners and used in an attempt to regulate village growth. It depicts neat rows of uniformly-sized houses organised into 'streets' and 'avenues'. These are named after the protagonists of regional and national history and the houses are numbered and organised into 'blocks'. It designates public parks and recreational areas. But this is a far cry from the organic, emerging growth of the village, which is dictated more by kinship practices and practical needs. Old houses are divided and subdivided as families grow; neighbouring buildings can be swallowed up and

additions are built. On the ground, official street names are unheard of and neighbourhoods are known by reference to religious patron saint names or by reference to the clustering of a specific surname (chapter III: 146). Furthermore, house numbers are unknown and one refers to a house by the names of the husband and wife who built it.

I became a temporary participant in village-making and village improvement toward the end of my fieldwork in Yapatera when I finalised my plans to build a public playground. I had requested a plot of unused space for this from the municipality and one day Tito, my friend, neighbour, and village councillor, accompanied me to survey the plot I had been allocated. As we began to measure out the dimensions of the playground and to mark the boundaries in order for work to begin the following week, an older woman whose dark, windowless cane house faced the future playground emerged to observe us. Tito greeted her, telling me she was his 'aunt', and asked her after her health. He then explained to her that the recreational space I was constructing was foreseen in the urban plan, and that this plan required a wide 'avenue' to connect the row of houses facing it and the row of houses behind it. To my embarrassment, he proceeded to inform her that this avenue, as sketched out on the urban plan, fell where her house was and that her home would eventually have to be levelled to the ground to make room for it. She would either have to rebuild a sliver of the house to one side or, so he recommended, she should move in with a nephew who apparently had some spare room for a widowed, childless aunt. It became clear, as Tito continued, that this was not news to his aunt, but Tito's role as guardian of the urban plan was strengthened by my building of the playground.

Like Samaria to Jerusalem

Reining in the messiness of organic village growth for the purposes of administration, bureaucracy, and management may be a universal problem for local administrators such as Tito. But village consolidation in Yapatera faces a further, perhaps bigger obstacle, which is that in everyday situations most villagers still think of the village as being split into two segments. Furthermore, this difference between the two parts of the village sometimes lends itself to

thinking about a difference between the people who inhabit each part, not directly in racial or ethnic terms, but in ways which reference past social divisions.

The distinction between La Hacienda and Cruz Pampa is seldom referred to outside of the village, or in dealings with outsiders. In talking to outsiders or in speaking in general, abstract terms villagers usually cast themselves as Yapateranos, disguising a split between the two settlements. But within the village they usually act and speak as if the two are separate villages. To give one example, the local 'radio stations', or *emisoras*, were essentially megaphones rigged up on long poles above the houses of entrepreneurial women who charged 1 Sol to read announcements to the neighbourhood, such as death notices, invitations to public events and so on. While the *emisora* in La Hacienda began its announcements with 'Good morning, village of Yapatera', the *emisoras* in Cruz Pampa announced 'Good morning, village of Cruz Pampa'.

This switching between frames of reference, where the village was one to outsiders but two to insiders, was the source of much confusion to me in the initial months of fieldwork. Having arrived in a place I thought was Yapatera, many of my new neighbours in Cruz Pampa baffled me by saying that Yapatera was a place different from this one, and one they did not like to visit. I soon learned that they were referring to La Hacienda as 'Yapatera' and were distinguishing it from Cruz Pampa. Other times locals would introduce themselves to me by saying they lived in Cruz Pampa whilst in the next sentence casually talking about the place they were from and where I found myself as Yapatera. Other people made a fuss of me walking 'all the way to La Hacienda', indicating that it was far away, indeed separate from Cruz Pampa and then proceeded to correct me when I spoke of 'Cruz Pampa' and 'La Hacienda'. Informants often spoke critically of their co-villagers, in both parts of the village, making the distinction between 'those from over there' (*los de allá*) and 'the people from here' (*la gente de acá*) yet on other occasions criticised individuals, especially outsiders, who made such distinctions.

One day I visited Dionisio, a member of Yapatera's *serrano* migrant population who had arrived from Frías with his wife and five children eight years

earlier after losing his *chacra* and house to the torrential rains of El Niño in 1992. He lived in a tiny shack on the outskirts of La Hacienda, on a piece of land given to him by the municipality. Hoping that with the perspective of an outsider he might shed light on the question of whether Yapaterra was one village or two, I asked him what the relation was between the two parts. Dionisio responded enthusiastically, 'it's like Peru with Germany or Chile: they are brother countries!' Dionisio was describing the relation as friendly, but by referring to the idea of national boundaries and territoriality he also drew attention to the potential for conflict. His choice of Germany (no doubt for my benefit as a German) and Chile as the potential 'others' to Peru, was not coincidental. Both countries are associated with expansionism and war, suggesting that antagonism might be simmering under the apparently peaceful relation between the brotherly 'countries' of Cruz Pampa and La Hacienda.

On another occasion I was shadowing a pair of older Jehovah's Witnesses, who were my neighbours, as they gave a weekly Bible study lesson to an aspiring convert a few streets from my house in Cruz Pampa. The passage being studied contained a reference to the biblical places of Samaria and Jerusalem. One of the Jehovah's Witnesses paused to explain that Samaria and Jerusalem were the names of two places that were 'like La Hacienda to Cruz Pampa', as the student nodded in comprehension. In this metaphor the two parts of the village were presented as clearly separate places, albeit indicating a relation between them. The Jehovah's Witness was also making reference to an ancient political, economic and religious rivalry between the capitals of two different biblical kingdoms, and was also insinuating a moral gulf between the two places. Both of these examples indicate that the two places were considered historically different.

The boundary between the two parts of the village was ill-defined, with La Hacienda residents telling me that Cruz Pampa began at the irrigation ditch one crossed over a concrete slab of bridge right before arriving at Cruz Pampa's main square. People from Cruz Pampa, by contrast, told me that Cruz Pampa included the area south of the irrigation ditch and extended past the mayor's house in the direction of La Hacienda. This sort of nit-picking over where one

part began and where the other ended, together with my assumption that I had come to study a place called ‘Yapatera’, led me to believe that the notion of two separate settlements was more socially constructed than material. In fact it was not until I was able to obtain a Google map image of my field site, several weeks into fieldwork, that I saw just how strikingly the two settlements were separated as two clusters connected by a single road which was lined with houses, but ones which were loosely interspersed rather than continuous.

In talking about the distinctions between the two parts of the village, many villagers, from both parts of the village affirm that in the past there was little relation between people from the two parts. People from Cruz Pampa state for example that, ‘a *morena* [lit. brown woman] from here would never go dancing in La Hacienda!’ and that ‘the youth from there would never come here for a *chingana* [get-together, dance]!’ Others stated that if the young men from La Hacienda came to court the girls in Cruz Pampa they would be kicked out. Some women in Cruz Pampa suggested that they were sometimes insulted in the past when they walked through La Hacienda: ‘They called us blacks [*nos negreaban*]. They would say, “Here come the blacks from Cruz Pampa”!’ In Cruz Pampa, the residents of La Hacienda are sometimes referred to as *forasteros*, or foreigners, and often described as *cholos*, referring to their ancestors’ origins in the Bajo Piura valley, other parts of the state of Piura and neighbouring states. Both sides state that surnames mark one’s descent from either part of the village. Residents of La Hacienda say spontaneously that ‘before, the people from here didn’t get along with the people from over there!’ and, ‘in the past people there were very, very black!’ Perseveranda, who lived in La Hacienda and was born in Chulucanas, told me:

Over there were hardly any houses, it was all flat. Then the children of those who lived there arrived and that’s why the family of *morenos* increased. They married over there, between friends and their children. Before they didn’t marry people from here —they wanted nothing to do with each other. People didn’t have that relationship. They would say the people from here were full of themselves [*eran cogidos*]. Later it came about that the young kids, the children who are being born now, the children of the latest generation, they come over here and take away the girls from here. Did you know that just last night one girl left for there? And sometimes the boys from there come over here too. I have a niece and her boy is from there, Cruz Pampa. They live peacefully.

Most villagers claim that these rivalries no longer exist and many point to the existence of intermarriage (both ancestral and contemporary) between people from the two parts of the village to affirm that hostilities belong to the past. There are many cases of intermarriage between couples from different parts of the village, although the civil registry does not record which part of the village people are born in, such that statistics on intermarriage are not available.

According to villagers, the local secondary school is an important site of village consolidation. It was established by the co-operative in the 1980s and was initially housed in the former plantation owners' residence; having outgrown this building the school is now located in new buildings on the same property. Because the school is outside the village, southwest on the road to Chulucanas, it requires children and teenagers from Cruz Pampa to walk through La Hacienda to get to the school. Villagers often say that before the establishment of the school there was little reason to mix socially. Today children intermingle there, get to know each other and many grow up to marry and establish new households.

Villagers also insist that Yapatera is one village, even if in the past it may have been made up of two villages. One day I was cycling back to Yapatera from Chulucanas after having been interviewed about my research on an hour-long live programme at the Diocesan radio station. I stopped off at one of the *chacras* close to the village entrance because it belonged to my friend Amador who often hid coconuts with their tops sliced off in his fence for me as refreshment. Amador appeared out of nowhere and came up to congratulate me on my radio appearance. Approvingly he declared, 'You gave Yapatera a good name, you didn't fail us!' (*Dejaste el nombre de Yapatera en alto, no nos fallaste!*) 'Just one thing,' he added sternly, 'Yapatera is one now!' (*Yapatera ahora es una sola!*) He was reprimanding me for having drawn attention during the programme to the historical differences between La Hacienda and Cruz Pampa. Amador laughed, probably to ease my obvious embarrassment, but I never again made mention of any type of division in my dealings with outsiders.

In a similar instance, my host mother Flavia recounted to me how she had had to re-register at the local health post, staffed almost exclusively by doctors,

nurses and administrators from Chulucanas, after the death of her husband. While filling out the forms the administrator asked her, ‘Do you live in La Hacienda or Cruz Pampa?’ Flavia responded irritably, ‘And who has divided the village?!’ The bewildered administrator explained that the health post used different codes for registration and data collection: ‘5’ for Cruz Pampa and ‘6’ for La Hacienda. Relentless, Flavia countered, ‘You are an outsider [*forastera*]: you’re not from here! I am from Yapatera; it’s your problem what code you put down!’ But this outward projection of unification contrasted with her grumblings at home on the mornings when Cruz Pampa did not receive water, despite it being its turn, ‘That’s because the man from the water council who turns on the motor is from La Hacienda, so he forgets which day the water is due in Cruz Pampa and he gives it to La Hacienda instead!’

These examples illustrate the general tendency to acknowledge differences between La Hacienda and Cruz Pampa in dealings with other villagers, and the tendency to deny them and project Yapatera as one in encounters beyond the village. Becoming one unified village is an ongoing, unfinished project. Political unification as the ‘Large Population Centre’ in 1990 was an initial step toward unification as was the decision to place several public buildings along the road connecting the two parts of the village on ‘middle ground’. These buildings include the municipal building, housing the civil registry office and a public meeting space, the water council office, the health post and primary school. This was done to avoid favouritism and to make the buildings equally accessible to people from either part of the village. Ironically, however, this strategic placement in the middle prevents people from both parts of the village from spending more time in the other part.

In addition to the shared public buildings, La Hacienda and Cruz Pampa also maintain parallel sets of institutions, which is rather unusual in a Peruvian village. Each has its own local Deputy Governor (a largely symbolic role) and its own Justice of the Peace (who resolves minor disputes among villagers). Cruz Pampa has a large church, which is used relatively frequently compared to the small chapel in La Hacienda. Residents of La Hacienda instead fulfil their ritual needs and obligations in Chulucanas, including burying their dead in the town’s

cemetery. Villagers from Cruz Pampa interpret this decision as arrogant. Similarly the decision by many families in La Hacienda to send their children to schools in Chulucanas, rather than the one of the village's two primaries and one secondary school, is seen as a rejection.

Maps suggest that the process of physical unification of La Hacienda and Cruz Pampa is still underway. A 1961 map of the Hacienda Yapatera (see figure 34), produced for use by the plantation owners and showing the different *predios*, depicts the two settlements as completely separate and does not even show a road or footpath connecting the two. Interestingly, it does not label the settlement known today as La Hacienda, considering it not so much an autonomous settlement as part of the plantation infrastructure. Cruz Pampa, labelled a 'hamlet' (*caserío*) is located in the area of the *hacienda* reserved for cattle grazing.

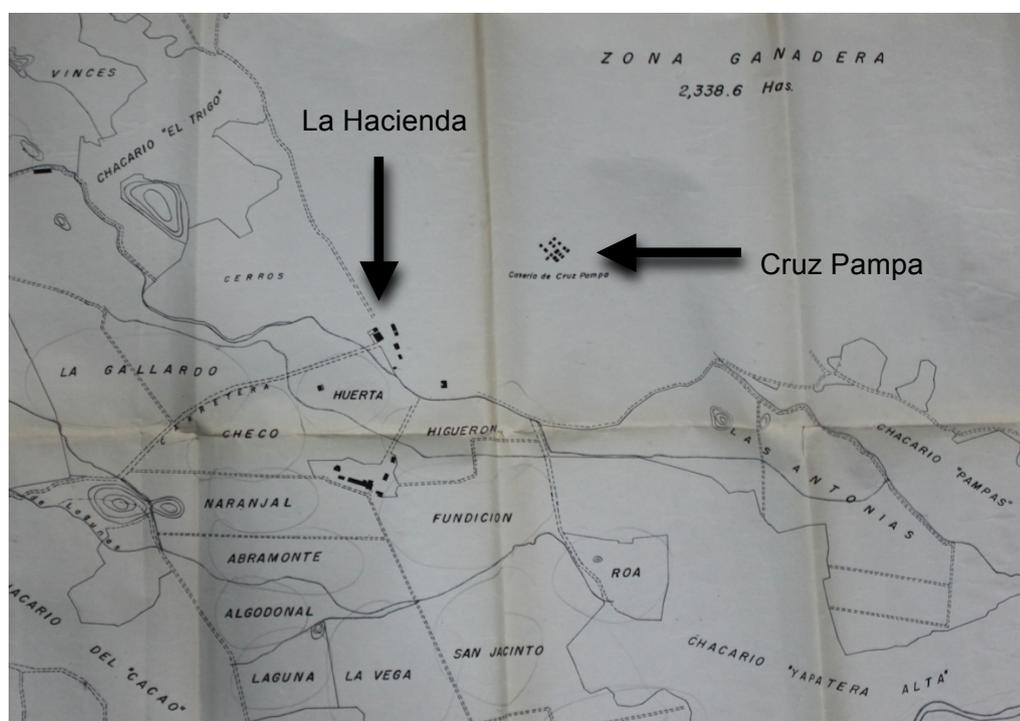


Figure 34. Detail from map of the Hacienda Yapatera, dated 1961.
(Family archives of the former landowners; reprinted with permission)

The proposal for district status, produced in 1995, includes a map (see figure 35) which, by contrast, depicts Yapatera as one single, unified village. It does not name the separate parts as La Hacienda and Cruz Pampa and depicts one

continuously populated area; the drawing of a boundary around the village implies a territorial unity. It also depicts the former *hacienda* as a separate place, located south outside the village, thereby portraying the village of Yapatera as an entirely distinct entity independent from the *hacienda*. This visual portrayal undermines the claim by La Hacienda's villagers that they have a privileged association with the former plantation.

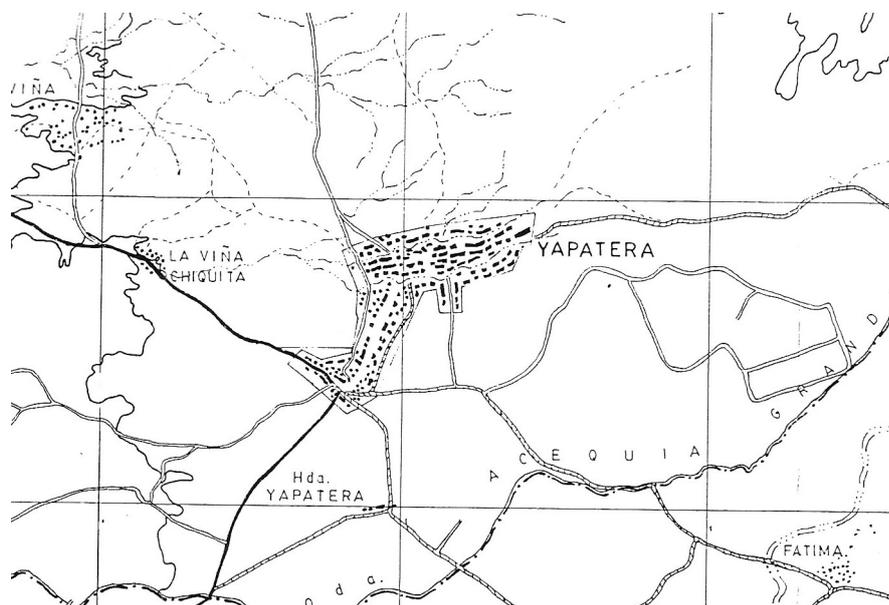


Figure 35. Detail from map of 'future district'.
(Balbín Ordaya 1995; reprinted with permission).

However this depiction of Yapatera as one continuously settled territory is based more on an ideal vision of the future than on reality. Satellite pictures of Yapatera (see figure 36) suggest that the area between the two settlements is quite sparsely populated, not in the uniform fashion suggested in the 'future district' map.



Figure 36. Satellite image of Yapatera.
(Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe)

The water and sewage project

Everyday distinctions between La Hacienda and Cruz Pampa are usually based on fairly petty squabbles; on the whole most villagers project an image of a unified village. But such projections, including the desired ‘district status’, are threatened by a latent sense of difference. This sense of difference surfaced in a much more dramatic way toward the end of my fieldwork in a conflict over scarce material and symbolic resources.

One of the remaining requisites to turn Yapatera into the kind of village that might be fit for becoming the capital of a future district was the installation of a running water and sewage system. Many villagers felt that the installation of such a system would bring much needed ‘progress’ and ‘development’ and, crucially, would diminish the incidence of gastroenterological problems—the primary cause of infant and child mortality in Yapatera. During my fieldwork word spread about the regional government’s plans to implement such a project in Yapatera; unlike past promises, however, this one would soon materialise. There was a consensus in Yapatera, where few people belonged to, or were interested in political parties, that the regional president who was up for election just a few months after the start of the project, was desperate to spend his budget and attempt to secure votes for the upcoming elections.

It was not until the company in charge of executing the project turned up at the municipality with their computers, engineers and pick-up trucks that villagers believed it was really going to happen. The mediator between the company and the village interests was the young mayor of Yapatera, Edson, who was widely regarded as a weak leader who acted without consensus and often served the interests of Chulucanas more than those of Yapatera. Expectations were raised from the start of the project that jobs would be created for villagers in unskilled labour roles. But Edson soon got carried away by popular pressure and promised that every man in the village would be able to work on the project in a fifteen-day rotation over the course of six months. All the men who were interested were asked to sign up on a list at the municipality and announcements were made over the *emisoras* in both parts of the village. Over six hundred names made their way on to the list and the question of how to organise such a rotational system arose. Edson decided to select the first fifteen workers in a private meeting with his councillors, at which I was present. The councillors decided to pick eleven individuals who lived in Cruz Pampa and four from La Hacienda. The councillors, most of whom were from Cruz Pampa, remarked that proportionally La Hacienda was over-represented; however, they should have four workers ‘such that they keep their mouths shut!’

At a subsequent meeting the board of councillors announced the names of those workers selected for the first rotation. The meeting started amicably, with many of the attending villagers making optimistic and conciliatory statements such as ‘Yapatera is one!’, ‘This project is for everyone. Here I will not look at who is my brother, my friend, my cousin...!’ and, ‘With this project there will come many more!’

Others drew attention to the project’s potential to ‘improve’ the village and turn it into a more civilised, orderly place saying things such as

- There will be workshops for civilising the people. They will give us education about how to use the water!
- We have to be punctual with our water payments! Sometimes we say ‘I don’t have the money’— but we have money to drink beer with!
- As workers we must respect each other. We must be punctual! If someone doesn’t show up for work, we must go and tell the person in charge...
- Yapatera is rich—but we are not united. When there are meetings, we must participate!’

Edson added, 'People must understand that we are not in a desert here! Here no one can just take the water as they please! There is an authority here!' But when the names of the first workers were read out the assembled crowd soon began to complain that the men had not been selected transparently and fears began to mount that many would never get to work. Despite reassurances by the councillors that everyone would get a chance to work, the atmosphere became tense. One man came forward to announce that the neighbours of La Hacienda had formed their own 'neighbourhood front' and had compiled their own list of men who wanted to work. He pointed out that few people from La Hacienda had come to the meeting, and that they were not well represented. He had prefaced his interjection by stating, 'I have no intention of dividing the village.' However, the indication of a split was perceived as hostility by the villagers from Cruz Pampa and Edson took it as a direct challenge to his authority as mayor. Edson, fuelled by the mounting agitation of the crowd, now had sweat on his face and he shouted angrily, banging his fists on the table, 'We already have a commission to select workers and oversee the list of names! There is an authority here, and it is the mayor!' There was applause all round and the man who had come up soon disappeared. This was met with satisfaction by much of the crowd who stated that the man 'left out of shame' and a young woman said to me, 'If the people in La Hacienda had wanted to sign up they should have come here, to the municipality, this is the right place!' Afterwards, the crowd dispersed and at one of the drinking places a man said to me, 'The people over there [La Hacienda] think they are better than us, when they are just three, four cats [meaning a handful of people]!' In fact it was often affirmed that the population of La Hacienda was significantly smaller than that of Cruz Pampa. Statistically, looking at the census data until 1993 (the last census in which each settlement appeared separately), this is true, but the difference perhaps is not as great as ordinary people suggest (see figure 37).

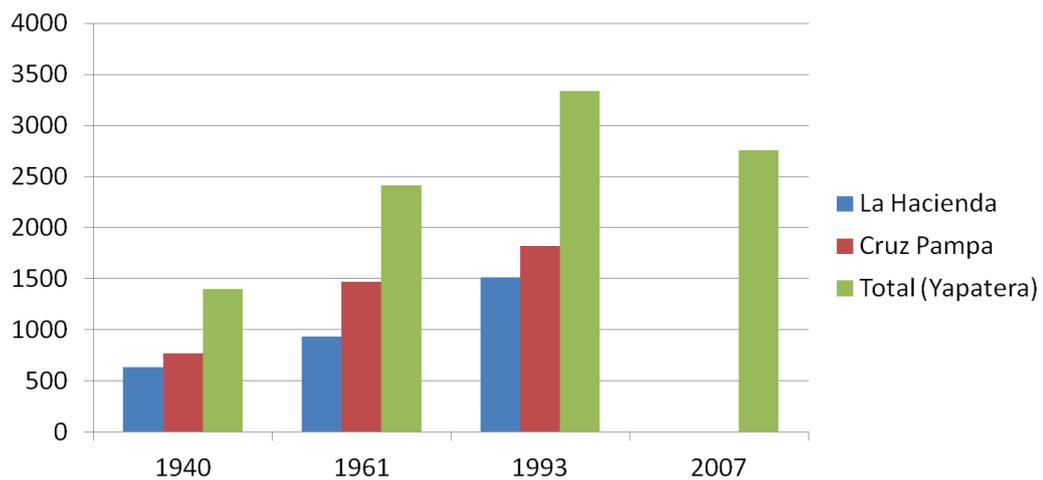


Figure 37. Population growth in Yapatera 1940-2007
 Compiled from national census data (INEI 1940; 1961; 1993; 2007).

But the fears about the rota system continued to mount. Originally the councillors had said that only one man per household would work, but Edson, perhaps trying to reclaim some support, decided that all men should be eligible to work, since there could be married men with children living with their parents or in-laws who needed to maintain their families. However, this only increased the fear that there would not be enough work to go around. Two weeks later, as I happened to be walking through La Hacienda one evening, I came upon a crowd gathered on the square. Despite affirmations at the municipality that the ‘neighbourhood front’ in La Hacienda no longer existed, I had stumbled right into it. Someone was saying that ‘Fair is fair. There should be ten men from here and ten men from there!’ Another added, ‘These are two villages, them over there and us over here. Edson does everything for them over there!’ It was demanded that the engineer in charge of the project ‘speak directly to us’, and it was proposed that the men should stage a strike the next day, when the project was supposed to start, blocking access to the warehouse with all the tools and machinery for the project. Someone threatened that any man from La Hacienda seen working the next day would no longer belong to the neighbourhood front. One of the municipal councillors, who was from La Hacienda, tried to appease the crowd but was told to leave.

There was no strike the next day, nor any day after that, and the project ground to a halt soon after it started because of lack of funds. Nevertheless, the conflict over work had stirred up divisions inside the village and had generated resentment which was antithetical to the vision of Yapatera as a unified village worthy of ‘future district’ status. While this conflict was not framed in terms of clear racial or ethnic differences, it nevertheless pitted people from historically different social backgrounds against each other. These different social backgrounds, former *hacienda* employees on the one hand, and former field hands on the other, were ones that were sometimes thought about in terms of differences between kinds of people, such as the differences between *forasteros* and locals, or between *cholos* and *morenos*. In casting Yapatera as divided into two, the conflict ideologically extracted two separate groups of people. This denial of mixing, such as through ancestral intermarriage, went against the very history which villagers otherwise hold on to dearly.

Conclusion

In contrast to the construction by ethnic activists of Yapatera as a ‘black’ or ‘Afro-Peruvian’ place, local place-making practices and ideas about what kind of a place Yapatera is are premised on the physical, social and moral consolidation of formerly dispersed and differentiated people. These ideas are oriented toward a bright future in which Yapatera is fully unified as modern, civilised and ‘mixed’. The ‘future district’ proposal and initiative is perhaps the most deliberate and most reflective instance of what I have referred to, in this thesis, as practices of ‘mixing’. Ideas about the future district are legitimised through references to the bygone era of the *hacienda* and they are premised on recognition of the Peruvian nation state and its jurisdictional hierarchy; hence place-making practices do not seek a place outside that hierarchy. Demands for some limited degree of autonomy and authority and for an improved collective status are performed in the registers of ‘development’, nationhood, decentralisation and civilisation. However, visions of such a future are held back both by organic village growth and by continuous references to everyday geographical divisions and a not-too-distant past in which the people of La

Hacienda and Cruz Pampa led more segregated lives. This past comes to haunt the present and the future, such as in the conflict over work in the water and sewage project. This suggests that mixing as a practice grounded in place and space is both unfinished and easily threatened. In the localised discourse about neighbourhoods and places that was mobilised during the conflict over work in the water and sewage project race made a significant re-appearance.

Conclusion: Mixing as a fragile project

In the centre of the main square of Yapatera stands the village's only example of secular public art, a statue of a *campesino*, or peasant (see figure 38). He wears the wide-brimmed straw hat called a *chalán*, which farm-workers and merchants in the state of Piura have used since colonial times to protect themselves against the cruel sun of the coastal desert. His bare feet are a sign of his poverty; his rolled up sleeves and the shovel he carries in one hand represent the physical nature of his work and his resilience in the face of adversity. In the other hand he holds up a mango, a symbol of autonomy and the promise of future prosperity. Local wisdom has it that he has surely just tied up his trusty mule, that robust and hard-working animal upon which the *campesino* depends, in the shade of a nearby carob tree.

Another feature of this *campesino* statue was of note when it was designed in the early 1990s: his skin colour which, like the rest of the statue, was black. The intellectual and artistic creator of the statue was Taba, the popular youth leader in the village who had been one of only a handful of locals who participated in the country's original Afro-Peruvian movement, the MNFC. To commemorate village unification and the establishment of the municipality, Taba had created a statue that sought to capture and draw attention to Yapatera's ethnic or racial distinctiveness. Taba's choice of a monochrome figure was subtle but he meant for the *campesino* to be seen as having black skin, so other activists and his wife told me.



Figure 38. Statue of a *campesino* on Yapatera's main square

But activists and ordinary villagers read the statue in opposite ways. Ethnic activists see an Afro-Peruvian who, as it happens, lives in a rural area. Villagers, as I have endeavoured to demonstrate in this thesis, have practical, conceptual, social and emotional priorities that mean that they first, and most importantly see a peasant, as this is how they refer to the statue, simply as a *campesino* without reference to his 'race' or 'colour'. The colour of his skin is secondary, even incidental. The peasant's trappings indicate how he makes his living, his relation to the land and to his labour; they also give clues to his customs, his forms of knowledge and the social history he is part of. His skin colour, if indeed identifiable from the monochrome figure, does not provide the same level of meaning or richness of information. This local understanding is reflected in villagers' ideas and practices of mixing which permeate through various domains of everyday village life including kinship, native theories of race, religion, historicity, economic and political life and place-making practices.

Because of this local emphasis on mixing, and the supposed irrelevance of race, once I had left the field and was writing up my thesis, whenever the image of the *campesino* statue came to mind, I thought of it as a contradiction: it attempted to represent the village as ‘black’ in contrast to what ordinary villagers told me. I came to see it as the proverbial ‘exception that confirms the rule’: within the village, in everyday life, it was the only visual and public reminder that Yapatera was cast by some as ‘black’.

Then something strange happened. A year after returning to London I came across a short video clip on the Internet that had aired on a national news programme on Peruvian television. Reporting on the ‘black’ village of Yapatera, the camera swung ever so briefly across the main square and, in doing so, the statue came into view for a split second. To my great surprise I discovered that it had been given a drastic paint job: the formerly all black statue now had a rosy pink skin colour, brown hair, and sported freshly painted clothes (see figure 39). Here was a news report which portrayed a black village, a story consistent with the perspective of ethnic activists but at variance with local knowledge. But now the only public image which had previously symbolised blackness had received a dramatic whitening treatment.



Figure 39. The repainted statue
(photograph by Jaime Quichca Torres 2012; reprinted with permission)

Intrigued by the transformation I made some telephone calls to a few close informants to find out who was behind it. But my attempts proved fruitless: no one could provide details of how or why this makeover came about. Finally, my host mother offered that Edson, the mayor, was probably responsible since he had recently ordered the repainting of the entire square, as part of municipal plans for village ‘improvement’ and ‘development’.

At a first glance, the repainting of the statue is consistent with the project of mixing in which, I have argued, villagers in Yapatara are engaged in everyday life. The repainting of the statue can be read as perhaps the boldest, most explicit attempt to distance Yapatara and its people from the labels ‘black’ and ‘Afro-Peruvian’, to emphasise mixing and to deny that race is meaningful for human categorisation or for understanding or describing social practices and experiences. But if race is truly as irrelevant as villagers insist, why did the statue need the paint job at all? What the transformation of the statue illustrates is the contradictory role of race in Yapatara, and in Peru. It exposes the way in which race is simultaneously absent and present, at once inconsequential and highly significant.

In this thesis I have demonstrated how for the people of Yapatara, a rural Peruvian village built on a former plantation, the categories of race and ethnicity are not salient for conducting everyday social life. Despite incipient efforts by ethnic activists, based mainly in Lima, to foster a shared sense of ‘blackness’ and to create a collective consciousness as members of an African Diaspora, and despite constructions by activists and other outsiders of Yapatara as a black village, villagers do not class themselves as ‘Afro-Peruvian’ or black. Nor do they give great importance to race or ethnicity as significant factors which distinguish their own existence.

Instead, as each chapter has demonstrated there are multiple ways in which people conduct social life, imagine the past, the present and the future, create a sense of place and maintain social relationships in life and beyond death where race is only of tangential importance. Indeed local stress on ancestral

intermarriage, the multiple racial affiliations of individuals, and village history as driven by a blending away of racial distinctions, shapes various domains of everyday life. Mixing is at the core of local understandings of history, kinship, physiology, religion, local economy and local politics.

Race is de-emphasised or deliberately ‘pushed’ out through everyday practices. The relative non-importance of race as a marker of collectivity is bolstered by a local folk theory of race, procreation, physiology and kinship which posits that individual persons cannot straightforwardly be grouped into unambiguous, bounded and distinct racial groups, but instead insists that individuals carry multiple racial affiliations (chapter II). This theory influences villagers’ cultural narratives about themselves as well as their inferential reasoning about race in abstract hypothetical scenarios. Ideas about kinship, particularly bilateral descent, marriage and personhood provide a broader logic for this form of understanding and legitimate the notion that race is irrelevant by reference to a kinship ideology which maintains that humans cannot be meaningfully categorised into exclusive groups by descent (chapter III). Other categories and practices, particularly those to do with religion and the afterlife provide meaningful ways of maintaining sociality and ways of leveraging ritual, social and emotional responsibilities in order to come to terms with the fundamental uncertainty which death brings about and to secure a more advantageous position both for oneself and one's beloved deceased (chapter IV). The category of peasants, which is inherently non-ethnic, and the historical trajectory by which it came into full existence provides a story for understanding the present in terms of the past (chapter V). Ideas and practices to do with place, in particular the notion of Yapatera as a past and future ‘district’, provide a means to improve a collective social status. Such practices are cast in the language of jurisdiction, national belonging, ‘development’ and ideas about being ‘modern’ and ‘civilised’, and are predicated on mixing directly contradicting depictions of Yapatera as an ethnically distinctive place (chapter VI). In a crucial way, ideas and practices of kinship, in particular an emphasis on bilateral relations, are thought to tie together and drive this process of mixing.

Mixing can be understood as a form of collective ethnic and racial ‘despecification’ (Gow 2007) and boundary blurring (Bodenhorn 2013) which is achieved by stressing mixed racial affiliations, by blending away race and by emphasising belonging in other categories. Mixing also suggests an attempt to negotiate a better, more respectable social status within the dominant social hierarchy. My aim in this thesis has also been to indicate, given the lack of published ethnographic data on Afro-indigenous Peruvians, how cultural practices, rituals, beliefs and ways of thinking in Yapatera are similar to, rather than distinct from, those in other villages in the Alto Piura valley and the rural northern Peruvian coast which are not classed as Afro-Peruvian by ethnic actors (and which could be classed as *mestizo/cholo*/indigenous). The fact that we find nothing particularly ‘African’ or ‘black’ about villagers’ practices is testament to their ancestors’ success in mixing. Mixing is not acculturation or assimilation in the current sense of the word. Ancestors and contemporary villagers have not been simply absorbed into *mestizo* or *criollo* or Peruvian society, but they were and are shaping the meaning of what it is to be mixed, Peruvian, Catholic, a peasant, a person from Piura and so on.

However, this is not to say that race and constructions of racial difference play no role in everyday life. As this thesis has shown, the way in which race ‘matters’ in Yapatera is often subtle, complex and hidden. Often it is in the very instance where mixing is enacted that racial divisions or racial constructs reappear to challenge the local story (compare Wade 2009: 158-159). Race, counter the local understanding, works in the following ways:

- in striving to turn Yapatera into a modern, more civilised ‘future’ place, divisions between former *hacienda* employees and workers come to the fore, thinly disguising divisions between *cholos* and *morenos* (chapter VI)
- while the *campesino* is a quintessentially non-ethnic category, the historical process through which the *campesino* comes into being reveals past inequalities which fall along quasi-racial lines (chapter V)
- while religious practices of remembering maintain sociality both among the living and between the living and the dead, religious authorities cast these very practices, and those who practice them, as deficient,

degenerate, idolatrous, disorganised and materialistic, thereby recycling stereotypes about ‘blacks’ which are of colonial origin (chapter IV)

- stories about relatedness which emphasise mixture as the fundamental condition and medium of procreation, personhood, marriage, and descent, acknowledge that in a distant past, people were more easily divided into separate races (chapter III)
- preference for whiteness and incidences of racist stereotyping and racist discrimination, although downplayed by villagers, frame villagers in negative racial terms (chapter II)
- in contrast to villagers’ emphasis on mixing and despite the insistence that race is a superficial, unpredictable, insignificant attribute, experimental tasks suggest that in some hypothetical scenarios, villagers do use race to make social inferences (chapter II)

Mixing is therefore always in dialogue with a dominant racial hierarchy and with constructions of race in more essential terms (compare Wade 1997; Stutzman 1981 and others), with local narratives of ‘silent’ racism (de la Cadena 2000), and with the historical structures which can construct certain people in ‘racial’ terms. As Bodenhorn suggests, in many places narratives of ‘mixture-as-norm’ and ‘purity-as-desirable’ have co-existed (2013: 133).¹ In Peru, although the mixture-as-norm idea is not explicitly articulated or endorsed as a national narrative such as *mestizaje*, it has been less overtly challenged than elsewhere in Latin America. For some Peruvians it remains deeply relevant, indeed for those most at risk of being cast as biologically different, the stakes in it may be highest. Villagers in Yapatera find themselves navigating the murky waters between *mestizaje* and racism.

Course has recently warned against a growing tendency to attribute ‘agency’ to every facet of indigenous life in Latin America, including every encounter with whiteness (2013: 772-773; 790-791). For the Mapuche, he argues, figures of clowns in ritual are, on the one hand, instantiations of Mapuche people’s transformative capacity to become white, but are also a means by which

¹ Even in societies such as the United States, which is usually seen as characterised by racially essentialist models, there exists the ‘melting pot’ idea (Bodenhorn 2013: 133).

they come to understand their own lack of agency, a sense of failure and their constitutive role in the white 'other' who dominates them (2013: 773-774). Gow also acknowledges, in his discussion of ethnic despecification of Amazonian Cocama that 'a mixture of differences does not equate with erasure of differences for these must be maintained on the edges of the system to generate its ongoing dynamics' (2007: 208). Villagers in Yapatera are active agents in a project of mixing; however, they are still ultimately constrained by a socio-racial hierarchy which seeks to cast them as inferior.

Mixing is therefore an ongoing project. By that I mean that it is actively being pursued, but also that it is inherently unfinished and fragile precisely because it is challenged both from the outside and from within. Mixing is a result of, and a response to the particular historical position in which people in Yapatera find themselves and is an attempt to negotiate oneself out of the very undesirable category of 'black'. People in Yapatera, on the whole, live in a world that does look racially mixed, and where they are busy being poor Peruvian peasants, having children, stealing wives, remembering their dead, building their village, drinking *chicha*, harvesting mangos, dreaming of a 'district' title, all without being ethnically Afro-Peruvian or belonging to a black race. But this perspective is not unchallenged.

I would like to suggest that by thinking and talking about mixing, the perspective taken by villagers in Yapatera is similar to anthropological thinking about human groups. Anthropologists have long argued that the human world is not made up of objectively existing, discontinuous, mutually exclusive, internally homogenous and externally bounded cultural, racial or ethnic groups, nations, societies, tribes, clans, castes and so on (Astuti, in preparation). The natural sciences also support the fact that humans cannot be objectively categorised into discrete races or ethnic groups. If the world appears divided up into racial or ethnic groups, it is because some humans construct their view of the world in that way. Brubaker et al. (2004: 77-87) argue that ethnicity is not a category in the world but a particular perspective on the world. In seeing mixing as the default state of things, where people and practices are always in flux changing each other as they interact, villagers in Yapatera echo a fundamental point made by social

scientists. This is that ‘race’ and racial differences are powerful social constructions that cut the links of human relatedness, segregating people into invented categories along imaginary lines. But what villagers in Yapatera are doing is not science but a form of politics. Without engaging in overt political action, and even denying actual ‘identity politics’, through everyday practices they try to blend away the racial boundaries that trap them at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

To return to the statue of the *campesino* with which I began this conclusion, aside from what it captures about race, it also illustrates a wider phenomenon which defined my fieldwork and conversations in Yapatera. This is the fundamental sense of ambivalence with which villagers talk about most aspects of everyday life, including about mixing, being Catholic, Peruvian and peasants, about the past, the future, the afterlife and so on. Ambivalence is the co-existence of two seemingly contradictory feelings or states of being; in my fieldwork ambivalence was manifest by a sense in which things could be true and not true at the same time. In the case of the *campesino* statue, and of race in general, villagers in Yapatera recognise that others see them as black or Afro-Peruvian and that they may have been ‘blacker’ in the past, while at the same time maintaining that they cannot be classified as black or Afro-Peruvian. In painting the statue white, villagers are contesting the divisive nature of race, but they are also implicitly acknowledging that race is often used to exclude certain ‘kinds’ of people and to perpetuate social inequalities. Ambiguity, which is closely related to ambivalence both in its meaning and in its etymological origins, is the sense in which things can be understood in more than one way. The late Olivia Harris suggested that ambiguity is a feature of Andean, and more generally, Latin American culture.² Ambiguity and ambivalence may also have wider cross-cultural relevance. They may be a by-product of the human capacity to imagine someone else’s point of view and the ability to take multiple perspectives at the same time. This is something that ethnography is in a unique position to capture and to understand.

² LSE Digital Anthropology Resources for Teaching (DART) Interview July 2008; <http://elearning.lse.ac.uk/dart/interviews/harris.html>

Appendix

Significance test for Custom Task 1

We have eight trials, each with a '1' (race) or '0' (social category) answer, for each of 24 participants; hence $8 \times 24 = 192$ answers. We can assume that the answers of different participants are independent, since they were not based on any prior knowledge, and since they were tested individually and unable to consult others for their answers. We can assume that each person's answers on different trials are independent, because a new, unrelated scenario was given in each trial.

In that case if people are indifferent between race and social category we can assume 50:50 chance (on average) of one or the other answer.

This means a binomial distribution will be used, with $p = 0.5$, $n = 192$.

We want to test:

H_0 participants are (on average) indifferent.

H_1 there is an average (but unknown) predisposition to one or the other.

Then we know that observation = 56 ('1' for race).

P (no. of '1's is ≤ 56) is $10^{-9} \times 3.63598$

So P (no. of '1's ≤ 56 or ≥ 136) = $2 \times 10^{-9} \times 3.63598$
= $10^{-9} \times 6.727196$
= $0.0000006727196 < 0.01$ for a 1% significance level.

This P value of 0.0000006727196 is far smaller than a significance level of 1% (0.01) or even 0.1% (0.001) so we reject H_0 and conclude that participants are on average not indifferent. We conclude that on average race is less important than social categories.

Significance test for Custom Task 2

We have eight trials, each with a '1' (race) or '0' (superficial) answer, for each of 16 participants; hence $8 \times 16 = 128$ answers. We can assume that the answers of different participants are independent, since they were not based on any prior knowledge, and since they were tested individually and unable to consult others for their answers. We can assume that each person's answers on different trials are independent, because a new, unrelated scenario was given in each trial.

In that case if people are indifferent between race and superficial characteristics we can assume 50:50 chance (on average) of one or the other answer.

This means a binomial distribution will be used, with $p = 0.5$, $n = 128$.

We want to test:

H_0 participants are (on average) indifferent.

H_1 there is an average (but unknown) predisposition to one or the other.

Then we know that observation = 104 (1 for race).

P (no. of '1's is ≤ 103) is 0.99999999999771

So P (no. of '1's ≥ 104) = $1 - 0.99999999999771$
= $0.000000000000229 < 0.01$ for a 1% significance level.

This P value of 0.000000000000229 is far smaller than a significance level of 1% (0.01) or even 0.1% (0.001) so we reject H_0 and conclude that participants are on average not indifferent. We conclude that on average race is more important than superficial characteristics.

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