

## Tradition and modernity side-by-side: experiential tourism among *Quechua* communities

Sandra Sotomayor, Claudia Gil Arroyo & Carla Barbieri

To cite this article: Sandra Sotomayor, Claudia Gil Arroyo & Carla Barbieri (2019) Tradition and modernity side-by-side: experiential tourism among *Quechua* communities, Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change, 17:4, 377-393, DOI: [10.1080/14766825.2019.1591683](https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2019.1591683)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2019.1591683>



Published online: 20 Mar 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 69



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)



# Tradition and modernity side-by-side: experiential tourism among *Quechua* communities

Sandra Sotomayor<sup>a</sup>, Claudia Gil Arroyo<sup>b</sup> and Carla Barbieri<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Tourism Administration Program, Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola, Lima, Peru; <sup>b</sup>Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, USA

## ABSTRACT

Experiential tourism can be a catalyst for enhancing the wellbeing of indigenous communities. Yet, experiential tourism is a conundrum as cultural adaptation to increase tourists' satisfaction can threaten authenticity. This study examined the dialectic between experiential tourism and traditional culture among seven *Quechua* communities in Peru offering experiential tourism, by addressing three questions: (1) What is the perceived role of ancestral traditions in experiential tourism? (2) To what extent modernism permeates into their lifestyles?, and (3) How do they negotiate ancestral traditions and modernism? Data collected in 2015 revealed that locals involved in tourism considered a priority to keep their ancestral traditions alive by passing them on to new generations; those not involved in tourism are less compliant of cultural authenticity. As a result, study communities showed signs of acculturation, syncretism and re-authentication. Findings also revealed that tourism is perceived as the catalyst for keeping and recovering traditional cultural manifestations, while modernism of certain practices is a necessity. This study contributes to the tourism scholarship by stressing the necessity to negotiate the coexistence of modernity and traditions in experiential tourism. Findings also elucidate policy and marketing suggestions to increase the positive effect of experiential tourism in heritage preservation.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 15 December 2017  
Accepted 11 August 2018

## KEYWORDS

Authenticity; culture;  
experiential tourism;  
heritage; *Quechua*; Peru

## 1. Introduction

The many kinds of positive impacts that tourism can bring to destinations around the world have been largely documented. Among them, the economic enhancement of local people through the creation of new jobs and the generation of revenues are the most salient (Zaei & Zaei, 2013). Such economic stimulus has encouraged many developing countries to offer a mosaic of tourism and accommodation services, which differ in terms of size, type, activities and sophistication, particularly among indigenous communities who tend to inhabit in socially and economically depressed rural areas (Albaladejo & Díaz, 2005). The low population and infrastructure density in rural areas creates an impression of open spaces that draw tourism from urban dwellers seeking to escape

**CONTACT** Carla Barbieri  [carla\\_barbieri@ncsu.edu](mailto:carla_barbieri@ncsu.edu)  Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, North Carolina State University, Campus Box 8004, 3028D Biltmore Hall, Raleigh, NC 27695-8004, USA

© 2019 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

from their stressful lifestyles (Kastenholz & Lima, 2011). The countryside also entices a sense of nostalgia derived from a romanticized past when people were more attached to the land and the agriculture lifestyle (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen, & Duangsaeng, 2015).

The charm of rural destinations augments when tourism initiatives directly involve indigenous communities seeking to celebrate and honor their ancestral lifestyles, traditions, arts, and knowledge (Polnyotee & Thadaniti, 2015). Many of these initiatives are offered as 'experiential tourism' in which tourist's pursuit new emotions and feelings through the experiences they live within a community (Araújo Vila & Brea, 2015). Experiential tourists are in permanent and close contact with locals, who directly provide an array of services (e.g. accommodation, guiding) and activities (e.g. agriculture, art craftsmanship) that conform their traditional ways of life (Chuang, 2013). Although experiential tourism can represent economic growth and enhance the wellbeing of indigenous communities, it can also bring inevitable changes that may be difficult to assimilate (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011) or even create tensions among community members and between the community and tourists (Cheer, Reeves, & Laing, 2013; Sin & Minca, 2014).

Authenticity of the experiences offered is a conundrum in experiential tourism. While experiential tourism depends upon the authenticity of community offerings, the desire to meet tourists' needs and expectations can posit a threat for authenticity itself. This is the case of several *Quechua* communities in the Peruvian Andes whose economic and daily life activities are still ruled by ancestral worldview (customs and beliefs); yet, they are compelled to adjust some practices to meet western standards of the tourists they host. However, the extent to which these communities are negotiating the traditions-modernism dialectic is unknown. This study investigates the dialectic between ancestral traditions and modernism in the context of experiential tourism and traditional culture among *Quechua* entrepreneurs by addressing three questions: (1) How do indigenous communities perceive the role of ancestral traditions in their experiential tourism endeavors?, (2) To what extent modernism permeates into the lifestyles of indigenous communities, and (3) How do indigenous communities negotiate their ancestral traditions and modernism when offering experiential tourism?

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Tourism as a catalyst of traditions

'Tradition' is a complex construct embodied from simple definitions to those carrying much more philosophical connotations (Moreno & Littrell, 2001). In this study, tradition refers to intangible cultural heritage defined as: 'Practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage' (UNESCO, 2003, p. 2). Thus, traditions include oral expressions (e.g. narratives), performing arts and craftsmanship, social customs (e.g. festivities), and knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe. The increasing recognition of culture as a key asset to foster community well-being has encouraged the development of policies and programs to protect local traditions and encourage

their transmission. However, these efforts are still insufficient mainly because cultural issues are still treated on an intuitive rather than an analytical level (Daskon & Binns, 2010).

Tourism initiatives in which public, private and non-profit stakeholders work together with indigenous communities to purposely protect their traditions appear promising, especially because learning about traditional lifestyles and knowledge is a main tourist driver (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003). In this sense, rural areas immersed in traditional social structures appear suitable to attract tourists seeking to immerse in local customs by partaking in their gastronomy, festivities, and even values and beliefs (Kovačić, Bošković, & Jugović, 2015). The cultural richness of the trip increases when tourists stay at homestays because they can taste the *living* culture with a local family (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013). As such, experiential tourism maximizes tourist appreciation of local traditions and lifestyles by engaging in their host's daily economic (e.g. agriculture, handcraftsmanship) or cultural (e.g. games, rituals) activities which have been passed on over generations.

Experiential tourism brings social benefits beyond economic impact. The close host-guest interaction creates a special bond that fosters cross-cultural awareness (Jamaludin, Othman, & Awang, 2012). Showcasing traditional lifestyles and culture not only helps to uphold local traditions and craftsmanship (Chuang, 2013), but reinforces the community's distinct identity (Thompson, 2004) and the additional income encourages youth to stay in their town and keep traditions alive (Jamaludin et al., 2012). However, the extent of tourism impacts on the social fabric of traditional destinations depends on several factors, being the tourist's behavior a main one (Spanou, 2007). Tourists of community-based initiatives would be less harmful than mainstream tourists as they would be more sensitive to social and cultural values (Lepp, 2007). For example, Sin and Minca (2014) identified the 'responsible tourist virtual global community' whose travel styles incorporate concerns for the environment and well-being of the communities they visit. This group suits the aims of experiential tourism as their travel can help to preserve rural landscapes and traditional lifestyles with limited negative socio-cultural impacts (Tolkach & King, 2015).

## **2.2. Tourism as an accelerator of modernity in traditional destinations**

Despite the growth and positive sociocultural impacts of experiential tourism, it is undeniable that an excessive demand contradicts local's humble lifestyles (Lepp, 2007). For example, making homestay experiences more interactive is also increasing tourist's intrusion in their host's lifestyles, which is transforming the very notion of 'home' into a commercial space (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015). Although traditions can be recreated in response to changing natural and social environments (UNESCO, 2003), host-guest interactions over time may lead or accelerate changes in local social and cultural expressions, such as adapting traditional arts, ceremonies, customs, rituals, and architectural styles to please tourist's tastes, needs and expectations (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012; Kovačić et al., 2015).

A major concern of tourism-induced change is the commodification of local cultural assets when they become consumables for tourists (Cole, 2007). An evident and predictable example is the alteration of the style (e.g. motifs, designs), production process and materials (e.g. standardization), and function of local handcrafts (Moreno & Littrell,

2001). Cultural commodification is typically regarded negatively as the impersonation in cultural performance for tourists may harm locals' identity (Lenzerini, 2011; Yang, Ryan, & Zhang, 2016). A second concern relates to the overall loss of authenticity and consequent staging of such (Chhabra et al., 2003). Yet, this concern may be contested considering the complexity of authenticity that entails objective (expert validation) and symbolic (visitor perceptions) aspects (Ram, Björk, & Weidenfeld, 2016; Timothy & Ron, 2013). Simply put, authenticity is a Western cultural notion associated with the past and seemingly primitive in contrast to modernity. Thus, tourists may challenge the authenticity of such activities and places when perceiving signs of modernization due to tourism development (Cole, 2007).

Cultural commodification and loss of authenticity appear to be major threats to experiential tourism as unique traditional markers of the destination are critical to fully enjoy and understand the host cultural lifestyle (Cheer et al., 2013; Kastenholz & Lima, 2011). However, the paradox emerges in the context of indigenous communities because tourists seek tradition while their payments enable locals to embrace modernity (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015) and host communities seek improving their wellbeing while maintaining key cultural traits they are unwilling to abandon (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011). Thus, culture commodification and authenticity in tourism are constantly re-evaluated and redefined in different ways, such as emphasizing the positive effects of commodification in terms of enhancing locals' pride and awareness of their traditional culture (Cole, 2007) or legitimizing the re-creation of authenticity with the passage of time given its natural evolution (Lenzerini, 2011). Such negotiation and elasticity of commodification and authenticity are evident when distinctive cultural elements of traditional craftsmanship and cuisines are blended with contributions of the next generation (Duarte Alonso & Krajsic, 2013; Teixeira & Ribeiro, 2013; Timothy & Ron, 2013).

### 3. Study context

This study was conducted in Cusco and Puno in the southern highlands of Peru (Figure 1). Cusco is internationally recognized primarily as the gateway to Machu Picchu Historic Sanctuary, the administrative capital of the Incas, which receives around one million visitors per year (MINCETUR, 2017). The outskirts of Cusco city – *Sacred Valley* – houses numerous towns which offer a wide array of culture and nature based tourism (e.g. archaeological sites, white water rafting). Lake Titicaca, believed to be the cradle of the Incas, is Puno's main attraction; it received 194,695 visitors in 2017 (MINCETUR, 2017). The numerous islands of Lake Titicaca are the main region's attractions due to their natural and cultural resources. Raqchi archaeological park rests between Cusco and Puno, making it a compelling stop in this tourism corridor. Although Raqchi receives over 130,000 visitors per year (MINCETUR, 2017), the tourism services offered are limited to guiding and food and beverage facilities because most tourists barely spend two hours in town.

Many of the *Quechua* communities of the Cusco and Puno regions have capitalized on their cultural richness to develop experiential tourism endeavors centered on their traditional *living* culture. *Quechua* communities, spread across the country, are the largest indigenous group of Peru, representing about 13.2% of the country's population (INEI, 2008). Descendants from the Incas, many *Quechua* communities maintain their traditional



**Figure 1.** Location of Cusco and Puno (Peru, South America).

cultural customs, lifestyles, and worldview, yet attenuated by western influence since the Spaniards conquest (Pratt, 1994). A governmental program (*Turismo Rural Comunitario*), launched in 2007 to promote sustainable tourism as a tool for socio-economic development among indigenous communities in rural areas (MINCETUR, 2009), supports the development of experiential tourism among *Quechua* communities in Cusco and Puno. Although specific data on the number and economic impact of experiential tourism is not available, MINCETUR (n.d.) indicate that *Turismo Rural Comunitario* increases rural employment in 12%, especially among women, and supplements S/.53.00 soles (about US\$16.30) household monthly incomes. PROMPERU (2016) describes the experiential tourists as predominantly highly educated and wealthy Europeans, between 40 and 70 years, who tend to stay two nights in these communities, seek immersive authentic experiences, and expect personalized service.

#### 4. Research methods

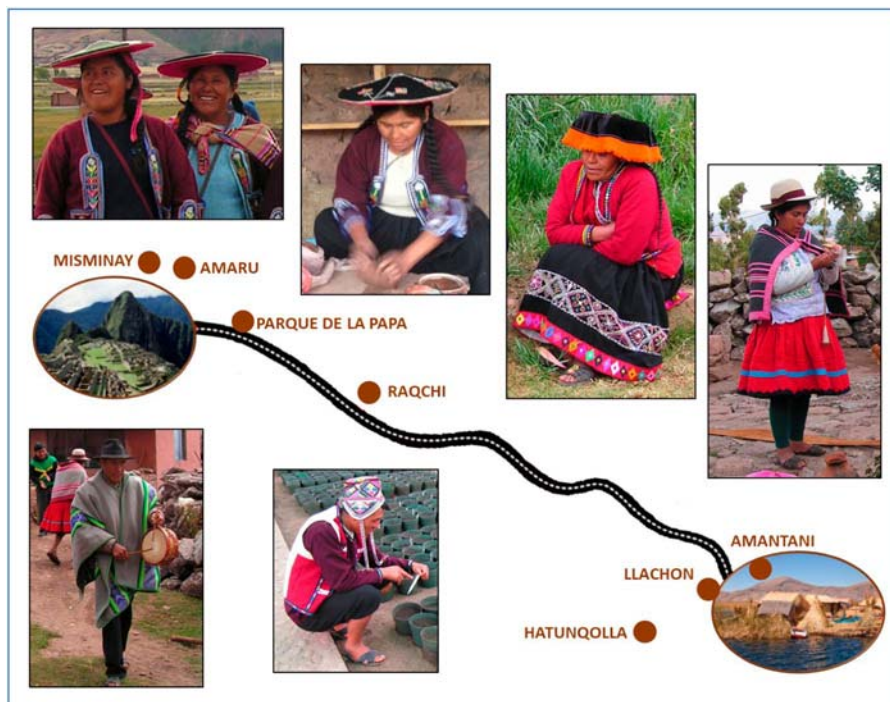
Four communities in Cusco and three in Puno were selected for this study due to their comparable political and economic vulnerability (MEF, 2016), harsh climatic conditions given high altitudes (3,380-3840 meters above sea level), and strong *Quechua* lifestyles. Saccacca – Paru Paru,<sup>1</sup> Misminay, Amaru, and Raqchi are located in Cusco; while the first three sit in the Sacred Valley, Raqchi is located in the way to Puno. The studied communities in Puno span along the region; Amantani is an island located in northern area of Lake Titicaca, Llachon is in a peninsula of the Lake, and Hatunqolla is an hour away from



the city of Puno (Figure 2). All the studied communities are involved in experiential tourism (homestays and cultural demonstrations), but have different offerings based on available assets and skills (e.g. pottery, textiles). Although all communities are *Quechua*, they have subtle cultural distinctions, expressed in their traditional attire (e.g. different hats) and festivities.

A combination of qualitative research methods (individual and group interviews, field notes, photographs) were used for data generation over two weeks (November 2015) in which researchers stayed across the selected communities. A total of 12 individual and group interviews were conducted among nine men and 15 women ranging from 28 through 62 years old (Table 1). Upon arrival to the community, the research team contacted the community leader who provided information of members involved in tourism. Based on their availability and preferences, participants opted for individual, family or group interviews. Interviews were conducted following a semi-structured script to give researchers freedom to probe on specific themes (Patton, 2002). All three researchers conducted the interviews alternating leading (following the questionnaire script), supporting (assisting with probing), and note-taking roles. Interviews, totaling 479 min, were voice-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Notes and photographs were taken throughout the visits as second-hand observation procedures (Flick, 2014) to document modernity and traditions among study participants.

Data generated (transcriptions, field notes, and photographs) were combined to enable a methodological triangulation that would increase a deeper understanding of the dialectic between experiential tourism and traditional culture in the study (Flick, 2014). Framed



**Figure 2.** Location of study communities (not scaled) and sample of attire variations

**Table 1.** Key characteristics of interviews.

| Location                          | Interview type        | Interviewees' gender |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Cusco</i>                      |                       |                      |
| Misminay                          | 1 group               | 3 women, 2 men       |
| Amaru                             | 2 group, 1 individual | 4 women, 1 men       |
| Saccacca – Paru Paru <sup>a</sup> | 2 individual          | 2 men                |
| Raqchi                            | 1 group, 2 individual | 6 women, 2 men       |
| <i>Puno</i>                       |                       |                      |
| Hatunqolla                        | 1 group               | 3 women, 2 men       |
| Llachón                           | 1 individual          | 1 women              |
| Amantani                          | 1 individual          | 1 men                |

<sup>a</sup>Both communities operate in the same tourism initiative (Parque de la Papa).

within inductive methods, data interpretation was performed through open and axial coding. Two researchers independently reviewed the data to identify emerging topics; these were then discussed with the third researcher to finalize theme categories and build relationships among them (Patton, 2002). Rigorous measures were employed to ensure trustworthiness (e.g. memos to reflect biases in observations) and credibility (e.g. constant peer-debriefing) of data generated as well as the transferability (e.g. constant comparison) of data interpretation (Henderson, 2006). The community name is inserted at the end of every quote to indicate the source.

## 5. Findings

Data analysis yielded nine sub-themes (underlined) related to three main themes (Table 2). Altogether these themes elucidate how participants involved in experiential tourism build their offerings upon their heritage, which in turn is fortified with their interaction with tourists. The emerging themes are presented logically, so they can tell the tourism-heritage dialectic that has resulted in the coexistence of modernity and traditions in the studied communities. Thus, their order in the text does not indicate any level of importance.

### 4.1. Building-up from our ancestral way

Participants explained that traditions still rule their ways of living because their heritage is a matter of pride and celebration. Participants were *Embracing Connectedness* with nature and community members. As such, they 'make pagachi [payback] to mother earth. Every year in February, there in the lookout, all the community make pagachi' (Llachón). They

**Table 2.** Emerging themes and sub-themes.

| Themes                                | Sub-themes  |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Building-up from our Ancestral Way | 1a – Embracing Connectedness<br>1b – Showing-off Pride<br>1c – Celebrating Heritage         |
| 2. Passing on our Legacy              | 2a – Fearing for the Future<br>2b – Strengthening Heritage<br>2c – Consenting Syncretism    |
| 3. Touring Heritage                   | 3a – Revitalizing Heritage<br>3b – Reciprocating Culture<br>3c – Modernizing Cultural Norms |



explained invoking different gods to thank for what they have received and for what they will receive from *Pachamama* (mother earth): ‘with candles and food, invoking, praying all night. The prayer made is not “Our Father” or “Hail Mary”, this prayer is much different’ (Amantani). Under a shaman guidance, similar rituals are often celebrated ‘with the family, given that it has so much meaning [...] The [shaman] mostly wants people who are related with the family’ (Hatunqolla). Interdependency also emerged as the prevailing labor exchange among community members for family (e.g. repairing a roof) and work (e.g. harvest) chores, which the Incas enacted as *Ayni* and *Minka* upon expectation of reciprocity and shared benefit (Townsend, 2012). Participants explained: ‘In agriculture we, the men, work under *ayni* and *minka*. For example, today they have helped me working, so tomorrow I will help my neighbor’ (Misminay).

Maintaining ancestral traditions emerged as *Showing-off Pride*, especially related to their livelihoods. A participant proudly explained how their community keeps traditional fertilizing techniques: ‘With the fertilizer from the sheep. We also throw a little lime, what we call “Catahuii” in Quechua. We throw it so that the worm does not enter. Fertilizers, we don’t use’ (Hatunqolla). Participants in Raqchi explained that the high quality of their ceramic is due to their ancestral materials and techniques:

Our ceramics are unique. It is not possible to compare them with those from Pucará, where they also make [ceramics], or those from Písaq or Cusco. They make them only with clay. But here, we keep practicing the technique that the Incas developed. That is to mix clay with volcanic sand to make it resistant.

Efforts to maintain traditions were beyond sweet talk as participants were *Celebrating Heritage* by investing resources to revalue and increase awareness of their agricultural assets. A participant explained how they have developed festivals to celebrate their resources in Saccacca – Paru Paru ‘here there are many medicinal plants that our elders know [...]’. So we organized a festival (focused on them)’ and ‘We cultivate 1400 types of native potatoes. So now we organize the national potato day.’ As such, these new celebrations were not only for recreational and tourism sake, but had deeper meanings usually related to agricultural production:

For example, the Carnival dances are for invoking rain. [...] The first day of January, we have that party so the whole year goes well. Each of the ten communities has to dance a typical dance from their area. And they are invoking Pachamama for good production. (Amantani)

A woman explained that wearing typical clothing was a way to celebrate their ancestors: ‘We do not forget our ancestors, our grandparents; we are wearing our traditional outfits’ (Llachón). However, field observations suggest that traditional attire was mainly worn by family members involved in tourism.

#### **4.2. Passing on our legacy**

Despite participants’ pride of their heritage, they were cognizant of their vulnerability due to different societal forces. As such, they recognized the need to preserve their traditions, putting especial effort in the next generations, and accept syncretism as they feared for cultural loss with the pass of time. A participant from Misminay recalled a lost custom with nostalgia:

When I was a little boy we would fill a big bag with flowers called dahlias. We would knock on houses, saying in Quechua to the women, 'your little crown'. And because it was so nice, women would trade them for peaches, breads, cherries, whatever they had. It was very nice [...] 'I don't want to do it because I feel ashamed' [children now] say.

Participants were *Fearing for the Future* of their customs mainly because of low cultural engagement and globalization. They recognized reluctance among young kids to engage in local customs, especially to speak *Quechua*: '[Children] don't want to speak [Quechua]. They feel ashamed. Even my son doesn't want to speak. He knows, he used to grow up, but that's in the past, he doesn't want to anymore' (Llachón). Others blamed globalization, especially in terms of technological influx, affecting their customs: 'When they celebrated weddings it was with our traditional music, but it has now changed. They bring national or regional artists, or they use potent sound equipment' (Raqchi). Others mourned the past because new religious beliefs are displacing and even banning traditional practices: 'We are losing [traditions] because some don't believe in festivities [...] Those who are Adventists or other religions do not [dance]' (Hatunqolla).

Communities with high presence of tourists also perceived tourism as a heritage threat. Participants in Saccacca – Paru Paru were concerned with tourism-economic dependency and agriculture abandonment:

There are many associations formed in which 10, 20 people are involved in tourism. They are farmers and when more and more tourists come, they stop farming. They no longer farm because potato production takes a long time with no profit. But tourism, they say, brings a lot of money.

A participant from Amantaní was concerned about the commodification of their religious practices as offering them without proper knowledge may shake their cosmivision:

There are always passengers, national and foreigners, who ask me for [pagachi]. I do not do it. Pagachi in Amantaní is very rigorous; it cannot be done at any time [...] and should be done with much faith and devotion. [...] It could be people with no experience doing it only for money and they will fail our Pachamama. [...] That could also ruin our culture.

As participants recognized the many threats to ancestral traditions, they extensively explained existing efforts to *Strengthening Heritage*. Some participants explained: 'We are working on raising awareness in children, in the future generations, the young people, about the native potato, conservation, customs, our Quechua language, how important it is, and to continue having a cultural identity' (Saccacca – Paru Paru);

In our towns today's children almost no longer know the traditional tales. [...] So, we're working on it now! For example, for the town's anniversary, we organize traditional games, storytelling or jokes contest. Through an incentive, we try to recover them. (Raqchi)

A participant from Hatunqolla praised the reformulation of national educational policy that used to ban native languages from schools: 'Even the Peruvian government is now encouraging schools to teach in Quechua and Spanish.' Families invested in sophisticated expensive traditional attire to wear in special celebrations including in key tourism tasks (e.g. greeting tourists, cultural demonstrations):

We have recovered our typical clothing that none of the other communities in the region has; they still wear synthetic cloths and ours are classic. We have it as our gala clothes that we wear at important times. For example, for the board change, community anniversary [...]. (Raqchi)

Participants' efforts to preserve heritage was in tune with *Consenting Syncretism*, resulting from the incorporation of Spanish and Catholic practices into their traditional *Quechua* elements. A participant from Misminay explained the incorporation of an ancestral agricultural practice into a wide celebration Spaniards brought: 'In our community we celebrate Carnival in March, and then is when we cut the tails of the sheep. A beautiful ceremony we make.' Religious syncretism was also evident in the similar weight and enthusiasm placed in Catholic and Incan festivities. For example, 'Today is all Saints Day. Today may be a big day. [...] We make "chichita" [corn liquor] and the family comes, we cook at home and we have fun' (Misminay). A participant explains the pomposity of *Papahuatay*: 'Is an ancient ancestral ceremony [...]. Everyone, dressed up in traditional outfits, perform a ritual for the potato. Every community participates. It is a very large festivity; people come with music, dances, flowers' (Saccacca – Paru Paru). Field observations showed strong cultural syncretism in local gastronomy in which hosts used local ingredients (e.g. quinoa) to create foreign dishes (e.g. fried rice) that may be more appealing to tourists.

### 4.3. Touring heritage

Participants perceived tourism as a catalyst for cultural enrichment, as it enables them to keep their traditions while embracing modernism and cultural traits tourists brought:

There are changes that are taking place, but somehow, as we are organized and live from tourism, we are trying to recover our customs to keep them on par with the new [things] that exist. We can't discard what is current, but we have to take it along. (Raqchi)

Most participants recognized tourism was *Revitalizing Heritage*: 'The customs and traditions of the community are quite beautiful and within the community, given that we are working with tourism, we continue practicing them' (Raqchi). Tourism emerged as an incentive to recover heritage that was vanishing. The revival of traditional festivals was commonly cited across communities: 'For the patron, mamacha Saint Anne, we have two days of celebration and dancers too. Before [tourism] these customs were being lost, but now, this organization of experiential tourism is recovering our dances' (Misminay). Some participants referred to the recovery of their typical clothing: 'Before [tourism], girls would wear pants. Not anymore. Now they wear pollera [traditional skirt] with chullo [yarn beanie] if they are single' (Llachón). Some even indicated that tourism encouraged them to improve traditional techniques:

My wife, who as a little girl used to be a weaving specialist, as we migrated to the city she forgot her craftsmanship, she stopped weaving. Now that I offer tourism in Amantani, my wife is remembering her weaving; she is reaching a very special finesse in her fabrics. So, [tourism] is an incentive. (Amantani)

Tourism also meant *Reciprocating Culture* between locals and tourists. Experiential tourism provides communities the opportunity to share their knowledge and way of living with tourists, incorporating them in their various daily activities (e.g. agricultural chores, adobe making). 'We also have culinary lessons. And we give [tourists] all the products, and we teach them how to cook, all the process, how to blend aji [hot pepper] and everything in mortar' (Misminay). At the same time, participants acknowledged being enriched by foreign cultural expressions. A participant from Hatunqolla praised good customs he learned from tourists: 'What I see from their culture is that are quite punctual,

they do not converse too much, they are precise. I like that a lot. And they take care of the environment. They respect it.' Others referred that their interaction with tourists represented a gain for their kids: 'Children are quite outgoing, they are not afraid of other people, they can converse ... on the contrary, when there is no tourism like in nearby communities, they are afraid' (Raqchi).

The demands of tourism development were also *Modernizing Cultural Norms* in the study communities especially in terms of commodification and family dynamics. Regarding commodification, it was observed in Llachón the incorporation of modern patterns in traditional hats due to tourists' demand. Artisans in Raqchi explained that although they strictly follow ancestral techniques in their ceramics, they have modified their size and styles (from white to colorful) to make them suitable as souvenirs: 'People opted to make small pots for the tourist, so we made them very small. [...] As we have more tourists, we sell them here directly'. Tourism has also modernized traditional family dynamics in two regards. First, it has allowed all members of the family, including kids, to contribute to the household economy: 'Men are not the only ones working anymore, we both work. It is positive for both, for supporting our families' (Amaru); 'My kids, when they are at home, also come to pick up the passengers or take them for a walk. So, we all work, the whole family works' (Raqchi).

Secondly, tourism is blurring traditional gender roles: 'When there was no tourism [...] women depended on their husbands who had to work and bring money. And women were just housewives, who had to do laundry, cooking ...' (Saccacca – Paru Paru). Changes in gender roles were significant beyond the household economy. They appear to be empowering the public participation of women in their communities:

Thus far we have not had a female president [in our association]. They have all been men. But it's because women had not accepted yet. They could. There have been treasurers, secretaries, and so. Maybe she [my wife] could be the next. (Amaru)

Deeper, these changes also appear to be increasing the husband-wife bonding:

We both always do everything together. Always both of us. From harvesting the quinoa, the two of us, until getting the grain out [...] And when it comes to cooking, we both are always there. Both my wife and I. In the lodge also we both, the cleaning, making the beds, because only one couldn't do it. (Hatunqolla)

## 6. Discussion of findings

Findings indicate that members involved in experiential tourism among the studied *Quechua* communities maintain the traditions and way of life from their ancestors and take their unique characteristics, whether in terms of attire, festivities, cuisine or any other cultural manifestation, with pride. Such cultural embracement has made them particularly attractive to tourists searching for cultural experiences, especially immersive experiences, as the literature indicates (Jamaludin et al., 2012; Kovačić et al., 2015). Although participants acknowledged the influence of external forces (e.g. globalization) in their heritage and fear for their future demise due to youth disengagement, they perceive tourism as a catalyst for revaluing and recovering their traditions (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012; Thompson, 2004). Participants recognized that their experiential offerings could also become a threat to the *raison d'être* of these visits as drawing large numbers of

tourists can accelerate changes in cultural expressions that are not always beneficial for the host communities (Durydiwka, 2014; Spanou, 2007). As such, they showed due diligence to keep their immersive experiences as a complement to their agricultural livelihoods.

Finding a balance between honoring their ancestral heritage and adapting it to changing contexts, such as tourism influx, is no easy feat for indigenous communities (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011). Yet, *Quechua* communities have dealt with that conundrum since the Spanish conquest, which resulted in a syncretism that attenuated distinctions between cultural contributors (e.g. Incas, Spaniards, recent religions). As such, cultural commodification and the recreation of authenticity resulting from negotiating modernism and tradition noted in the studied communities appeared smooth – yet consciously – attained. Although the commodification of culture can pervert locals' identity (Lenzerini, 2011; Yang et al., 2016), it can also enrich cultural practices or elements (Cole, 2007), thus augmenting tourists' experiences. That is the case of the studied communities, where the commodification of festivities and rituals (e.g. *Papahuatey*) to amplify tourists' satisfaction have stimulated locals' interest and action in reviving their traditions. Likewise, the commodification (e.g. converting ceramic pots into souvenirs) and re-authentication (e.g. increasing color variety in traditional beanies) of cultural products is extending the practice of ancestral arts destined to vanished.

Cultural interaction is an essential element of tourism and it is critical to experiential tourism (Jamaludin et al., 2012). *Quechua* communities demonstrated full awareness of this cultural exchange when emphasized distinctions between western tourists' worldview and their own. Furthermore, they explained such distinction as an opportunity for learning new ways that could enhance their quality of life (e.g. improved sanitation), which goes beyond fostering cultural understanding stated in the literature (Lepp, 2007; Tolkach & King, 2015). Cultural exchange can result in blending ancestral traditions with visitor's cultural contributions (Duarte Alonso & Krajsic, 2013; Moreno & Littrell, 2001; Teixeira & Ribeiro, 2013), which was noted in the study communities in the way they mix traditional (e.g. *olluco* tuber) and foreign (e.g. rice) ingredients in their cuisine or preparing western dishes with local products, such as quinoa pancakes. Yet, they also demonstrated a selective –intentional– blending by adjusting only some of their practices to tourists' needs (e.g. serving chicken) while keeping more traditional manifestations within their family realm (e.g. eating guinea pig).

Data gathered through interviews and field observations indicate that experiential tourism contributes to the wellbeing of local communities beyond economic enhancement, notably cultural preservation and restoration. Such positive impacts may be in part to the technical support that the national *Turismo Rural Comunitario* program and non-for-profit organizations provide to these efforts, which emphasize tourism as complementary to traditional agricultural livelihoods. As most participants were at the inception of their tourism efforts, it is important to monitor their sustainability over time, placing especial effort in comparing core values (e.g. dependence to tourism, level of awareness of intended acculturation and re-authentication) across initiatives with different years in business.

## 7. Concluding remarks

This paper reports the dialectic between tourism and heritage in seven *Quechua* communities in the Andes of Peru, whose members have built unique immersive experiences

upon their ancestral ways of living. In such dialectic, findings support the catalyst role of tourism in preserving and even recovering some ancestral practices (e.g. religious ceremonies) and artistic manifestations (e.g. hand-made textiles) as they have become the tourism distinctness of these communities. Notably, participants stressed how young generations were more willing to speak *Quechua* in public because tourists find its phonetics appealing. The examined dialectic also showed that these communities are reshaping their heritage by embracing modernity and syncretism. Introduced cultural changes among the study communities due to western and new religious influx could be accounted to the self-generating nature of culture (Durydiwka, 2014). Yet, study results indicate that these communities purposely accept and even pursue certain level of modernism and syncretism seeking to balance their desire to please tourists in public spaces and to maintain authenticity in private spaces.

Given that traditional culture encompasses accumulated values, beliefs, and knowledge of communities, its interpretation should be flexible and supportive, rather than rigid and constraining (Daskon & Binns, 2010). As such, cultural changes that the study community purposely sought to maximize tourism revenues (e.g. pottery adaptation) or enhance their quality of life (e.g. wearing socks during winter times) should not be harshly criticized. Rather, it is important that both, hosts and tourists, accept the coexistence of traditions and modernity (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012). That is, to acknowledge that the key for successful experiential tourism is to preserve the essence, charm and mysticism of ancestral roots along the adaptation of their offerings to the needs, interests, motivations and behavior of tourists (Durydiwka, 2014; Kovačić et al., 2015). With that purpose, it is imperative to revisit existing policies to foster locals' cultural identity and pride and to develop monitoring systems to prevent undesired acculturation. It is also critical to design marketing strategies conveying the essence of the immersive experiences communities offer to socially sensitive tourists.

### **7.1. Study limitations, contributions and implications**

This study was conducted within a handful of *Quechua* communities in the Andean regions of Peru. Although some of these findings could be transferable to nearby *Quechua* communities involved – or willing to develop – experiential tourism, caution is advised in doing so for two main reasons. First, while *Quechua* is the largest ethnic minority of the area, they do not have a homogenous cultural identity. Subtle differences exist based on regional variations and even more profound differences due to various levels of acculturation with Spanish and Aymara cultures. Secondly, the Peruvian government officially recognizes the study communities as experiential tourism providers (MINCETUR, 2016), situation that may grant them a privileged access to public resources (e.g. trainings) as compared to other initiatives. Considering these limitations and aforementioned findings, this study contributes to the scholarship of tourism and carries implications as to strengthening and consolidating over time experiential tourism offerings in the Peruvian Andes.

Scholarly, this study contributes to the knowledge of experiential tourism in two main ways. First, the view of studied communities of tourism as a catalyst for selective acculturation and syncretism with the conscious purpose of enhancing the family/community quality of life (e.g. improved sanitation) goes beyond fostering cultural understanding stated in the literature, which calls for further investigation. Secondly, the literature



tends to dichotomize the commodification of cultural expressions as obstructive or enriching under certain circumstances. Yet, study participants acknowledged the commodification of their products (e.g. adaption of hats to tourists' taste) as a process of re-authentication. As such, even though participants recognized that some current practices deviate from their ancestral essence, they acknowledge that such deviation permits to revitalize their acceptance among youth. On this regard, future studies should investigate the level of tourists' acceptance of the re-authentication that indigenous tourism providers pursue. Finally, given the cultural differences observed across the study communities (e.g. attire, decision-making protocols), it would be valuable to further examine whether selective acculturation, syncretism and perceptions of purposive re-authentication stands across all *Quechua* communities and in other ethnic minorities of the region (e.g. Aymara).

Study findings also provide practical implications related to policy and marketing intelligence. Existing policies related to experiential tourism endeavors among indigenous communities in the Peruvian Andes should be revisited periodically to protect their ancestral heritage, as they are a critical element of cultural identity and source of pride beyond 'the' feature tourists seek. In this sense, it is important that policies prevent undesired practices that may suppress, limit or modify cultural elements (e.g. traditions, native tongue) that would have irreversible effects in the providers' heritage, and ultimately diminish community's economic welfare. With that aim, policies should devise mechanisms to strengthen locals' pride in *living* culture and to pass on such legacy to future generations (e.g. mandatory workshops) and to systematically monitor the influence of foreign cultures on host communities to prevent undesired acculturation. These suggestions are critical for the study communities considering that the support they currently receive from government and non-for-profit organizations may run off over time.

It is also advisable that *Quechua* communities implement strategic marketing to emphasize the singularity of their experiential tourism offerings. Marketing efforts should design messages that clearly convey the nature of this activity, targeting socially sensitive tourists (Sin & Minca, 2014). For example, promotional materials should avoid displaying indigenous *living* culture as a mere commodity or as a show in which visitors are bystanders. Featuring the immersive character of these activities can increase public awareness of the impact of tourism in the cultural fabric of indigenous communities while preventing massification of these offerings. The implementation of the aforementioned policy mechanisms and marketing practices calls for continuing in-depth research efforts in the study area, especially to measure the long-term effects (benefits and hindrances) resulting from the interactions between tourists and host communities when engaged in experiential tourism.

## Note

1. Saccacca and Paru Paru are different communities that operate together in the same tourism initiative (Parque de la Papa). Given they common organizational structure, management and training, they were treated as one community.

## Acknowledgements

Our sincere thanks also to Dr Timothy Lee, guest editor, and both referees for their valuable comments and suggestions.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Funding

The authors thank the Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola for providing the funds to cover data collection.

## Notes on contributors

**Sandra Sotomayor** is a faculty member in the Tourism Administration program at Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola in Lima, Peru. She teaches courses related to destination marketing and quality of services offered to domestic and international tourists. Her research focuses on sustainability indicators of tourism development and higher education in tourism.

**Claudia Gil Arroyo** is a doctoral student and graduate research assistant in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management at North Carolina State University. Her research focuses on the relationship between tourism and local food systems, tourism destination and product development and sustainable development practices.

**Carla Barbieri** is an associate professor in Equitable and Sustainable Tourism at North Carolina State University, where she leads the Agritourism and Societal Well-being lab. Her research focuses on tourism in agricultural settings and rural well-being. She also conducts research on sustainable tourism and different types of niche tourism.

## References

- Acharya, B. P., & Halpenny, E. A. (2013). Homestays as an alternative tourism product for sustainable community development: A case study of women-managed tourism product in rural Nepal. *Tourism Planning & Development, 10*(4), 367–387.
- Albaladejo, I., & Díaz, M. T. (2005). Rural tourism demand by type of accommodation. *Tourism Management, 26*(6), 951–959.
- Araújo Vila, N., & Brea, J. A. F. (2015). From experiential economy to experiential tourism. Fiction series as inducers of experiences and destinations visit. *PASOS: Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural, 13*(4), 959–964.
- Cheer, J. M., Reeves, K. J., & Laing, J. H. (2013). Tourism and traditional culture: Land diving in Vanuatu. *Annals of Tourism Research, 43*, 435–455.
- Chhabra, D., Healy, R., & Sills, E. (2003). Staged authenticity and heritage tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 30*(3), 702–719.
- Chuang, S. T. (2013). Residents' attitudes toward rural tourism in Taiwan: A comparative viewpoint. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 15*(2), 152–170.
- Cole, S. (2007). Beyond authenticity and commodification. *Annals of Tourism Research, 34*(4), 943–960.
- Daskon, C., & Binns, T. (2010). Culture, tradition and sustainable rural livelihoods: Exploring the culture–development interface in Kandy Sri Lanka. *Community Development Journal, 45*(4), 494–517.
- Duarte Alonso, A., & Krajsic, V. (2013). Food heritage down under: Olive growers as Mediterranean 'food ambassadors'. *Journal of Heritage Tourism, 8*(2-3), 158–171.
- Durydiwka, M. (2014). Between tradition and modernity: Selected aspects of cultural changes under the influence of tourism (on the examples of tourism reception regions). *Turystyka Kulturowa, 10*, 105–122.
- Flick, U. (2014). *An Introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ghaderi, Z., & Henderson, J. C. (2012). Sustainable rural tourism in Iran: A perspective from Hawraman Village. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 2–3*, 47–54.

- Henderson, K. A. (2006). *Dimensions of choice: Qualitative approaches to parks, recreation, tourism, sport, and leisure research*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- INEI–National Institute of Statistics and Information of Peru. (2008). Perfil Sociodemográfico del Peru (2nd ed.). Retrieved from [www.inei.gob.pe/media/MenuRecursivo/publicaciones\\_digitales/Est/Lib1136/libro.pdf](http://www.inei.gob.pe/media/MenuRecursivo/publicaciones_digitales/Est/Lib1136/libro.pdf)
- Jamaludin, M., Othman, N., & Awang, A. R. (2012). Community based homestay programme: A personal experience. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 42, 451–459.
- Kastenholz, E., & Lima, J. (2011). The integral rural tourism experience from the tourist's point of view – a qualitative analysis of its nature and meaning. *Tourism & Management Studies*, 7, 62–74.
- Kontogeorgopoulos, N., Churyen, A., & Duangsaeng, V. (2015). Homestay tourism and the Commercialization of the rural home in Thailand. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(1), 29–50.
- Kovačić, M., Bošković, D., & Jugović, A. (2015). Cultural resources as a factor of tourism development of rural Istria. 34th International Conference on Organizational Science Development, Portorož, Slovenia, March 25–27.
- Lenzerini, F. (2011). Intangible cultural heritage: The living culture of peoples. *European Journal of International Law*, 22(1), 101–120.
- Lepp, A. (2007). Residents' attitudes towards tourism in Bigodi village. *Uganda. Tourism Management*, 28(3), 876–885.
- MEF–Ministry of Economy and Finances of Peru. (2016). Lineamientos básicos para la formulación de proyectos de inversión pública en emprendimientos de turismo rural comunitario. Retrieved from [https://www.mef.gob.pe/contenidos/inv\\_publica/docs/normas/normasv/snip/a2013/Anexo-RD-005-2013.pdf](https://www.mef.gob.pe/contenidos/inv_publica/docs/normas/normasv/snip/a2013/Anexo-RD-005-2013.pdf)
- MINCETUR–Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru. (2009). Programa Nacional de Turismo Rural Comunitario. Retrieved from <http://legacy.iica.int/Esp/organizacion/LTGC/agroturismo/Documentos%20varios%20%20Andina/Programa%20Nacional%20de%20Turismo%20Comunitario%20-%20Per%C3%BA.pdf>
- MINCETUR–Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru. (2016). Niveles de desarrollo de los emprendimientos de Turismo Rural Comunitario en el Peru. Retrieved from [https://www.mincetur.gob.pe/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/LINEAMIENTOS\\_DESARROLLO\\_TURISMO\\_RURAL\\_ARTE.pdf](https://www.mincetur.gob.pe/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/LINEAMIENTOS_DESARROLLO_TURISMO_RURAL_ARTE.pdf)
- MINCETUR–Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru. (2017). Sistema de Información Estadística en Turismo. Llegada de visitantes a sitios turísticos, museos y áreas naturales protegidas por el Estado. Retrieved from <http://datosturismo.mincetur.gob.pe/appdatosTurismo/Content2.html>
- MINCETUR–Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru. (n.d.). Turismo Rural Comunitario. Retrieved from <https://www.mincetur.gob.pe/producto-turistico/turismo-rural-comunitario/>
- Moreno, J., & Littrell, M. A. (2001). Negotiating tradition: Tourism retailers in Guatemala. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(3), 658–685.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and Evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Polnyotee, M., & Thadaniti, S. (2015). Community-based tourism: A strategy for sustainable tourism development of Patong Beach, Phuket island, Thailand. *Asian Social Science*, 11(27), 90–98.
- Pratt, M. L. (1994). Transculturation and Autoethnography: Peru 1615/1980. In F. Barker, P. Hulme, & M. Iversen (Eds.), *Colonial discourse/postcolonial theory* (pp. 24–46). Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- PROMPERU–Comisión de Promoción del Perú para la Exportación y el Turismo. (2016). Evaluación del Turismo Rural Comunitario en el Perú 2016. Retrieved from [https://promperu.gob.pe/TurismoIN/Uploads/temp/Uploads\\_mercados\\_y\\_segmentos\\_segmentos\\_1020\\_Evaluaci%C3%B3n\\_TRC\\_2015.pdf](https://promperu.gob.pe/TurismoIN/Uploads/temp/Uploads_mercados_y_segmentos_segmentos_1020_Evaluaci%C3%B3n_TRC_2015.pdf)
- Ram, Y., Björk, P., & Weidenfeld, A. (2016). Authenticity and place attachment of major visitor attractions. *Tourism Management*, 52, 110–122.
- Ruiz-Ballesteros, E. (2011). Social-ecological resilience and community-based tourism: An approach from Agua Blanca. *Ecuador. Tourism Management*, 32(3), 655–666.
- Sin, H. L., & Minca, C. (2014). Touring responsibility: The trouble with 'going local' in community-based tourism in Thailand. *Geoforum; Journal of Physical, Human, and Regional Geosciences*, 51, 96–106.

- Spanou, E. (2007). The impact of tourism on the sociocultural structure of Cyprus. *Tourismos: An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism*, 2(1), 145–162.
- Teixeira, V. A. V., & Ribeiro, N. F. (2013). The lamprey and the partridge: A multi-sited ethnography of food tourism as an agent of preservation and disfigurement in Central Portugal. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 8(2–3), 193–212.
- Thompson, C. S. (2004). Host produced rural tourism Towa's Tokyo antenna shop. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 580–600.
- Timothy, D. J., & Ron, A. S. (2013). Understanding heritage cuisines and tourism: Identity, image, authenticity, and change. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 8(2-3), 99–104.
- Tolkach, D., & King, B. (2015). Strengthening community-based tourism in a new resource-based island nation: Why and how? *Tourism Management*, 48, 386–398.
- Townsend, S. (2012). Minga: The communal work tradition of Bolivia. *Americas*, 64(3), 15–17.
- UNESCO. (2003). Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. 32nd Session of the General Conference, Paris (29 September–17 October).
- Yang, J., Ryan, C., & Zhang, L. (2016). Impersonation in ethnic tourism: The presentation of culture by other ethnic groups. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 56, 16–31.
- Zaei, M., & Zaei, M. (2013). The impacts of tourism Industry on host community. *European Journal of Tourism Hospitality and Research*, 1(2), 12–21.