

# WOMEN WEAVERS AND MALE TOUR GUIDES

## Gender, Ethnicity and Power Inequalities in the Selling of Handicrafts in the Sacred Valley of Peru

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In Peru, in the tourist village of Chinchero located in the Machu Picchu region, tourism is often organized through guided excursions. This article deals with the complex relationships that urban male guides maintain with the local, often Quechua-speaking, women of Chinchero. These women have opened workshops where they offer tourists demonstrations of their weaving art as well as weavings to purchase in an atmosphere created to simulate the Andean home. To a large extent, the women depend on male guides to bring tourists to their workshops, and pay them commissions. Based on frequent field visits, informal conversations, interviews, participation and a survey, the study demonstrates how gender and ethnic inequalities are replicated through interactions between weavers and guides.<sup>1</sup>

*Keywords:* tour guides, ethnicity, gender, Peru, commissions

### Introduction

The Urubamba Valley, better known as the Sacred Valley of the Incas, is one of Peru's main tourist regions. Located in the southeast of the country, between the city of Cusco and Peru's tourist flagship of Machu Picchu, it offers a wide variety of attractions to entertain tourists: beautiful nature and ecosystems, Inca ruins, colonial architecture, museums, the so-called living cultures of indigenous people,<sup>2</sup> and outdoor activities such as hiking, hang gliding and canoeing. It is not without reason that an increasing number of national and international tourists visit the region. During the last decade, the

annual number of international visitors arriving in Peru grew from almost 1.5 million in 2004 to 3.5 million in 2015. The number of tourists visiting Machu Picchu increased from 453,000 to 971,000 in the same period.<sup>3</sup> An important tourist service in this area is the guided tour. Excursions of one or multiple days are offered all along the tourist route between the city of Cusco and the ruins of Machu Picchu. For tourists, these tours are an efficient and safe way of sightseeing. On the famous Inca Trail, the state obliges visitors to go on guided tours. One of the tourist villages in the Sacred Valley that is heavily dependent on guided tours is Chinchero. Here,

Quechua-speaking women have opened workshops where they offer tourists demonstrations of their weaving art. This article problematizes the relationships between the women weavers and the (generally) male tour guides.

There is a body of literature on guides analyzing the different roles that guides perform (Weiler & Black 2015). Early studies focused on guides as intermediaries between the tourists and the local population. They are perceived as middlemen (van den Berghe 1994), culture brokers (McKean 1976) or mediators (de Kadt [1979]1984; Pearce 1984: 73). Inspired by these studies, Cohen presents a typology of the roles of modern tourist guides that have their antecedents in the *pathfinder* who leads the way and the *mentor* who directs a person's behavior (Cohen 1985). He identifies two archetypes: the *leader*, who is responsible for the group dynamic (inner-directed) and the organization of the tour (outer-directed), and the *mediator*, who explains points of interests to tourists (inner-directed) and mediates between the tourists and the local population (outer-directed). The mediator role is becoming more important in contemporary guiding, as intercultural communication becomes more central in the increasingly professionalized tourist industry (Cohen 1985; Weiler & Black 2015: 45–70). Other studies refine the mediator role of guides focusing on their role as interpreters who help tourists to experience the *couleur locale* with all the senses (Dahles 2002: 786), or creative storytellers using global discourses (Salazar 2006). As performers, they add meaning to a tourist attraction and may even turn it into a “sacred” site (Fine & Speer 1985; see also Cohen 1985: 26). They are acknowledged as contributing significantly to the way tourists experience the tour and local culture. Hence, the quality of guiding has become a key component in the tourist experience (Cohen, Ifergan & Cohen 2002: 920; Geva & Goldman 1991).

However important and inspiring these studies are, they do not offer a reflection on the power relations the guides are involved in. Their role as cultural mediators and go-betweens is often more problematic than is suggested in most of the discussed literature. Dahles states about the guides' work that

“it is doubtful whether [it] ... can be interpreted purely according to a harmony model of ‘mediation’, of keeping all parties involved satisfied” (Dahles 2002: 784). Mediation is not always a conflict-free, neutral and innocent practice, and the positioning of guides is important (MacDonald 2006: 123; see also Feldman & Skinner, this issue). In highly stratified Peru, guides' positioning in the social hierarchy of gender and ethnicity is, as we will argue, crucial in understanding their mediating role. In Peru, social discrimination based on class, ethnicity and gender is pervasive (de la Cadena 2000). It varies from daily practices among individuals to institutional discrimination and state policies that violate human rights (Boesten 2012, 2014; Weismantel 2001). Tourism reflects and is integrated within existing social hierarchies and in the Cusco-Machu Picchu region, ethnic and gender inequalities are notable (cf. van den Berghe 1980: 387). One manifestation of this is that local tourist workers occupy different socio-economic positions based on their gender and ethnic affiliation (Ypeij 2012). Moreover, the way guides perform their jobs reconfirms and recreates ethnic and gender inequalities.

We illustrate the social hierarchies within tourism through a focus on the financial side of guiding and related power inequalities. Guides earn their income through three sources: the salary paid by the travel agency or tour operator, the tips from satisfied tourists and the commissions that are paid by local businesses (Holloway 1981; Feldman 2014). The latter will be at the center of our scrutiny. As Feldman argues, these different parts of the guide's income are associated with different sets of moral values and degrees of transparency. In his study on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, commissions are of concealed nature and have negative connotations attached to them (Feldman 2014: 147). In this study, we investigate the commissions collected by male guides from female tourism workers in the small village of Chinchero located in the Sacred Valley, and show how they contribute to ethnic and gender inequalities.

The article is organized as follows. The first section describes the structure of tourism in the Sacred Valley. We then provide a sketch of the guides who

work in the Valley, and subsequently we present the women weavers of Chinchero. We then turn to the relationships between the women and the guides and especially to the commissions that the women are obliged to pay them. The last section focuses on how the guides use and abuse these commissions to confirm their superiority over the women. The article is based on frequent field visits to the village of Chinchero. Annelou Ypeij studies tourism in the Sacred Valley since 2003. Her yearly field visits last two to three weeks. Chinchero is one of her case studies. Eva Krahl and Floor van der Hout did research on tourist guides in Chinchero as junior scholars and under supervision of Ypeij. Krahl stayed in Chinchero for two weeks in December 2013/January 2014 and van der Hout for three months in 2015. Research methods include observations in the workshops, informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with women weavers, focus groups and a small survey with guides. The 30 guides were selected by the snowball method. The lists of structured questions took 30 minutes. Often the conversation continued after the questionnaire.

### **Guiding in the Sacred Valley**

In the Cusco-Machu Picchu region, the tourist infrastructure is reasonably well-developed with transportation possibilities, hotel accommodation and restaurants to suit every person. Despite the region's intensive engagement with tourism, there are inherent challenges for the travelers. Its altitudes vary from 2,400 meters above sea level at Machu Picchu to 3,800 meters at Chinchero where we conducted our study. The rainy season has particularly heavy showers. During the year, temperatures can vary from tropical at lower altitudes to below zero with hail at the higher altitudes. Tourists run the risk of altitude sickness, headaches, stomach trouble, fatigue, chilly shivers and sunburn. Many international tourists travel with tight schedules and wish to see everything in a few days, often before their bodies can adjust to the altitude, food and climate. Besides, distances can be difficult to cover, especially to Machu Picchu.

Both the ruins and the Inca Trail are located in

a park known as the Historical Sanctuary of Machu Picchu that is protected and acknowledged as a Unesco World Heritage. Governmental agencies strictly control the flow of tourists with several checkpoints in the park. Tourists are not allowed to enter the park without an accompanying guide with a special license (Maxwell & Ypeij 2009). Hence, guided tours form an important aspect of the way tourism is organized in the Sacred Valley. Throughout the Valley one can find local travel agencies that organize these tours and especially in the city of Cusco, where larger and smaller travel agencies are located around the Plaza de Armas. A popular excursion is the one-day Valley tour that passes the highlights of the Valley and ends in Chinchero.

The guides who accompany the tourists on these excursions form a heterogeneous group, often specializing in specific tours or trails. Most guides who work on one-day tours do not do multi-day hikes. Also, there are "spiritual tours", which demand specific expertise. Tour guiding is a protected profession in Peru, demanding a university degree or higher vocational training in tourism. Moreover, guides who wish to work on the Inca trail must be registered by a union in order to receive their licence and must follow refresher courses on a regular basis (Bosman 2006: 203).<sup>4</sup> But not all guides are formally educated or keep their licence up-to-date. It depends whether they work independently, for a small travel agency or for a larger tour operator. All guides work on a temporary basis (Bosman 2006) and they may switch agencies regularly or alternate work for agencies with independent work. In a survey of 60 guides held in 2004, almost 90 percent mentioned their heavy responsibilities and their low wages as the most negative aspect of their work (Bosman 2005: 65; see also Ypeij 2012: 25). All in all, tour guiding is a demanding job and Salazar's (2010 and this issue, p. 113) characterization of tour guides as "mechanics", that is, "highly skilled technician, working to keep tourism operating properly", certainly fits the situation in the Sacred Valley.

Based on official lists of guides who were registered in Cusco in 2013 and 2014, we conclude that 80 percent of them are male.<sup>5</sup> Both women and men

work as guides on one-day trips in the city of Cusco and in the Sacred Valley. Few women guide multi-day hikes such as the Inca trail (Bosman 2005), and even on day tours female guides are greatly outnumbered by males. Guiding is perceived as men's work. Ypeij argues that because a guide's work, especially the work on the trails, demands an able and strong body, leadership, and a strong sense of responsibility, it is associated with masculine values, such as authority and superiority (Ypeij 2012: 26).

In 2015, we conducted the survey of male guides, and found that more than half had a rural, agricultural background and spoke the indigenous language of Quechua as their mother tongue. Ethnicity in Peru, often associated with the divide between the urban and the rural, is related to styles of living, clothing, language and education. As de la Cadena argues, the urban represents modernity and progress and those who consider themselves as modern, such as city-dwellers, look down upon the rural population, whom they associate with backwardness, lack of morality and Indian-ness (de la Cadena 2000). In Peru, according to de la Cadena, the most important characteristic of ethnic difference is not phenotype but one's intelligence and morality as expressed through one's exposure to education (2000: 9).<sup>6</sup> Schooling at different levels and proficiency in Spanish enable people to climb the social ladder and distance themselves from Indian-ness. Van den Berghe's (1980: 385) study of ethnic relations in the tourism industry of Cusco found that the middlemen positions in tourism, including the tourist guides, were all occupied by Spanish-speaking men who lived in cities. Furthermore, in the research Bosman conducted in 2004, the mother tongue of most (male) guides she encountered was Spanish. They were born and/or raised in the city of Cusco and had an urban lifestyle. Our findings, that several guides speak Quechua as their mother tongue and originated in rural areas, may indicate that social relations within the tourism industry are slowly changing. Increasingly, rural Quechua families are benefitting from tourism work that they conduct in combination with their agricultural activities. The additional income they generate is often used for

the education of their children. As working in tourism has a high status, the preferred career choice is studying tourism at one of the universities or at the cheaper institutes for higher vocational education in Cusco. However, ethnic inequalities remain. Quechua guides generally work without a license for smaller travel agencies under less secure circumstances. Also, while more Spanish-speaking urban guides work on the day tours in the city, the Valley or to Machu Picchu and on the multi-day Inca trail, the Quechua guides are more involved in multi-day trails such as to Salkantay, Choquequirao, Lares and the jungle. To use the classification of Erik Cohen, the Spanish-speaking urban guides work in the "central regions of the tourist system", whereas the Quechua guides work in its periphery (Cohen 1985: 25). They are not only "pathfinders" but also "path-breakers", leading tourists to less known areas, off the beaten trails (Cohen 1985). The guides receive a lower salary for these more physically demanding tours that also have added responsibilities for the well-being of the tourists. It is not without reason that many used the term exploitation when referring to their working conditions. One Quechua guide indicated that he would prefer to work for larger travel agencies because they pay better. But, as he stated:

At the larger agencies, they discriminate against guides from the countryside. They immediately see that you are a peasant because of the way you dress and the way you talk. (Interview, June 2015)

In other words, his education notwithstanding, this guide's social distance from Indian-ness was not sufficient to obtain a better paid job. Chinchero, the village of our case study, is part of the central region of tourism and it is largely Spanish-speaking male guides who take the tourists there.

### **The Women Weavers of Chinchero**

Chinchero is a small village in the Sacred Valley of Cusco located on a road that connects Cusco and Machu Picchu. It is located at 3,800 meters above sea level. Lonely Planet describes Chichero as a "typical Andean" village with "a colorful Sunday market"

and “traditionally dressed locals” (Lonely Planet 2010: 263). The Sunday market is a regional market where local peasants trade their agricultural products. Under the influence of tourism, the market has changed in character and is expanding in size. Handicrafts and other tourist items are increasingly being sold. A daily tourist market is held in front of the colonial church which dates from 1605. The “traditionally dressed locals” mentioned in the Lonely Planet are women who wear the typical Andean woolen layered skirts, hand woven shawls, their hair in artistic braids with a characteristic round hat in red and black on top. This clothing is their most beautiful and valuable, originally worn only on special occasions. Since the rise of tourism and an agreement made between the members of the market associations, they wear them for tourists on a daily basis. However, when traveling to Cusco or working the fields, they change into more comfortable, less expensive clothing. They live in the village itself or in the surrounding communities and speak Quechua as their mother tongue. Their language

skills vary between fully monolingual to proficiency in both Quechua and Spanish. They are members of peasant farming families who grow broad beans, barley, potatoes, etc. on their plots of land (Garcia 2015: 17). The growing number of tourists who visit Chinchero offer them the possibility to generate an additional income with the sale of their weaving and other handicrafts. They work as street vendors on the tourist and Sunday markets, and increasingly, in the many weaving workshops that have emerged in Chinchero’s small tourist center over the last ten years (Garcia 2015). These workshops can be considered as a tourist border zone (Feldman & Skinner, this issue; Bruner 2005: 17, 191–210).

The women have established them as an intercultural meeting place where they offer tourists demonstrations of their weaving art. They invite tourists to sit on low benches covered with sheep hides and have a cup of coca tea. They show and explain the processes of spinning the sheep’s wool into yarn and coloring them with a natural dye made of a variety of herbs, which they boil in clay pots on an *adobe* stove



Ill. 1: Overview of a weaving workshop in Chinchero. (Photo: Yolanda van Dongen)

like the ones they use in their own kitchens. They warp the yarn and weave the textiles sitting on the ground with the typical backstrap loom attached to their bodies. In the workshop, guinea pigs, the local food specialty, are kept in cages, small children walk around or play with kittens and even some llamas may be present. Weavings of all sizes decorate the adobe walls and counters. The women take time to engage with the tourists and pose patiently for their cameras. In this tourist border zone, the women create an intimate atmosphere and give a romanticized manifestation of the “ideal Andean home” with the ultimate goal of selling their weavings. The border zone of the home is a designated space for women to perform the commodified persona of the native Andean. There, they become exoticized under a tourist gaze (Bunten 2008; Feldman, this issue).

These women weavers follow the example of Nilda Callañaupa, the first woman of Chinchero to go to university. She studied tourism and anthropology, graduating from the Universidad de San Antonio Abad del Cusco in 1986. During her studies, a grant

enabled her to travel to Berkeley, California, to study the history of textiles and experiment with different types of looms (Callañaupa Alvarez 2007, see also 2012). She came in contact with American anthropologists interested in Andean antique and contemporary artefacts and noted that collectors valued the traditional weavings highly. As the transmission of the art of weaving was declining in Chinchero (Callañaupa Alvarez 2007: 16), she began to organize women into weaving workshops and established the Centre for Traditional Textiles of Cusco (CTTC). Callañaupa’s organization, the CTTC, represents more than 650 women from all over the Sacred Valley. Besides, there are an additional 8 to 10 organizations that unite another estimated 300 women. The aim of Callañaupa’s work is to revive the art of weaving while offering poor rural women income-generating opportunities. The president of one of the workshops told us:

As the president of the organization, I try to continue preserving everything that is from our an-



Ill. 2: Woman weaving in a workshop in Chinchero. (Photo: Yolanda van Dongen)

cestors, our culture, and further to promote it and to spread it. Our ancestors are the Incas. The textiles come from pre-Colombian times. Thus, we will not lose our culture and can pass it on from generation to generation. (Interview, October 12, 2010)

The experience the women offer to the tourists is presented as part of a culture with historical roots that dates back to pre-conquest times. As Ypeij argued elsewhere, the women appreciate their work in the weaving workshops, not only for the earnings but also for the contact they have with tourists and the pride they feel through their work (2012: 31).

By presenting themselves in their most beautiful clothing, in the intimate home-like atmosphere of the workshops and by demonstrating their weaving art, the women stress traditional ethnic and gender identities.

At the same time, however, gender relations, especially those at the household level, are being

transformed by tourism (Ypeij 2012). Tourism enables women to generate an income, which changes the sexual division of labor that ascribed income-earning to men. Women spend increasingly more time on their weaving art and, when they get a turn to participate in the workshop, they may be away from home for up to a week. Their position within the household changes and men may become more involved in childcare. However important these changes in their marital relations may be for the women, we will argue that the relations the women maintain with the guides introduce new gender inequalities in their lives.

The weavings on display in the market and in the workshops are in part woven by the women themselves, while they also sell machine-made items, other weavers' items and even weavings made by prison inmates in Cusco (Steel 2008; Garcia 2018). The practice of prison inmates weaving and earning money with it, originates already from the 1930s. Nowadays, the women of Chinchero subcontract



Ill. 3: Women from Chinchero (left) and Santa Thomas (right), both working in a weaving workshop. (Photo: Yolanda van Dongen)

their weavings to the inmates because they do not have time to do it all themselves and the inmates provide cheap labor (Garcia 2018: 15–18).

The tourists can easily pick out the handwoven items, because of their quality and design. About the other items some confusion may exist and the women may invent stories to add to their authenticity (stating that they handknitted the items themselves, while in fact, they are machine-made). Needless to say, they never mention the word “inmate” during their sales-pitch. These women often combine the sales in the workshops with street vending in Chinchero or elsewhere in the Sacred Valley.

### **Guiding as a Job**

Most tourists visit Chinchero as part of a one-day excursion through the Sacred Valley. The excursion starts early in the morning in Cusco at the tourists’ hotel. It takes them to Písaq and Ollantaytambo and, on the return to Cusco, the tour pays a call to Chinchero, arriving in the late afternoon, when dusk is starting to fall and temperatures drop. Only a few backpackers and tourists with private guides visit Chinchero during the day. From 16.00 onwards, bus after bus appears at the parking lot in the center of the village. The tourists have 45 minutes to an hour to visit the tourist market, the church and the museum, to walk around the Inca ruins and to go to one of the weavers’ workshops. Sometimes, accompanying guides ferry “their” tourists to one of the workshops. Other tourists may have some free time to spend in the village and enter the workshops by themselves, in response to the invitation of the women in the street. The tourists appreciate what they consider to be the authenticity of the workshops. They value the opportunity to meet and talk to Quechua women and to experience local culture with its “age-old traditions”. Given the importance of staying on schedule and the short time-span allotted the visit, and the position of guides as time-managers, information providers and cultural mediators (cf. Cohen 1985), guides exercise a great measure of control over the tourist-weaver encounter. In particular, the guide’s contacts and the authority accumulated in the course of the day’s tour (or longer) are crucial

in shaping tourist experience (cf. Bosman 2005).

As mentioned in the introduction, guides’ income consists of salaries, tips and commissions (Holloway 1981; Feldman 2014). The latter two sources of income can be quite significant. As Bosman shows for the guides who work the Inca Trail, the tips paid by satisfied tourists can amount to up to 40 percent of their income (Bosman 2006: 210–211). Unfortunately, we have no data on the percentage of the guide’s income that derives from commissions. But we do know that the payment of commissions in Chinchero, as in the entire Sacred Valley, is considered a normal and unavoidable practice.<sup>7</sup>

The women weavers who participated in our research all confirmed that they are expected to pay commissions on sales to tourists who are accompanied by a guide: 10 to 20 percent is the norm, according to our inquiries, but they can go as high as 25 percent. Many of the women weavers did not want to speak about this openly or told us not to tell the president of the workshop that they had given us this information. Many efforts are made to keep the payments out of sight of tourists (and anthropologists for that matter). As Feldman has argued, the knowledge that the guide benefits from the deal may compromise his professional authority in the eyes of the tourists (2014: 148). Guides come back the next day to claim their commissions. Also, we noticed a batch of envelopes with money and names written on them that were hidden under the merchandise, waiting for the guides to collect their share. We also observed how a guide asked for some grass to feed the guinea pigs. Later one of the weavers explained that this was a “coded” message to the weaver to hide the commission under it. While the sale of the weavings to tourists is an open agreement in the course of which both parties negotiate with each other and exchange money publicly, the payment of commissions is a shadowy game.

The size of the workshop and its position in the tourism industry determine the extent to which the workshop, or its leader, can negotiate the size of the commissions. Nilda Callañaupa’s CTTC, an internationally known organization with a newsletter, a website, and two shops-cum-museums has a much



stronger negotiation position than the many small informal workshops. CTTC maintains working relations with several larger travel agencies. As they pay lower commissions, they are frequented mainly by guides who work for those agencies and are obliged by the agents to do so. Smaller, more informal workshops have much less control over the visits of the tourists and the level of the commissions, and are more at the mercy of the guides.

In addition, income within the workshops are often distributed unequally (Ypeij 2015; Garcia 2018). Some workshops function as commercial companies with a president who acts as the owner of the workshop. In others, the president charges a commission, whether the guides demand one or not. In one such case, the president argues that the animals that adorn the workshop need food. Moreover, she charges the women for the meals of the guides (see below). We also know of cases in which women pay a percentage of their sales to the workshop owner in lieu of stall rentals.

### **Between Collaboration and Exploitation**

As we mentioned, most tourists come to Chinchero on guided tours. This means that the workshops are very dependent on the guides. When arriving with tourists in the village, the guides advise them what to see and whether to go to a workshop or not. Women may stand outside gesturing to tourists or weave outside the workshop to attract tourists, but it is difficult for them to get tourists inside if their guide has other plans.

The women compete with each other for the attention of guides by paying the guides commissions. However, aside from large workshops such as CTTC, opportunities for most women weavers to negotiate the commissions is quite limited. Therefore, to establish long-lasting relations with guides, the women offer the guides meals and sodas in addition to their commissions. Around Christmas time, *panetones* (a Christmas bread with raisins) are presented as gifts. The meaning that the women attach to the commissions and the additional gifts vary – from acts of reciprocity to blunt corruption. Reciprocity in the Andean context has a special meaning. In

the rural communities reciprocity and communal work are an essential part of the political-economic structure (Golte [1980]1987; Mayer 2002). Reciprocal obligations and maintenance of mutual exchange relationships are characteristic of Andean culture and governance. The exchange of work for work, or work for money, can be supplemented with an ancillary meal (Mayer 2002: 109–112). These practices are attested to by the stories of the women weavers. The meals and *panetón* complement the commissions and change their meaning from an exclusively economic exchange relation – in which the women pay for the services of the guides – into a reciprocal relationship with additional meanings of friendship. Or at least they give the relationship an aura of friendship. Friendship – whether genuine or not – facilitates the negotiations about commissions and offers a certain guarantee that the guide will continue bringing tourists to their workshop. Also, guides are perceived as knowledgeable about what tourists want. Befriended guides may give advice about how to make the workshop more attractive to tourists. For example, a guide advised a workshop president and her husband to relocate the workshop to a courtyard at street level to make it more accessible to less able walkers. In addition, the guide proposed higher counters for display of the handicrafts and the construction of more accessible lavatories. The workshop president and her husband followed this advice in the hope of pleasing the guide so that he would continue to bring “his” tourists. These forms of collaboration might indicate a certain level of interdependency. Nevertheless, most women are critical about the relations with the guides and stress the unbalanced reciprocity and inequality.

We both need each other, but they have more power. That is how it is. When we give them their food, their commission, they are loyal to us and always come back. If we wouldn't do that they will go to another place where they treat them better. We give presents to them. Not they to us. (Interview, December 30, 2014)

When we told guide “Carlos” that the women think guides have a lot of power, he reacted as follows:

In the end that is how it is. I have the power. I am with the passengers. I can go wherever I like to go. What I say is ... the law. But we also want to take the tourists to a place that is serious, responsible, authentic. (Interview, December 30, 2014)

As Salazar (2005: 642) indicates, “guides actively help to (re)construct, folklorize, ethnicize, and exoticize the local, ‘authentic’ distinctiveness and uniqueness...”. In Chinchero, guides choose those workshops that, in their opinion, give the best and “most authentic” experience to the tourists. They also advise tourists where to buy the “real” handicrafts. We observed a guide leading his tourists away from the street vendors who displayed locally woven items saying: “This stuff is fake. It comes from China.” Another: “Don’t buy this. It is sheep’s wool, not alpaca.” The saleswomen explained that this happened regularly (cf. Garcia 2015: 183).<sup>8</sup> Garcia’s study mentions that guides would get angry with the women when they were not “dressed up” in traditional clothing with their hair braided to look more “Indian” and “would threaten them with taking their tours to other centres” (Garcia 2015: 191).

This display of power should be understood in light of the social hierarchies marking the relations between weavers and guides. The work of the guides stresses their masculinity, their leadership roles, authority and machismo, their urban identity, their knowledgeability, education and language skills (cf. Ypeij 2012). Their contacts with international tourists further increases their social status. The work of the women weavers and their traditional dress recreate a romanticized ideal of the Andean home and culture, reaffirming the women’s femininity and Indianness (de la Cadena 1995). The male guides look down upon the people from Chinchero, considering themselves as superior on the social ladder. Asked about discrimination among his colleagues, Carlos answered:

Yes, that happens everywhere. Everywhere in Peru. The people from Lima feel themselves to

be better than the people from Cusco. And those from Cusco, because it is a bigger city, feel themselves as better than those from Urubamba, Chincheros and other villages. (Interview, December 30, 2014)

The guides’ feelings of superiority manifest in disdainful behavior toward the women weavers. We observed one guide who entered a workshop, looked briefly around, refused the tea the women offered him by shaking his head, and left without saying a word. He seemed to be checking out the place – why we wondered? And why so arrogantly and disrespectfully? We also witnessed how a guide produced an uproar, walking agitatedly up and down the workshop, arguing loudly with the women and even shouting at them. The women responded nervously, “No, no, no.” Finally, the guide left the workshop, still as angry as when he came in, leaving the women (and us) behind in amazement. Later, the women explained that the guide accused them of not having paid a commission. He thought that two of “his” tourists had bought something in the workshop, but they had only taken some photos. “The tourist bought at another workshop, not with us,” the women assured us, still confused (cf. Ypeij 2015: 198).

Here, when the guide doesn’t receive what he thinks he is entitled to, he tries to get his way by intimidating the women through aggressive behavior. In retrospect, we consider these occurrences examples of what de la Torre has called everyday forms of racism (de la Torre 1999; cf. Essed 1991). Studying ethnic relations in neighboring country Ecuador, he defines racial discrimination as “the overt and subtle actions and words utilized by white-mestizos ... to exclude, restrict, or harm Indians” (cf. Feagin & Sikes 1994: 18–26). Verbal attacks, as in the example we described, are one of a range of discriminatory actions.

Because of these disdainful practices in combination with the sometimes excessive commissions demanded by the guides, some women referred to “corruption” when talking about the guides’ behavior. References to “corruption” express feelings of injustice and indicate the other pole of the continuum

between collaboration and exploitation. Nevertheless, references to reciprocity, albeit unbalanced, are never completely absent in the discourse about commissions. As one woman reflects:

Yes, it is a type of corruption. In Peru, everything and everybody is corrupt. We see it as follows: if they do something for us (bringing tourists), then we do something for them. Just that. (Interview, December 27, 2014)

Disdainfulness may turn into sexual intimidation when the guides' feelings of ethnic superiority intersect with their masculinity. We have witnessed flirtatious behavior, indecent jokes and physical contact that obviously embarrass the women. A recent example from our fieldwork diary:

We entered a workshop in the center of Chinchero. It was a large workshop where the light was dimmed and the wooden benches for the tourists were set up in three semi-circles. Within fifteen minutes three different groups of tourists with their guides entered. It became very crowded as there were at least 50 people there. At a certain moment, three demonstrations were given simultaneously. A guide stepped in front of the tourists and intervened in a demonstration. He grasped the weaver, a young girl, by her shoulders and turned her around. As she stood with her back to the audience he took her hair between his fingers, lifting it high and asked: "Why is she wearing her hair loose? Why doesn't she have braids?" Nobody answered. "That is because she is single. All single girls have their hair loose," he continued, smiling significantly. The audience laughed. Then he let her continue with the demonstration.

We didn't have to wait long to witness a second incident with another guide. While his tourists were buying and negotiating with the women, he put his arm around the shoulder of a woman standing next to him, talking excitedly to her, tried to convince her of something. We noticed how she blushed as she tried to distance herself from him. A third incident occurred in the tumult

of many tourists buying at the same time: a guide grasped the braids of a woman, played with it between his fingers and then stroked her cheek with his hand. It all happened in less than half an hour. The guides were clearly older while the women they touched were all young. (Excerpt from fieldwork notes, June 21, 2017)

This shameless display of masculinity and ethnicity before a group of foreigners confirms the social inequality and the intersection of gender and ethnicity as a social fact. Guides have a much broader power basis from which they operate and women's opportunities for negotiation are highly constrained. Inequalities in access to tourists are not stand-alone manifestations but are firmly rooted in existing social hierarchies of ethnicity and gender.

## Conclusions

Tourism in the Cusco-Machu Picchu region is built upon and integrated into already existing social hierarchies of the highly stratified society of Peru. In spite of the recent entry of Quechua speaking guides into the profession, the hierarchies of ethnicity, class and gender are maintained and often reinforced in the tourist industry and in the tourist border zones of the workshops that the women of Chinchero have created. Male, Spanish-speaking urban guides occupy superior positions in the hierarchy of guide work, and reflect and manifest their privilege and power in verifying authenticity, exoticizing the Quechua-speaking women weavers and in the ways in which they negotiate commissions with them.

The guiding roles of leader and mediator are certainly important in the Sacred Valley (Cohen 1985). The guides do not only establish the contact between the weaving women and the tourists, but they are also active in giving advice for improving the workshops. They play their role as cultural brokers with a great deal of verve and define for tourists what is authentic and what is not. The general goal of the women with the workshops is twofold: to earn a living within tourism and to revive ancestral weaving techniques. The demonstrations of their weaving art, their typical clothing with the handwoven shawl

and layered skirts, and the setting of the workshop as a reminiscence of the Andean rural home reconfirm their ethnic and gender identities. The women are proud at their work and the interest of tourists adds to their feeling of self-worth (Ypeij 2012). The revival of their ancestral traditions and arts are very meaningful for them. It leads to a reshuffling of gender and ethnic relations at home, where the changes in the sexual division of labor and increased women's status and earning power are notable. Yet the performance of traditional work under the conditions of mass tourism, with its increased contact with Spanish-speaking guides and foreign tourists, may introduce new gender and ethnic inequalities into the lives of the women.

In the women's daily touristic interactions, guides have a broader power basis to determine the conditions of their interaction than the women. Because the number of tourists that travel independently to Chinchero is very small, the women depend heavily on guides to bring tourists to their workshops, that is, to turn their workshops into real border zones. Their room to maneuver is subsequently limited, except for the large and well-known workshop of CTTC, which can negotiate agreements with tour operators and travel agencies. The other, smaller workshops depend on maintaining friendly relationships with the guides and complying with their demands. In order to compete with other workshops, they have to accept the commission demanded by the guides, who "skim off" 20 percent or more of their sale price. While some weavers stress the reciprocal character of their relationships with the guides, others see this as "corruption".

The negative moral value assigned to these exchanges by the women is reflected and reinforced by the concealment of the ways in which money changes hands. For the women, keeping this practice in the dark may have to do with the competition they face from other workshops. For the guides, it protects their professional authority toward the tourists and increases their ability to manipulate the women.

More importantly, commissions play a pivotal role in the power play between the male, Spanish-speaking guides and the Quechua-speaking, rural women.

Based on their positioning in the gender and ethnic hierarchy, the guides feel superior to the women and play out status differentials with rude, disrespectful and intimidating behavior. The determination of percentages of commissions, the authority in determining authenticity, the right of guides to demand ancillary meals, and the sexual license displayed by the guides are all expressions of discriminatory social hierarchies.

The case studied here can contribute to our knowledge of guides' roles. As Dahles has stated, guiding is not necessarily a harmonious mediation "keeping all parties satisfied" (Dahles 2002: 784). Our research shows that the different positions the women weavers and the guides have in the border zone of the weaving workshops reflect the social hierarchies of gender and ethnicity of the overall society. Both male guides and women weavers show resemblance to the commodified persona who commodify and exoticize themselves to accommodate tourists' conceptions (Bunten 2008); in the case of guides, however, the acting out power differentials prevalent in the broader society may not only be part of their performance for tourists, but a means of intimidating the Indian women in order to secure financial gain.

We realize that our study is limited because it only focuses on commissions and the related power differentials between guides and local tourist workers. A broader study might also examine the relationships between the guides and the travel agencies who pay their salary, or between the guides and the tourists who pay them tips. By taking the entire spectrum of the guides' income, including the visibility or invisibility of acts of exchange, as a starting point to study inequalities in tourism, we may shed further light on the role of guides. This may result in greater focus on the performative bases of their authority, and further problematize their mediating role.

## Notes

- 1 The authors wish to express their gratitude to the reviewers and editors, particularly Jackie Feldman, for their many fruitful comments on earlier versions of this article.
- 2 The term living cultures of Peru is used by Promperu,

the Commission on the Promotion of Peru for Tourism of the Peruvian government. See their website <http://www.peru.travel/en-us/what-to-do/peru-of-living-cultures.aspx>, consulted November 5, 2018.

- 3 Sources website of INEI (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Informacion) "Entrada de extranjeros, por años", <https://www.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/tourism1/>, visited November 30, 2016.
- 4 Karin Bosman did this research as a master's student under supervision of Annelou Ypeij in 2004.
- 5 In Cusco, guides are registered with three unions: Agotur, Colitur and Proatur (Bosman 2006: 203). Of the 691 registered guides on the list published by Agotur, in 34 cases their surnames did not reveal their gender. Of the remaining 657, 522 (79.5 %) were males and 135 (20.5 %) were females (<http://www.agoturcuso.com>, visited July 27, 2014). The Ministry of Environment list for the Inca Trail to Macchu Picchu lists 1,361 licensed guides. Of the 1,320 whose gender could be identified by surname, 79.3 percent (1,048) were males and 20.6 percent (272) females.
- 6 See the documentary Choleando: Racism in Peru, by Roberto de la Puente with the collaboration of Taller de Antropología Visual, Relapso Films, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wrixBocUg0>, consulted November 5, 2018.
- 7 We have focused on commissions paid by the women to the guides. We have no information on whether the women or the workshops pay the travel agencies for which the guides work.
- 8 Ypeij and Zorn (2007) have noticed comparable practices at the island of Taquile.

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