

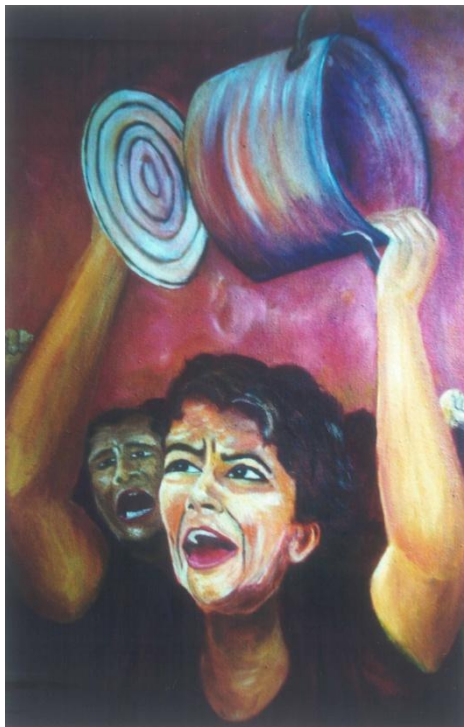


Sacrifice and devotion among women in the Communist Party of Peru

by

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Painting made in the art and handicraft workshop “Nueva Semilla”,
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Abstract

In 2001 ended a 21 years long violent conflict between the Peruvian state and the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP). During the violent period were hundreds of women and men imprisoned for affiliation to the PCP. The PCP had a significant number of women participating in the violence, these women were present in all levels of the party. The PCP represented a higher level of female political participation than any other political party in Peru had been able to. My informants claim to not have been fighting for themselves or female emancipation. These women fought for improvement of the poor, uneducated villager.

This thesis is based on field work among imprisoned female in the PCP. The theoretical is drawn from Daniel Miller and Pierre Bourdieu.

Abbreviations

Andean	A cultural and historical region, stretching from Venezuela in the east to Chile and Argentina in the south.
Campesino	A villager, often farmer, always poor
Cholo	A villager that has moved to a state capital or Lima and do not know the codes of conduct in the city.
CVR	Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación The Truth and Reconciliation Committee
El pueblo	People, nation, village or a small town.
PCP	Partido Comunista del Perú Communist Party of Peru
PUCP	Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú The name of the university I studied on in Lima
Limeño	A person that is born, raised and look like you are from Lima, Peru
Mestizo	The “racial” mixture of indigenous and white (most likely Spanish descent)
MRTA	Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru Revolution movement Túpac Amaru
Senderista	Nickname for a member of the Shining Path
SL/SP	Sendero Luminoso / Shining Path
UNSCH	Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga National University of San Cristóbal of Huamanga

Feil! Fant ikke referansekilden.

*“Because it was going to be cold, and I had blankets,
because there was hunger beneath, and I knew how to cook,
because vampires were flying, and I could hunt them,
because the villages were marching, and I wanted to march,
because there was so much to do
to put the world up-side-down
under the red sun
I made myself a soldier
I was born again”*

(Iparraguierre Revoredo 2001:134)

In 1982, then 19-years-old, Edith Lagos a member of the Partido Comunista del Perú (The Peruvian Communist Party, here after refer to as PCP) was killed in a battle with the Peruvian police, in a small village in the region of Ayacucho, Peru (McClintock 2001:61). Lagos’ image as a young, non-indigenous, educated female martyr was celebrated by most of the city of Ayacucho attending her funeral. Lagos was one among many women in the revolutionary party PCP’s war against the Peru that lasted from 1980 until 2001.

In 2001 had a 21 year long violent period in Peru come to an end, 68, 280 people were killed or disappeared in a war launched by the PCP against the Peruvian state in May 1980 (CVR 2003). PCP had one goal in mind, to create a “new democracy” and this had to be done through a revolution. As Laura Balbuena (2007) claims women were not left-out of the war, but instead women have always played a vital role for the PCP, representing about 40% of the military as well as always holding the rank of the second leader in command. I will in this thesis take a closer look at the women’s participation in the PCP. Why did an educated group of Peruvian women engage in the war? And what did these women fight for? I am in this thesis attempting to get a broader understanding on who my interviewees have engaged in a

popular war for. I see this in a theoretical perspective based on devotion and sacrifice as part of the female habitus.

The poem quoted above is written by the PCP's second leader in rank, Elena Iparraguirre. It was written to her children to explain to them why she left them behind to engage in the war. The poem describes how Iparraguirre gave all she had for the cold, hungry villagers, Peru's poorest citizens. Iparraguirre wanted to walk alongside the villagers, using these words as an analogy; to defend the villagers from the flying vampires, in reference to the ever-present threat of the Peruvian government. All was done for the revolution and for these reasons she became a soldier. The poem illustrates Iparraguirre's need to explain to her children why she left, why she "sacrificed" her family for someone else's plight.

Although women mostly are portrayed in literature on war as standing on the sidelines and as victims of war this is not the whole story. In the PCP women played an instrumental role in legitimizing the party's ideology, as teachers, members, martyrs, fighters and creators of propaganda images. The war between the PCP and the Peruvian state is not unique when it comes to its female participation: "Many of the armed conflicts after World War II, have had female fighters, such as Angola, El Salvador, Eritrea, Guatemala, Kenya, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Vietnam. In several of these conflicts, such as in Nicaragua, Eritrea and Sri Lanka women constituted more than 30% of the revolutionary forces" (Hauge 2008:296). The stereotyped image of men going off to war to prove their virility and women staying at home, not participating in the conflict, needs to be put aside. By bringing women's perspective into the analysis of war, we will get a larger and fuller picture of the combat.

This analysis is based on interviews with jailed women from the PCP. My research is an attempt to understand and contextualize the following paradox; while my interviewees experienced the PCP as a space with gender equality and female participation, my interviewees were still unable to "liberate" themselves from female stereotypes. They claim that their reason for involvement in the war was founded in a wish and need to *serve* the poor, the uneducated "campesino" also known as "el pueblo". My interviewees' struggle was about giving it all; a total sacrifice and complete devotion to the poor in the society. Women's desire to sacrifice themselves for a constituted object of devotion which is constituted as worthy is

not something new in society. According to Daniel Miller this aspect is constituted in our understanding of what it means to be “a woman”. The desire in women to sacrifice has been present in our understanding of women for more than one historical period but the object of devotion has change in correlation to political and cultural changes. My main argument in this thesis is inspired by Millers’ theoretical perspective and based on findings in my fieldwork. My main finding is that my informants with their newly gained knowledge and social consciousness constituted “el pueblo” as something worthy of their sacrifice. I argue in my thesis that the six women in the PCP that I interviewed in prison have engaged in a war fighting for “the other”, fighting for the poor indigenes campesinos, and not for themselves.

1.1 Methodology

My analysis is mainly based on empirical data collected in fieldwork in Peru’s largest female prison among female members and supporters of the PCP from June 2009 until August 2009. After having been given the formal approval of the INPE (National Institute of Penitentiary¹) I was able to interview six women. All- in- all I conducted a total of six interviews. My research topic changed in the process of doing fieldwork. At the outset I believed that my interviewees had a gender perspective as their reason to engage in the war. My understanding changed in the field, I realized that my interviewees had engaged in war to fight for social improvement for “el pueblo”. My analysis shows that the women I interviewed in the PCP experienced the PCP as a space of gender equality, where they were treated equal to their male counterparts. According to my interviewees they did engage in a popular war for social improvement for “el pueblo”, the poor uneducated villagers.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

In chapter 2 I will highlight some important national and international historical points that were vital for the germination of the PCP and the possibility that women could join the PCP. In chapter 3 I will describe my methodology and methods used in fieldwork among female prisoners convicted for terrorism. Chapter 4, my theory chapter I will elaborate on why Miller’s theory about shopping in Northern London is relevant in my case. In chapter 5 and 6

¹ INPE: Instituto Nacional Penitenciario

I am present the data that I have found; I will also discuss and analyze the data, and show my findings in these chapters. The concluding remarks you will find in chapter 7.

Chapter 2 Background

“At dawn on May 17 [1980], the day before general elections, five hooded men entered the Chuschi voter registration office, subdued and tied up the registrar, then burned the registry and ballot box. [...] And so the war began. For the Shining Path, the action was the first spark of destiny’s fire.”

(Gorriti 1999:17-18)

The 1980 presidential election was the first one after twelve years of military dictatorship, the action taken by the PCP on May 17th 1980 was ignored and the election went on as intended. In this chapter I will clarify some vital historical aspects that were important for the up rise of the war launched by the PCP against the Peruvian state in 1980. The first factor that enabled the PCP to develop as they did was the change in the status of women at the time. Women were about to gain more freedom in the Peruvian society and were not just seen as the property of her husband. This change in gender pattern made it possible for the PCP to successfully recruit among women. The second factor is the importance of the university as the cradle for recruitment; when it came to develop their ideology, and it was especially used to recruit young people to become members or supporters of the party. The third factor is an external factor; the Cuban revolution worked as a kick-off for more than one Latin American revolutionary attempt. Cuba was also an important source of inspiration for the PCP. Although the PCP and the Cuban revolution did not share the same ideology, still the PCP was inspired by the success that Fidel Castro and his guerrillas had achieved in their guerrilla war. The last factor is the poverty problem that occurred in Peru in the 1970s because of the economical crisis that struck the country. These four factors are historical aspects that I argue are crucial to recognize for us to be able to understand why women made the radical decision to join the PCP and for what reasons the same women fought.

The action that the PCP chose to take in 1980 has to be examined within the boundaries and context of the Peruvian state at the time. Peru was a country badly affected by poverty and deprivation with a clear distinction between the small urban ruling elite and the rural indigenous majority. Still it was not only the internal conditions in Peru that lead a group of mostly higher educated youths to take action against their own government. The war must also be seen in relation to what was happening in Latin America at that time. Revolutionary waves blanked the continent, while national universities became breeding grounds that

inspired and fueled a generation of educated youth to rise up against their governments. I will start by taking a closer look at the turmoil in Peruvian society and later in the chapter take a look at the Latin American and especially the Cuban influence. I also think it is important to understand the changes that occurred in the status of women in the Peruvian society at the time that the PCP was established, since it sets the background for the recruitment of women into the party.

2.1 “The success of our revolution hinges on the active participation of women”

(Gonzalez- Perez 2006:321)

The PCP and their leader, Abimael Guzmán, saw the importance of recruiting women to the party. The incorporation of women in PCP was so vital that Guzmán in 1970 stated that “the success of our revolution hinges on the active participation of women” (Gonzalez- Perez 2006:321). To understand the changes that the PCP offered women referring to female participation, and also why it appealed to a group of young educated women is related to the changes that happened in relation to the gender question in Peru throughout the 1970s. According to Isabel Coral Cordero women before the 1970s “suffered from being made invisible – a product of patriarchal relations that excluded and devalued women’s experience, hope, and interest, and that fomented, as well, women’s own low self-esteem” (2005:346). In general women’s activities were related to the domestic atmosphere while men were viewed as the head of the family and the family’s public representative. Cordero claims even though women did not have a formal decision making space prior to the 1970s, they were able to use their position to develop informal strategies and in this way were able to be heard in their families. In addition to housework, did women both in the countryside and in the cities contributed to the family economy by small-scale commerce, selling things like fruits, vegetables, prepared food or cloths. The public and political space in Peru was mainly reserved for men and limited for poor rural women. In the late 1970s there were changes in the position of women because of “the combined effects of economical crisis and an increasingly politicized civil society drew poor urban women into a search for broader space of participation” (Cordero 2005:348). The unemployment situation put into question the man’s role as the household provider. Families had to change their income strategy to a more collective survival tactic by using communal kitchens, participating in workshops and

contributing to health programs. These programs were often supported by NGO's or an ideology work done by political parties (Cordero 2005:346). Especially the NGO's organized women, they gave them leader education and encouraged participants to both reflect on the national politics and gender questions (Cordero 2005:348). Even though there was a "awakening" and mobilization of women in the 1970s, is it important to remember that this does not imply that before the 1970s women were suffering under total domination by men, but that there also before this time were ongoing negotiations done by women, only in a less visible space (Cordero 2005:348). What are stated above by Cordero (2005) were the tendencies in Peru at the time. It was clearly not one universal truth for all women in Peru at the time, there were individual differences within classes, families but also differences according to urban and rural setting. Still it was within this framework the PCP founded their communist party in the late 1960s.

Although there were changes happening in relation to women's status in Peru, and the PCP were willing to recruit women, gender equality and sexism were only a secondary preoccupation of Guzmán when he openly proclaimed to be "the Fourth Sword or Marxism" and the "world's greatest living Marxist-Leninist" in 1980 (Starn 1995:407). Guzmán saw from the beginning the need to involve women and the possibilities it gave to have a large percentage female in the party. One step to get women involved was the establishment of "The Popular Women's Movement" that was established in 1965 and was the first of its kind in the city of Ayacucho (Starn 1995:416). This group had the membership of important female characters like Edith Lagos and Augusta de la Torre (Starn 1995). Another aspect that influenced female support to the party is that the PCP offered some kind of legislation in the communities in the Andean region where there was a lack of state presence²; the PCP charged and held trials of wife-beaters, adulterers and rapists. Peru at the time of the commencement of the "popular war" was a country where "uneducated women were unable to vote until 1980 because of illiteracy laws, rape is hardly ever punished, racism against Indian groups is deeply entrenched and it is nearly impossible for a woman to escape the cycle of poverty, childbearing excessive labor and early aging" (14.06.10 nytimes). These are two strong reasons to why Peruvian women were attracted to the PCP. The percentage of women in the party is difficult to know precisely, as the numbers are contested among academics. Orion

² The lack of state presence in the countryside also worked to their advantage since it was easier to establish the PCP. The PCP was allowed to operate nearly freely until Lima discovered that there was a revolutionary attempt going on one and a half year after the first attack. In December 1981 the government did declare an "emergency zone" in the three Andean regions of Ayacucho, Huancavelica and Apurímac.

Starn writes that it was about one third of PCP members were women (Starn 1995:416), Margaret Gonzales-Perez argues that “records from 1987 indicate that over half of all SL members arrested and charged with terrorist activity were women” (2006:320), and Andrea Portugal claims that based on the CVR testimonies given by prisoners (from 2001/2002) only 18 percent were women and that the reason women’s participation in the PCP had gotten much attention was that women held high positions and were therefore more visible (2008:19). Although the actual number of women in the PCP is contested, it is clear that there was a high level of female participation in the PCP, the party supported high ranking female officers, and women were encouraged not only as supporters but as warriors and policymakers.

The change happening in relation to the gender question and a female’s role in Peru during the 1970s also encouraged women to study at university, which had long been open to women but previously with low attendance. The university provided a lair for the PCP in terms of recruitment but also in the establishment of the party, development of ideology and the spreading of their message.

2.2 The universities: a revolutionary nest

The universities were a crucial base for the founding of the PCP. The universities in mainly the region of Ayacucho, but also in the city of Lima worked as a place to recruit young educated women and men. The universities were also vital to the development of the PCP’s ideology. The importance of the university as a space for recruitment and ideologies is highlighted by my interviewees. These examples show how two universities were a place for recruiting new students to the party, Maya³, a Lima university student says, “*they [PCP] came with their members; it was a mobilization, politicization, why? Because they were about to start the armed struggle [...] so they called us, they explained [to] us, they planted and they drafted all the youths so that we would get involved in the popular war*”. Maria’s quote below states that there was not only outside PCP members coming into the university to recruit, but the professors at her university openly denounced their disapproval of the state in their lectures: “*In the course the professors, they for instant announced continuously that the national [fish] industry could not develop [...] because of the international monopoly*

³ I have chosen in this thesis to use pseudonyms for my interviewees. I have given a more in-depth explanation to why I chose this method strategy in chapter 3.

companies". The universities became a sort of "nest" of revolutionary ideas. The walls were covered with graffiti, the Plan of Studies was modified to include several courses on Marxism, and political activity among teachers and students expanded into all aspects of the university life" (Portugal 2008:32). The university was experienced as an eye opener for my interviewees, it gave them the opportunity to see what they claim is the reality of their country. Maya says "*being a medical student I started to know the reality of my country when it came to health questions. The village did not have access to medical care that is how I started to understand, I advanced in understanding the reality*". Andrea had a similar experience, as a sociology student, she did fieldwork among poor immigrants in Lima and in this way came in contact with what she saw as the reality of the country. For her, this experience opened her eyes to what was happening, especially when it came to the problems concerning poverty.

It is most likely attributed to their university origin that half of the PCP members had higher education, only less the two percentage were illiterate and the rest had finished primary or secondary school (Portugal 2008:21). What is interesting is that "57 % of women sentenced to prison had higher education compared to only 31% of men and that 10% had completed postgraduate studies, compared to 4% in the case of men" (Portugal 2008:18). These numbers are not representative to the average male Peruvian, where just above 11 % had higher education and the situation was worse in the case of women, this is according to Portugal "revealing the selective nature of the PCP-SL and the role education had within the party" (Portugal 2008:18). Karen Kampwirth writes that there was a tendency towards women more often than men being students and from urban origins at the time they enrolled in Latin American guerrilla groups (2002:137). According to Kampwirth this could be because the enrollment was a more radical decision for a woman to take than for a man, since the joining of guerrilla movements are more consistent with the traditional male gender role than women's (Kampwirth 2002). It was "only particular sorts of women were available for mobilization", there were circumstances that limited a woman's possibility to join, it helped greatly if she was young, had few or no children, little or no great responsibility and were able to organize freely (en-chanced by living in the city) (Kampwirth 2002:152).

The influence of the university as a base for the development of guerrilla movements is not unique in Peru, but was similar to what occurred in other Latin America countries; "guerrilla movements have emerged in countries with expanding university system" (McClintock

2001:71). The universities worked as a breeding ground not only for the PCP but also other guerrilla movements when it came to developing their ideology, strategies and recruitment of members. “Most guerilla movements, both failures and successes were organized and led by university students and professors, or by their former peers” (Wickham-Crowley 2001:141). Wickham-Crowley goes on emphasizing the close link between the increase in universities in the region and development of guerrilla movements, saying “there is a clear [...] correlation between university expansion and the 1960s guerilla strength” (Wickham-Crowley 2001:141). The university was also used to obtain peasant support; village youth that attended, The National University of San Cristóbal of Huamanga (UNSCH) were recruited at the university as members, and when returning back to their village after their degree they settled, taught and intermarried and thereby providing the basis for PCP peasant support (Wickham-Crowley 2001:159)

The 1960s and 1970s represent a change in Peruvian educational history; it was in these decades that a greater number of youth gained access to university education (McClintock 2001). Previously a university degree was reserved for a selective few generally from the elite class (McClintock 2001). UNSCH is one of the universities that represented a breeding ground for PCP, this university reopened in Ayacucho in 1959 after being closed since 1885 (McClintock 2001:71). “The university grew rapidly, with an open admission policy; by 1970 it employed at least 300 faculty and enrolled perhaps as many as 15,000 students [...] about 70 percent of the students came from the departments of Ayacucho itself; many were children of peasants, the first in their family to gain a higher education” (McClintock 2001:71). This was a huge change for a department mostly containing illiterate peasants until the reopening of the local university. Even though more youths received higher education and were therefore ready to take on professional jobs, it was difficult to find jobs due to the post- 1975 economical depression that Peru faced (McClintock 2001:71). This led to a situation where the expectations that a university degree gives a relevant job after graduation were not met.

In 1962 Abimael Guzmán was one among the teachers that came to lecture at UNSCH and by 1964 he was appointed Director of General Studies and also became one of the main promoters of the political work of the Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario (FER) (Portugal 2008:18). After some time at the university he was given the responsibility for hiring and appointing teachers (Portugal 2008:18), an influential position to hold. “In 1964, the Peruvian Communist Party split into two fractions: the pro-soviet PCP- Unidad that followed the

official line of the Soviet Union of Nikita Khrushchev and the pro- China PCP- Bandera Roja, which identified with Mao Tse Tung” (Portugal 2008:18). In general one can say that the communist youth and peasant bases followed Bandera Roja and the proletariat followed Unidad. Guzmán followed the Bandera Roja under the leadership of Saturnino Paredes (Portugal 2008:18). Because of Guzmán’s personal and ideological differences he fractured with Paredes in 1969, after a trip he had to China (Portugal 2008:18). After the split Guzmán created his own party, Partido Comunista del Perú – Por el luminoso sendero de Mariátegui with a base in UNSCH (Portugal 2008:18). The party consisted of mostly teachers and students, while the peasants stayed with Paredes (Portugal 2008:18). One might get the impression that PCP was the only and biggest Marxist party, but that was not the case - as a matter in fact “The Shinning Path was just one group, and not even the largest, in the alphabet soup of Marxist parties on Peru’s campuses in the 1960s and 1970s” (Starn, Degregori and Kirk 2005:320).

During this period, after the revolution had triumphed in Cuba, a left wind blew over Latin America. It was a time in Peru when within “certain urban groups of intellectuals, political affiliation became one more phrase of natural growth: adolescence and socialism were identified” (Portugal 2008:31). Throughout these urban groups violence was part of the radical discourse of the left wing parties, operating within the universities (Portugal 2008:32). The Cuban revolution was an important component in the social framework that the PCP was established within. The Cuban revolution offered inspiration and proof that a revolution was possible.

2.3 The Cuban revolution

Marisol, one of the members in the PCP, explained that after the revolution had triumphed in China in 1949, and the Cuban revolution had triumphed in 1959, the Peruvian left-wing started talking about making revolution as well. Because of the revolutionary atmosphere at the time, several youths from Peruvian universities traveled to Cuba and to China for inspiration. Although it was prohibited, there were students that had particular interest in creating a revolution, says Marisol. Marisol did not go to Cuba but had personal contact with a Cuban that had participated in the Cuban revolution against the government of Fulgencio Batista. Marisol was exchanging letters with the Cuban revolutionary when she was 14 until she turned 16 years old. Mostly they were writing about different things like their interest in

music, sending music notes to each other or writing about their families, but also about politics and what had happened in Cuba (Marisol). It was also in this period in her life that she wrote in her diary “I would like to become a guerrilla [soldier]” (Marisol). Marisol is one example on how the Cuban revolution influenced youths in Peru at the time and gave the left-wing politics enough air to set sail.

It was not only in Peru that revolutionary movements occurred. After the Cuban revolution succeeded in 1959 and the socialist transformation followed with success, guerrilla movements popped up all over Latin America. Most of these quickly withered but all of the revolutions that occurred after 1959 must be understood historically as post-Cuban in their nature (Wickham-Crowley 2001:133-139). The PCP was not the first party to try to create a revolution in Peru after 1959; before the PCP there had already been two groups trying to get support - the Army of National Liberation (ELN) and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) - but both these groups failed in their attempt before they even got off the ground (Wickham-Crowley 2001:135). Another characteristic that shows the importance of the revolution on Cuba is the lack of Peruvian indigenous grounding the PCP had in its ideology. The PCP revolt should not be mistaken as another indigenous movement, linked to previous Indian rebels like Túpac Amaru II, Juan Santos Atahualpa and Manco Inca or others (Starn 1995). Its ideology did not have any “Andean” cultural roots but was clearly a cause taken up by the educated, white urban citizen drawing their political ideology from Marx, Lenin and Mao (Starn 1995).

2.4 Reactions to an unjust society

The PCP grew with an aim to fight against what they saw as an unjust class society. As mentioned above, Ayacucho and the UNSCH were the PCP’s breeding ground - thus the success in recruiting members and supporters in Ayacucho and in UNSCH is not incidental. Poverty was a big problem in the three departments (Ayacucho, Huancavelica and Apurímac) where the PCP was able to gain relatively large support. “In the government’s 1972 and 1981 maps of poverty, Apurímac, Ayacucho and Huancavelica were the three poorest departments in both eras” (McClintock 2001:68). Not only were these three departments the poorest in the country because of income drop, but because of the change in the peasant economical situation which occurred in the previous decades (McClintock 2001:68). With poverty came

hunger. According to Cynthia McClintock the daily caloric intake dropped to below 70% of the recommended minimum, and in the poorest regions the intake reached as low as 420 calories (McClintock 2001:68-69). “The World Bank characterized the nutritional situation in 1980 as “bad”” (McClintock 2001:69). My interviewees also say that the poverty they saw in their own surrounding or experienced through field work at university was a reason to engage in the popular war.

Because of poverty many peasants migrated to urban areas, but few found jobs since the unemployment rate was almost 60% in 1983 (McClintock 2001:70). In the 1960s and the 1970s there were two attempts of agrarian reform by two different governments, the Belaúnde government and the military government of Velasco (McClintock 2001:72). Although they made some changes in other departments in Peru they were not as successful in Ayacucho. The primary reason for this was that “there were very few prosperous estates in the department [...] The absolute number of haciendas that could be transformed into viable peasant cooperatives was also small.” (McClintock 2001:70). As McClintock illustrates there was little impact from the agrarian reforms in the Ayacucho department. McClintock adds that although the material impact was rather small, the reforms did have political influence (2001:73). “The feudal services that many haciendas had required from peasants, again in both haciendas and communities, no longer applied” (McClintock 2001:73). Since peasants for the first time felt autonomous it allowed for tactical mobility, and the opening up of new political spaces, not only for guerrilla activities but also for peasants to organize themselves into confederations (McClintock 2001:73-74).

These four aspects, the poverty problem that were in Peru, the change in women’s status in Peruvian society, the expansion of university education and the impact that the Cuban revolution had in the Peruvian society was the background for the cultivation of the PCP. These historical factors are not all the factors that influenced the rise of the PCP, but it is vital to understand the role of women in the party. These four aspects are important in relation to my focus, how to understanding why these women joined the party and what they fought for in the PCP.

Chapter 3 Methodology

“The prison is a good place to know a country; because it hides away all that the society does not want to know about itself”⁴

(Roncagliolo 2007:226)

In this chapter I will take a closer look at the methodology, methods and theory that I have applied in my research. I utilized a qualitative methodological approach, including fieldwork. I adopted methods that I argue was adequate to my fieldwork situation. I have done interview research with women imprisoned because of their affiliation with the PCP, with the hope that I would acquire new knowledge. Using fieldwork as my approach I discovered original and unanticipated findings; this led me to change my research topic from the original plan. One of the benefits that I experienced being in the field is that it gave me the opportunity to shift slightly from having a gender perspective in my research, to a broader perspective after listening to my interviewees’ stories. I listened to what they claimed was their reason to fight, which for the women in the PCP were “el pueblo”. I interviewed six women that were affiliated with the PCP party and still are despite their imprisonment. I spoke to one woman that had been a lawyer defending war prisoners, who is now imprisoned for PCP affiliation. The last woman that I spoke to is the second ranked leader in the party, Elena Iparraguirre. All-in-all I have spoken to eight women and interviewed six, all of whom are related to PCP and have been imprisoned for terrorism. There are few researchers that have had, or taken, the opportunity to conduct research among the members of the PCP. Most articles, books and other documents that are written about the PCP are based on secondary resources like TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Committee) testimonies, Guzmán’s written work and other documents. My work is a combination between primary resources that I have collected from prisoners and secondary resources from other written sources.

My thesis is based on two sources of data collection. The primary resources is the empirical data that I have collected through audio-recorded interviews, conversations and observations during my fieldwork. The secondary resource comes from an extensive literature research among relevant articles, books, and films on the internet. The data that are obtained from this research are complementary to my fieldwork data.

⁴ “Las prisiones son buenos lugares para conocer un país, porque guardan todo lo que una sociedad no quiere ver de sí misma” (Roncagliolo 2007:226)

The reason I chose the imprisoned member of the PCP for my research is solely because of personal interest. I am intrigued and fascinated by both the prison society as well as the number of women recruited by the PCP. My reason is also founded in the extremely horrifying public images constructed about these women. In the public discourse in Peru there are many negative accusations about the features of the members of the PCP, especially the women. Among other things these women have been portrayed as “Gonzalo women”, “Masters of terrorism” or “Participants in a orgy of sex and liquor where Abimael gets lost” - metaphorically saying that the leader of the PCP Abimael Guzmán was a sex and alcohol addict, who lost his ideology along the way (Quehacer 1992:44). The accusations continue; Peru’s most known author and president of Commission of Enquiry into the Uchuraccay Incident⁵, Mario Vargas Llosa describes the senderistas as “bloodthirsty fanatics, detached from life and common sense [...] committed to destroy and killing, irrational and without capacity for dialogue” (Portugal 2008:8). In the public discourse there has been a dehumanization of the people that joined and supported the PCP, and this captured my interest. I had a desire to uncover whether there was truth to these images or not.

3.1 Survey area

My study is restricted to the research setting of the female prison that is located in Chorriollos, Lima: “Establicimiento penitenciario anexo maximo seguridad de mujeres Chorriollos”. This is the largest prison for female prisoners in the country. The prison is divided in two; the largest part consists of females that have committed misdemeanor crimes. Misdemeanor prisoners are separate from the women imprisoned for terrorism and the ones that have committed serious felonies, because of the need for higher security. As I mentioned in the last section, the high security division of the prison is where I did my fieldwork. This part of the prison was built in 1992; a time when many affiliated with the PCP were captured and put in prison regardless of whether they were innocent or not to guerrilla related accusations.

My fieldwork period in the prison lasted from the 25th of June until the 20th of August 2009. At the time of my interviews this division of the prison contained about 206 female prisoners and about nine children of female prisoners. Of the total amount of female prisoners, 57 are

⁵ “Created in 1993 by President Fernando Belaúnde Terry to clarify the circumstances surrounding the killing of eight journalist by peasants from the community of Uchuraccay” (Portugal 2008:8).

convicted of terrorism; they represent two fractions being affiliated with MRTA or PCP. The prisoners affiliated with the PCP are almost all located in pavilion B, where there are a total of 84 prisoners; around 40 of these are women associated with the PCP. All the interviews took place in pavilion B, either in the library or the art shop where the women of the PCP sell their artwork.

3.2 Data collection

I will start by explaining how I collected my data and gained access in the field and the methods that I used. I will also argue for why I thought the methods and techniques I used were the most appropriate way to go about my fieldwork. My first fieldwork action was to get into contact with former university colleagues and friends. When I arrived in Lima I started to find out how and where to get permission to enter the prison. After talking to some friends and a network of friends, I got an idea of how to get started. I had to get in contact with INPE (National institute of Penitentiary⁶) in central Lima.

On my first visit to INPE I handed in material like my project proposal (in english), application to do research⁷, the questions that I wanted to ask the prisoners⁸, and a copy of my passport, all of which were in Spanish. They told me that it would take about three days to get a decision. The truth is that it took about one month, in which they moved my application around, with uncertainties surrounding who was to handle these kinds of requests. I used this period to call them to try to make the progress on my application go faster. I soon found out that it was better to show up in person to actually make some progress. Most of the times I came to ask for my permission they told me that there was a new paper that I had to hand in, a resume of my project proposal in Spanish and write a declaration of where I committed myself to send my thesis and make a resume in Spanish. I also had to speak to some of the leaders at the INPE, to explain more about my personal background and my intentions with fieldwork. My reason to use one month of my time on this rather unproductive and frustrating part of my research was for safety reasons; since the Peruvian state has declared PCP as a

⁶ INPE: Instituto Nacional Penitenciario

⁷ Appendix 1

⁸ Appendix 2

terrorist organization I was afraid to run into problems with the Peruvian state if I did not have their authorization and approval⁹.

3.3 Interviews and observations:

After I had been given the formal approval I still needed the women of the PCP approval to be able to interview them. I had three pre-sessions with two different women, the first women I introduced myself to. I explained my research, handed over my project proposal, an article that I wrote at the PUCP and my questions. The second women, Elena Iparreguirre I had a more informal conversation with about myself, what I knew about them from my studies and my research. After having been given permission to do interviews among six of the women associated with the PCP I started out asking my interviewees structured questions. This method did not work well; my informants felt uncomfortable and only gave me “party propaganda” answers and no insight into their own perspective about the situation. After some interviews I changed my approach from prepared questions to open-ended interview. I started the conversations asking both of the women at the same time if they could tell me about a certain topic. When they started talking I listened and asked questions, to get them in the direction towards my topic of interest. I chose to do this change in strategy because I felt that when I had structured interviews, where it was more question- answer oriented, I did not get an answer. They only told me the formal, directed party program propaganda answers, which was of no interest to me. This resulted in a much more adequate method. I had the opportunity to choose this research strategy since my research group was rather small (Silvermann 2005). Changing my method to unstructured interviews allowed me to attain information from their own perceptions. All-in-all I conducted six interviews, between one hour and thirty minutes and two hours in length.

Most of the time there were two women present and me, this according to the wishes of the PCP leaders. The interviews were all conducted in Spanish, without an interpreter. I used tape recorder in all the six interviews and in some of the more informal conversations. However the informal conversations mostly took place before or after the formal interviews and were not recorded. The women themselves also recorded the interviews. In the last session I gave

⁹ Appendix 3

them a CD with all the material that I had recorded, as I had promised to do so in the first session we had together.

After talking to the women about their anonymity, we came to an agreement to create pseudonym to hide their identity and protect their interests. The only one that is referred to by her birth name is the second leader in rank Elena Iparreguierre Revored, but those data are not from my interviews with her but from other written resources. When it comes to referencing the interviews that I recorded, I only refer to their pseudonym and not the date or the time of the interviews.

I started out with the idea that these women joined the PCP to fight for women's participation in the Peruvian society; however after some reflection, I realized that my notion was colored by my own Norwegian background. This was something I thought both in the field and after I came back. My questions were affected by my background; a young woman who has enjoyed the freedom of a more gender neutral environment than women in Peru have today and had in the 70s, 80s and 90s. In other words, I was limited by my own personal background. I think that my questions were most likely Norwegian, tinted by the fact that Norway is one of the most gender equal counties in the world and promoting gender equality in the world. This might be why I did not get the answers I expected, but rather different ones and, I would claim, more interesting ones. The answers I got led me to change my topic to who and what the women in the PCP fought for, since it was not increased female participation. I started to analyze my data in an attempt to get a broader understanding of who my interviewees had been fighting for and why they did not see the need to fight for gender equality.

3.4 Challenges in the field:

Doing field work in a prison setting was not without its limitations. For instance the INPE gave me restricted time to spend with the prisoners. I was only permitted from 8:30 until 13:00 o'clock every Tuesday and Thursday from the 18th of June to the 27th of August and thus I was not able to live in my interviewees' environment. I had an on-off fieldwork, which means that I was never able to become an insider in the prison and do participant observation (Spradley 1980). Still I was able to make observations while doing my interviews, when I attended English classes with two of the members and also while waiting in the hallway for

the women before the interviews. These instances gave me the opportunity to do passive observation, where I was present at the scene of action but I did not participate or interact with the subjects to any great extent (Spradley 1980). All the observations I did in the prison I wrote down in my field work diary after every session. Observations made outside the prison that I considered important were also written down. My research setting gave me certain limitations for conducting my fieldwork. A benefit of not living in my fieldwork setting was that I was able to make some observations about how these women and the war was seen in the Peruvian society. However this gave me the opportunity to connect the data I gathered from the prison with the larger society (Holliday 2008).

One of the challenges I encountered was how to keep a politically correct language in accordance with whom I was taking too. In one of the first meetings I had with the PCP women I thought that the party was not called PCP-SP or just Shining Path, the name of the party is PCP, which was made very clear to me. Although in newspapers and academic articles they are usually referred to as the Shining Path or in Spanish Sendero Luminoso or a combination, like PCP-SP or PCP-SL. According to the women “Shining Path /Sendero Luminoso” was a nick name they got from the newspaper during the war, referring a founding sentence of the party from the 1920, stating: “Marxism-Leninism will open the shining path to revolution” (CVR 2003). Also when talking to the PCP women I used the term political prisoners, since they insisted on being political prisoners, but when talking to the guards or Peruvians outside of the prison (INPE, professors and friends) I had to use the term terrorist, guerrilla or referring to the name used in the public discourse (PCP-SP or Shining Path) because they do not consider them as political prisoners but as terrorists. Also Santiago Roncagliolo (2007), a Peruvian/ Spanish research author, encountered difficulties - concluding that in relation to the PCP and the war in Peru there does not exist a politically neutral language, in other words what the supporters of the PCP call war the military call terrorism and what the Peruvian calls “Truth commission” the supporters of the PCP call “the lying commission” (2008:214). This balance was sometimes hard to hold in my third language and I sometimes failed. This led to discussions of my relation to the political agenda of the PCP among my friends and contacts because they are considered terrorists in Peruvian society and I was corrected by the women in the PCP.

I find it hard to say if my group is representative or not. I have not talked to all of the members nor all of those imprisoned. Another aspect is that the interviewees I talked to were

selected by the party members and not by me. However I claim that this does not necessarily make them less representative. When I talked to the second leader in rank on the first day I asked if it was possible to get women that held different position in the party and that I got. I hope that by using my interviews and other academic work it will be possible to shade some new light on why the women in the PCP did not fight for themselves, but chose to engage in the war fighting for the society's poorest and economically weakest members.

3.5 My role as a researcher

In this part I will draw attention to some aspects that have affected the data that I collected during my fieldwork period. I will use this part to reflect on my self-representativeness in my work, my own presence in the field. Reflexivity is to acknowledge the researcher's presence in the field as well as in the written work. According to David McDougall the research must be understood as the researcher's perception of the world "without pretending to be their [the interviewees'] view of it" (1998:87). MacDougall (1998) argues that research must be seen as a meeting between a researcher and their subjects and not understood as a portrait of a culture. Research is an insight into how a researcher sees a cultural meeting. The reflexivity concept constantly has to be present, driving the research to a subjective description of a culture rather than striving for an unobtainable objectivity (McDougall 1998). It is the subjectivity, and how it is reflected, that strengthen the research. Holliday writes that reflexivity is best viewed as "the way in which researchers come to terms with and indeed capitalize on the complexities of their presence within the research setting" (2008:138). The data I have collected is limited because I was unable to become an insider in the prison, the PCP or the Peruvian society at large. It is also limited because I do not speak Spanish as my first language. Also translating from Spanish into English is an obstacle, and sometime it is hard to get the accrued meaning, especially since English is not my native language either. I have also interpreted the meaning and the context from my perspective as Norwegian that have lived in Peru and therefore have in-depth knowledge about the cultural context, but I have never been an insider.

I admit that I had a clear idea based on what I had read about "women and war" before I went to Peru. Many of the first articles I read saw women only as victims of war, standing on the side-line and not participating in the matters relating to war. To me it seemed like the PCP was a different case, since women did take up arms to fight in the war. Reading more specific

about the PCP and especially about the women in the PCP I found that in articles, newspapers and books these women were often disgraced, seen as harsh and almost portrayed as macho, this image is something I will come back to on the next page. I am also likely to have been colored by my own experiences of what I saw as the Peruvian macho culture when studying at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú in 2006. I particularly experienced the macho culture and saw it as a problem since I come from and are brought up in Norway, a more gender equal country than Peru. Out of this did my idea come to investigate “If the women saw the joining of PCP-SL as a possibility to escape from traditional gender roles, fight for gender equality or to end the violence committed against women by male patrons, to diminish “masculine dominance (Bourdieu 1996)”¹⁰. While conducting my field work, I stayed faithfully within the confines of my hypothesis. All of my interviews were done with the aim to obtain information to support my hypotheses (or falsify it). The data from my interviews, on the other hand disagreed with my hypothesis. Although I had hypotheses I was open to let the women comment on my questions and my theory, after all I was there to learn from them. During the interview process I started to see that maybe my hypothesis was not adequate, so some doubt about what I was discovering started to set in. After I came back from the field I got a closer look at the material I collected, this led me to realize that my hypothesis was not beneficial in the analysis of my interview material. My interviewees did not join the PCP as an escape from traditional gender roles. When I realized this it led me to take a fresh look on the material that I had collected and I opted to leave my pre- fieldwork hypothesis behind. This is how I arrived at my new topic.

Also another perception changed during my research. My perception of my interviewees was formed from reading newspapers articles, books and reports about the PCP and its female members. Because the PCP is categorized as a terrorist organization and its members portrayed in a dehumanizing manner throughout the Peruvian public discourse, I naively accepted this image as true and consequently constructed a misinformed perception of these women. This affected my expectations in my own interaction with them. The reality I met in prison was very different than my initial thoughts; I no longer view the imprisoned PCP women in the same light that as conveyed mainstream Peruvian discourse. This contrast between my expectations and how I perceived my meeting was a huge challenge for me. I asked myself many questions about meeting these women. Throughout my stay in Peru and

¹⁰ From my project proposal

partially in Norway the public discourse was constantly reaffirmed from different sources of information such as books, news articles, TV documentaries, colleagues and friends. Although I do not agree with the party program, with the use of violence as a tool for making political change, I think that the mainstream public discourse is simplified and unjust. The PCP in general is harshly condemned in the public discourse and the female members are even more degraded. In Peru as in most societies it seen as radical for a woman to join such a violent cause, because of the stereotype that women are birth givers and not life takers (Balbuena 2007). In the Peruvian public discourse the participation of females in the PCP did call attention; newspapers tried to understand the women in the PCP and explain their reasons for engaging, but instead they created a simplified image of the PCP, especially about the perception of women, and a narrative influenced by a patriarchal perspective according to Ricardo Caro Cádenas (2006:2).

There were factors beyond my control in this research, which I had to take into account. One of these factors was the distance in elapsed time between the actual time I interviewed these women and the time in which they experienced the event I enquired about. The war I am researching has passed and their situation now is different from the time of the “popular war” - therefore time and circumstance have influenced their perceptions. I asked the women about past experiences and they might remember things slightly different from how they actually occurred. Another aspect that influenced the situation was being in prison, which may lead them to romanticize their experience as active revolutionary soldiers. They might also be influenced by each other because they have been in close contact every day, some for more than 15 years. These variables influenced on my data collection but I claim that they do not make my data worthless - it should be noted that the data I got, could have been different if I asked the same questions during the “popular war” or just after their captivity.

3.6 The writing process

Writing my thesis has been a tough process with many ups and downs. I have doubted everything there is to doubt; my work in the field, my writing, and the methodology I applied as well as the theory. If I had the option to choose a different theory, I would have done it because of the great contextual differences in my work and the work of Miller. Miller’s theory has a strong relation to my work in some areas, but it is weaker in others. One of the strong

points is that there is in both cases a distinct presence of sacrifice. The sacrifice is done because of a distinct desire to be in a relationship with the subject of devotion. Devotion in Miller's article is related to the phrase *habitus* of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, a term that is important in both cases. That devotion and sacrifice in both cases are part of the concept of what it means to be a "woman". A weak point when I apply Miller's theory to my context is that Miller writes about more mundane sacrifices and distinguishes himself from the sacrifice that is done by soldiers in war. And when referring to war Miller writes about the symbols that are constituted after the war, the symbols that are created in the honor of the brave soldiers, "that the more blood that has been shed on their behalf the more sacred they [the soldiers] become" (Miller 1998:130). My thesis on the other hand is an attempt to understand my interviewees' reasons for engaging in the popular war rather than of analyzing the symbols that are created in post-war history. I try to understand their personal narrative created in a post-war setting. Still Miller argues that the sacrifice made in war and sacrifice done by female shoppers in Northern London is both devotional acts (1998:130). The reflections above are on the weaknesses and strengths of my choice of theory. The theory itself will be explained and applied in the following chapters.

The validity of my research must be seen in relation to the limitations that I have mentioned above. The data that I have collected have to be understood as statements and opinions and need to be seen in relation to their time and space. There is also an aspect of luck when doing fieldwork, luck in the people you encounter, their perception of you and events that are outside a researcher's control. My data are also dependent on my own assumptions, the theoretical approach I used, the research questions and the conditions of my fieldwork setting.

Chapter 4 Theoretical framework

Haleh Afshar argues that “when analysing the role of gender in conflict, the first myth that needs to be exploded is that of the absence of women from the battleground” (Afshar 2004:43). In other words Afshar argues that we have to acknowledge the presence of women on the battlefields in war. Women participate on different levels, they have been camp followers, taken care of the wounded, made the food for the warriors, given armory support and they have also been the ones left to take care of the land, house and children (Meintjes 2006:63). Although most women remain behind the scenes when a country breaks out in war, some women choose to take up arms and cross into enemy lines to fight. Traditionally in academic theories men are seen as the warriors, defending the nation and its women. Women on the other hand are seen as the ones who suffer and become victims of war (Meintjes 2006:63). When considering the study of peace and conflict I think that is important to acknowledge that women have taken part in wars for centuries. It is also important to not only portray women as victims of war, but to see the complex picture of women and war. In my attempt to understand my interviewee’s motivation to participate in the PCP I found Miller’s theory useful and therefore I will analyze my data in relation to his theoretical contribution on women’s devotion, to tend to the “needs” of others.

4.1 Miller’s theory

In Daniel Miller’s (1998) book “A Theory of Shopping” he outlines how shopping done by women in Northern London has a symbolic value, that it is an act of love and not simply a longing for objects. Miller analyzes the love and devotion that these female shoppers express through shopping; it is viewed as a sign of love and devotion to others, like their family, children or the house. These women are striving to be in a relationship with the subject that receives, by bringing home goods that she believes the subject wants or what she thinks will improve the subject’s life. Miller also analyzes how the act of sacrifice survives as a ritual even though the society is becoming secularized. Miller claims that it survives through the female habitus that he alleges holds a desire to sacrifice. I will come back to the Miller understanding of the term habitus later on in this chapter. I argue that Miller’s theory has transfer value to my own research and that my interviewees constituted “el pueblo” as subject of devotion and worthy of their sacrifice. The object of devotion or what the women of the

PCP sacrificed was a total surrender of their life to the revolutionary war against the Peruvian state.

4.2 Sacrifice and devotion

The desire in women to sacrifice themselves for a created divine remains in the construction of the female gender in our contemporary world, because it exist according to Miller in the female habitus. Miller (1998) does not attempt to define “sacrifice” in his book. Miller rather looked at some of the generalizations seen in literature and he acknowledging differences in how sacrifice is characterized. Still Miller finds two common features. One is that sacrifice is based on the wish to create a relationship to a divine, create a subject for adoration and constituting it the subject of devotion. In my case the women made “el pueblo” their subject of devotion. The second common feature is that sacrifice has an aspect of an “act of consumption, a form of expenditure through which something or someone is consumed” (1998:82). In Miller’s field the object of devotion was what the women were able to bring home, what she bought for the family (1998:82). Miller finds the object of devotion that are constituted through sacrifice are used to communicate or exchange with, to create a flow of efficacy. The most important feature in reference to sacrifice is that sacrifice “untimely [does] about constituting a relationship between those involved and a transcendent or sacred world” (Miller 1998:78). So even though there is diversity in the purpose of sacrifices they all have something in common, which is that the main goal is to create a relationship to the divine, sacrifice is a devotional act towards a constituted divine (Miller 1998), the divine in my case was “el pueblo”.

“Shopping as sacrifice [...] is turned into the specific expression of devotional love directed between woman as the continued instrument of love and for whom she has brought back the sacrificial remains in the form of purchases. Love is here the dialectical transformation of generality of devotion back into particularity” (Miller 1998:108). Miller argues that women express love and devotion to their family by bringing home from shopping not only what their subject of love desired but what she thinks will improve him / her. The activities of shopping, preparing meals and cooking is not seen as work by Miller’s interviewees but “constantly refer back to an ideology that institutes devotion as the sole legitimate grounds and criteria by which this work is done” (Miller 1998:108). In my own fieldwork my informants tried to

improve the lives of “el pueblo”. The villagers themselves did not ask for this sacrifice, but my interviewees saw the need to improve their lives and were happily willing to help. According to my informants many villagers enjoyed benefits of the PCP efforts and therefore supported the PCP presence in the village.

Devotion is divided into two different categories in Miller’s book. The first is “the subject of devotion”, by this he refers to the ones who receive; gods, patriarchy and infants (Miller 1998:112). The second one is “the object of devotion” something that is an inalienable possession (Miller 1998:112). I will argue in my work that my interviewees have constituted “el pueblo” as their subject of devotion and that the object of devotion, what they sacrifice, is their life in the way that when entering the party they made a total surrender of their life to the revolution for “el pueblo”. In the secular atmosphere it can be various objects of devotion like the nation-state in war time situations, but also one’s partner or potential partner where one is willing to sacrifice one’s life or something more mundane (Miller 1998:116-117). The desire to sacrifice found in the female habitus is also present in war. Miller present his argument referring to Rowland “that such victims of nationalistic war can be transformed *post hoc* into sacrificial rites by creating new inalienable object such as war memorial which then reconstitute war as the voluntary giving of blood on behalf of a nation which is thereby redeemed” (Miller 1998:130). This states that after the war is over there can be objects constructed to “transform a past war into a rite on sacrifice” (Miller 1998:130). These inalienable object, are presented to hold a permanent value that transcend for future ennoblement and maintaining of the images (Miller 1998:130). These objects of devotion listed by Miller are materialistic and concrete, memorial, land and nation, but still Miller finds these kinds of objects of devotion as rather mystical. Miller prefers to talk about “the ability of consumption as a process to extract items from the marked and make them personal” (1998:131). Even though there is not a direct relation between what Miller talks about as a materialistic object of devotion to the object of devotion of my interviewees lives there is still an object of devotion in the sense that the object is a means to create a “relationship of love between subjects rather than some kind of materialistic dead end which takes devotion away from its proper subject- other person” (Miller 1998:128).

4.3 Gender

Miller argues that the desire to sacrifice has persisted through history. He disputes that as secularization pushed the religious divine out as a subject of worship, the divine was replaced with a devotion to men, and now feminism pushed men out as subjects by devotion in advantage of the child. This change in subject of devotion occurred instead of ending the “self-sacrificial model of devotional duty” among women (Miller 1998:126). This adjustment in subject of devotion Miller sees as an argument that devotion has transcended in history. Miller says that “the key historical moment may be the establishment of modern forms of patriarchy, where that term implies a direct transference of the devotional habitus from a religious setting to a secular setting” (Miller 1998:117). To transfer the religious term “devotion” into a secular setting is valid action according to Miller, this since devotion as an act has continued through history, “where secularization removed certain key religious images of devotion, the Romantic movement steps in almost immediately and replace them” (1998:117).

Miller sees it as a striking paradox that women have been most concerned with the development of their own career and their development as a woman, at the same time there are those who are reborn as mothers and become “entirely devoted to the needs and whims of their infant” (Miller 1998:124). It is interesting how these women who insist on being “free” and reject the subservient position to men, replace their position as subservient to men with a total devotion to the infant, where her own “desires should not interfere with their obsessions about the proper way to bring up their infant” (Miller 1998:125). Miller argues that because of feminism the act of devotion has changed its subject, meaning that women have changed their focus area from their partner to their child, the “rise of the infant as a substitute for the partner as the object of contemporary devotion” (Miller 1998:124). Although feminism “saved” women from being oppressed by men, feminism did not affect the desire in women to sacrifice themselves for a worthy subject of devotion. I argue that as the revolutionary wave swept across Latina America and brought women into revolutionary armies, women were not able to leave their female habitus but incorporated it in to their revolutionary ideology.

4.4 Common features between shopping and female soldiers

Miller's book is based on a fieldwork among female shoppers in Northern London and my fieldwork is done among female fighters in Peru. There are not only important contextual differences in the actions conducted between fighting a popular war and shopping, but also great cultural differences between Northern London and Peru. These differences have to be acknowledged to understand the applicability of Miller's theory for my fieldwork. Instead of focusing on the cultural and contextual differences I would like to highlight the similarities. Women's role in society for both female fighters in Peru and female shoppers in London are colored by our understanding of what it "means" to be a woman. Our perception of what a woman is, is constructed through the family, the church, the state and the school (Bourdieu 2001:43).

The relevance that Miller's theory has for my work is founded on what Bourdieu describes as the female habitus (Bourdieu 2001). Bourdieu (2001) argues that our image of women is not only constructed within one culture and therefore different from one culture to another culture, but rather that the image has a level of universality. Bourdieu states that; "these universally applicable schemes of thought record as differences of nature, inscribed in objectivity, variations and distinctive features (of physique, for example) which they help to make exist at the same time as they 'naturalize' them by inscribing them in a system of differences, all equally natural in appearance" (2001:8). Bourdieu points out that there exists a set of universal characteristics that distinguish women from men according to our expectations of the two genders. Bourdieu (2001) claims that the dispositions should be seen as universal because they transcend through the state, the university system, the family and the church (2001:8).

Our understanding or image of a woman is not unchangeable. However as Bourdieu says, it is like in a dance with a partner where it seems clumsy and incorrect to act outside the established pattern. The pattern accrues as acceptable and even natural to us (Bourdieu 2001:9). Bourdieu continues to argue that social history has been converted into nature by that there has been a "long collective labour of socialization of the biological and biologicization of the social combine to reverse the relationship [...] to make a naturalized social construction

[...] appear as the grounding in nature” (Bourdieu 2001:3). Miller’s work is founded on Bourdieu’s term habitus. A term that by Bourdieu himself is described as:

“schemes, shaped by similar conditions, and therefore objectively harmonized, function as matrices of the perceptions, thoughts and actions of all members of the society- historical transcendental which, being shared by all, impose themselves on each agent as transcendent. As a consequence, the andocentric representation of biological reproduction and social reproduction is invested with the objectivity of a common sense” (2001:33).

In other words habitus is an embodiment of culture. Habitus only exists in thoughts, and it influences how we act, interact with others, our way of thinking, talking and behaving.

According to Miller’s understanding of the term habitus is it “a set of dispositions – that is the foundation to certain people’s being ascribed these aspirations as their “nature”” (1998:149). Are women in other words ascribed certain features that are accepted as part of the nature of women.

Miller sees devotion and sacrifice as part of the female habitus, since it “remains a primary function of the constitution of gender in the contemporary world” (1998:149). Miller sees women’s desire to sacrifice themselves for a cause as an aspect of the female habitus. This is based on Miller’s argument, that sacrifice “is not simply constituted by one historical period or object as, for example, patriarchy. Its roots lie in religious devotion that makes it both the prehistory of patriarchy and the post history of a cult of the infant” (1998:149). The historical constructed understanding of what a woman is, is transformed into, and must be seen and understood as part of women’s nature. According to Miller sacrifice conducted by women is neither rooted in one historical period nor in one particular object. However sacrifice is an activity that is rooted in our understanding of what it means to be a woman.

Chapter 5 First finding:

Felt gender equality and increased social consciences

My findings that will be presented in chapter five and six led me to argue that the women in the PCP fought for the “other”. My argument is that my five¹¹ sacrificed everything to fight for “el pueblo” instead of engaging in a revolutionary war for personal gain. These women saw themselves as having reached a higher level of social consciousness and knowledge through education. At the same time my interviewees experienced the PCP as a space of gender equality and significance was placed on your commitment to the party and the revolution. My interviewees in the PCP were fighting for the poor, uneducated villager known as “el pueblo”. These were people viewed as the neediest and most oppressed in society and thus worthy of the women’s sacrifice. My informants did not see the war as a struggle for themselves, where they could obtain personal gain, but saw their involvement in the party as a fight for the underdog; society’s poorest, weakest and voiceless members. The paradox that I found and will analyze in chapter six is that although the women saw themselves treated as equal to men and with newly gained consciousness and awareness they were not without the female habitus, the wish to sacrifice oneself for someone else.

In this chapter I will present my arguments and findings referring to the felt gender equality experienced by the women and their newly gained position as university educated. This is an important background for the paradox that I found in the field. In chapter six I will bring forward and analyze the paradox I found in the way in which it relates to Miller’s theory. Miller’s arguments are relevant for my thesis because he claim that there exists a desire of sacrifice in women, which goes beyond a specific period in history, and that women have in their habitus a set of dispositions to devote themselves to others (1998:149). According to Miller, the desire in women to sacrifice survived different political changes; I argue that my interviewees also brought it with them into the Marxist revolution. In the following chapter, I will elaborate on the paradox and theory pertinent to my argument. In this chapter I will illustrate the connection between the feeling of equality and newly gained knowledge.

¹¹ I will come back to way only five out of six have sacrificed everything.

5.1 The women in the PCP

The representation of female fighters often comes as a shocking image to society as a whole. According to Maria, in Peru it also came as a surprise when women took up arms with men:

“In a society where women are oppressed, the news started coming. Women together with men, using rifles in the countryside. How is it possible? What is happening? How can women do this? Why do women leave to fight?” (Maria).

Since it is considered bigger rupture for a woman to leave her family to enter into a revolutionary struggle, it is not for just any woman to enter. According to Kampwirth who writes about women and guerrilla movements in Central America¹², is it reasonable to assume that only a particular type of woman had the possibility to mobilize and take up arms (2002:152). Taking a closer look at the social setting and background of the women will give us an indication of who they are /were and a broader understanding of their engagement in the war for “el pueblo”. Leaving your family to join a popular war and taking on revolutionary tasks is a more radical decision to make for girls than for boys because of expectations that people holds in relation to women’s role. As Kampwirth argues entering a revolutionary cause is an “action that was consistent with men’s traditional gender roles but inconsistent with women’s” (2002:152). Women participating in a revolutionary group must make a break with earlier socialization, values and the way of life taught by her family, whereas male roles are reinforced when a man enters a revolutionary movement (Barth 2002).

The women that I interviewed have three common features except for their participation in the PCP. First of all, they were young at the time they entered, second, they were recruited while attending university, and third, the larger number of my informants came from economical advanced families. Because my interviewees were young at the time they entered it meant that they were more likely not to have a family of their own to care for. Only one of my informants, Marisol, had children when she left the children with their father to enter the PCP. All of my interviewees highlighted how they came from a family background of liberal parents with regards to a woman’s “place” in society. The university worked as a space for

¹² Kampwirth focus on the guerrilla movements in the Central American countries Nicaragua, El Salvador, the region of Chiapas in Mexico and Cuba.

women to get in contact with student organizations which opened up the opportunity for contact with revolutionary groups, such as the PCP. Most women in Latin America that joined revolutionary movements trace their affiliation to the movement back to the university, a space where they often have enjoyed some freedom, according to Kampwirth (2002). All of the women I interviewed had a university education and acknowledge the importance of university in their encounter with the party. It was also common for the members of the PCP to be blue collar workers, 86% of them lived with an income below the legal wage (Kampwirth 2002). The low level of economical income is confirmed by Portugal (2008) saying that the majority of the members in the PCP came from poor backgrounds. My fieldwork only partially confirms this; two of my informants (Fiorella and Maria) were from the lowest class, as Fiorella says about entering the PCP “*I had nothing, I had nothing to lose economically [by entering]*”. The other women can be divided into two categories, two belonged to the middle class (Maya and Andrea) and the other two (Marisol and Amanda) were from the upper-class. This categorization is done based on what my informant told in the interviewees on how they placed themselves. The majority of the students in the PCP were not from elite families but rather they came from a peasant background, being poor urban families that had recently migrated from the countryside to study (Kampwirth 2002). Rocagliolo notice in his meeting with the female prisoners from PCP, that they were not as white as the members of MRTA but that the majority of them were mestizo (mixture of indigenous and Spanish) with a university background and a provincial accent (2008:226). Many members of the PCP came from peasant backgrounds and were the first in their family to get university education (McClintock 2001). In the literature, the guerrilla movements are often portrayed to consist of either students or peasants (Kampwirth 2002). This is unfortunate according to Kampwirth (2002), and also wrong in the case of the PCP. The PCP consisted of both and to an equal degree, according to Portugal (2008)¹³. The PCP had a large group of women coming from peasant backgrounds with a university education.

The PCP opened up a space for female participation and had a political discourse of wanting to change the old system of discrimination towards women. These two factors appealed to women from different sectors in society and especially to women that did not have their professional expectations met in the job market because of gender discrimination (Portugal 2008:37-38). Professional women were encouraged by the PCP to enter the party and to break

¹³ “By occupation, 22,2% were student from universities or technical institutes, 19, 7% peasants” (Portugal 2008:22).

with traditional societal gender norms. El Diaro, a “senderista¹⁴ newspaper” supporting the ideology of the PCP, contained messages to professional women, saying that the only way for a professional woman to apply her knowledge was through revolutionary activity (Portugal 2008):

“The problem of the training and performance of professionals in general and of women in particular gets worse [...] [...] The crisis of the Peruvian society [...] denies them a future. What can professional women expect from this old system? In synthesis: nothing [...] the only way of a professional women is to assume the role that intellectual history demands; to participate in the revolution. Young students see their future cut short, that the old state denies them the possibility to develop as professionals. (2008:37).

Although gender discrimination is not the reason my subjects engaged in the revolutionary cause, the lack of professional opportunities may have affected their interest to fight against the old system. Barrig (1993) in Portugal argues that “frustration among professional women was the backdrop that explains the appeal to women of Sendero’s violent alternative” (2008:38). Opposite to the Peruvian society the PCP offered women an opportunity to use the knowledge they had acquired at university and saw them as useful contributors to the revolution. The PCP offered women a space to act out their frustration over the old system and even more important it encouraged them to participate in changing the old system into a “New democracy”. Even though there existed some common features between the women in the PCP was the members of the PCP not a homogenous group.

5.2 The feeling of gender equality

According to my data the women I interviewed experienced a feeling of being treated equal to their male co-combatants within the PCP. My interviewees argue that both women and men joined the party on equal terms and everybody participated in all areas of the party. My interviewees say that it did not matter if you were female or male in the party, what was important was your commitment to the revolution. Fiorella, one of my informants states; “*we were united in equal conditions; we have been treated in this organization as equal, [...] we*

¹⁴ Nickname used on the member of the PCP.

have participated and we have been active militants [...] we have done it in equal conditions, not been discriminated. That is true, we have not been discriminated". All the other women that I interviewed agreed with Fiorella, they all seemed to hold a joint experience of gender equality within the PCP.

In the PCP there was it a high percentage of female fighters. The estimated percentage differ among academics, Starn (1995) estimated the number to be about one third of the total members in 1990, higher than any other legal left party in Peru at the time. It is also known that women filled positions at all levels, holding eight out of 19 slots in the Central Committee (Starn 1995) and at the same time has almost always had a woman as their second leader in rank. The first women to hold this position was Augusta la Torre and now the second leader in rank is Elena Iparraguirre. Giving women opportunities to participate in the PCP appealed to young educated women at the time; women that thought that by joining the PCP they could transform society and their success was almost guaranteed (Starn 1995). According to Elise F. Barth's (2002) study on women in guerrilla movements in seven African countries - Eritrea, Ethiopia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa and Algeria – were female soldiers convinced that by revolution could they change their lives. Although there are great cultural differences within Africa and also between Africa and Peru is there one important similarity regarding female soldiers. It is that in both Africa and Latin America female soldiers challenge gender norms when they choose to engage in war (Barth 2002:2 and Kampwirth 2002:152). Cross-culturally and historically, combat has been reserved for men, a test of masculinity; however female soldiers have also been on the battlefield throughout the world at most times (Barth 2002:1-2). Marisol, one of my informants, argues that:

"[In the PCP] women organized women. The women got to know their rights. That they did not have to do what their husband told them [...] Women got to know their rights because of the work of the party. [...] These [poor] women had greater reasons, to support the work of the party, develop the war to change the society" (Marisol).

As Marisol stated the PCP allowed the particularly lower class women a possibility to fight back and gave women the possibility to "strike back violent[ly] at the traditional system that oppressed them" (Gonzalez-Perez 2006:321). Even if there was no need to strike back

violently against the oppressing society per se, there does seem to have been a need to participate, as expressed by Fiorella;

“Break with these backwardly feudal ideas about the woman. That women are subservient to the man, that women do not have the capacity to decide [...] I wanted to change this old system. So that women would not have to be oppressed by their husband or the society because she is a woman. Women are also able to make changes, have political consciousness, and advance with Marxist ideas”.

As Fiorella says, women were also politically conscious, having a desire to change society, to leave behind feudal ideas. My interviewees declared that they did not see the PCP as a way to acquire personal gains and personal liberation as women, but they saw the party as an instrument that allowed them to participate in the social change and transformation of the society into a Marxist one. *“I had a wish to transform the society; I wanted what was good for the society. [...] I do not think that I have felt empowered in the party because I grabbed a weapon that gave me responsibility. It was not like that, that is not the perspective”* (Fiorella).

According to Kampwirth (2002) and Wenche Hauge (2008) women in general join guerrilla groups for the same reason as men and almost never to end gender inequality. “In general, the reasons women gave for joining the guerrilla struggle were similar to those given by men: to end dictatorship, to end exploitation of the poor or indigenous (or both), or to create more just countries for their children. Gender justice was almost never a factor in their initial decisions to join” (Kampwirth 2002:8). Kampwirth’s (2002) findings and my own are similar on this point; as illustrated above my interviewees claim to have been fighting for “el pueblo” and not for gender equality.

5.2.1 Mass-mobilization and ideology

Two aspects affected the enrollment of women and the sentiment of gender equality in revolutionary movements; one, the implementation of a policy of mass-mobilization and, two, an ideology opening up for changes in the gender pattern. I will start by taking a closer look at the first one, mass-mobilization. Kampwirth (2002) argues that a joint feeling of gender equality among female combatants is typical in revolutionary groups that have had a policy of mass-mobilization, like the PCP, among other Latin American revolutionary groups (like FSLN,

FMLN and EZLN¹⁵). There are different reasons for allowing women to enter revolutionary struggles. One of them is lack of males, either because there is lack of willingness to fight among the male population or because of a low male population (Barth 2002:14). Another one is that by including women in a revolutionary movement, women can be used as symbols of the revolution to justify the struggle as representatives of the most downtrodden in society (Barth 2002:14). However women can also be included in revolutionary groups because of a wish to obtain as much support as possible. Guzmán saw the importance of the active participation of women in the PCP, saying in one of his speeches that “the success of our revolution hinges on the active participation of women” (Gonzales- Perez 2006:321). Also my informants saw their participation as crucial to the success of the PCP:

“Because we [the women] are half of the world’s population, without our [the women’s] participation it would be impossible for the revolution to triumph, without our participation it would be impossible that a party could take power. [...] I feel proud to have been part of this process, I feel proud to follow the example given by all the fellow [female] companions that have participated in this [...] it is a milestone for women’s political participation” (Fiorella)

Fiorella underlines the importance of female participation in the PCP. She says that the level of female participation is something to be proud of, because without female participation it would be impossible for a party to take power. The strategy of mass-mobilization that the PCP had is opposite of the Cuban revolution where there was focused strategy, which meant that only people that were considered “needy” were welcome to join the revolution (Kampwirth 2002:127). The PCP on the other hand did not discriminate and happily recruited all of those willing to join (Kampwirth 2002). Isabel Coral Cordero argues however differently referring to mobilization of women, accepted into the PCP. Cordero stated two specific qualities; “capacity of leadership and readiness to give oneself over to the party, to the point of renouncing responsibilities such as work and study and renouncing familial and affective ties” (2005:349). PCP put effort into recruiting women from faculties that were dominated by female students like social science, education, nursing and obstetrics (Cordero 2005). It is not necessarily contradictory to focus recruitment on qualifications that are considered pertinent to the revolution and have open admission. Mass-mobilization in guerilla

¹⁵ FSLN; Frente Sandista de Liberación, from Nicaragua, FMLN Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional from El Salvador and EZLN Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional from Mexico

movements affected a large number of Latin American women positively in the sense of gender equality (Kampwirth 2002:32). It meant that male combatants needed to suppress their sexism and open to the notion of welcoming women to join the party, because it was in the movements' interest to suppress sexist feelings to increase the number of members (Kampwirth 2002:32). This is not to say that the male combatants were not sexist; rather, it was in their interest to suppress it to gain more supporters and combatants.

The second factor that effected the feeling of gender equality is the fact that the PCP was a Marxist- Leninist party. According to Elise Fredrikke Barth (2002) it is likely that the ideology of the movement plays an important role in the groups that women join. Barth states that women are often found in Marxist- Leninist movements (2002:12). The feeling of gender equality in the PCP is not an unexpected finding compared to other articles (Barth 2002, Hauge 2010 and Stanski 2009), it seems like many Marxist- Leninist revolutions have had a significant percent of women among their combatants experiencing equality within the movements (FARC, MRTA, URNG). Codou Bop (2002) argues that groups with Marxist- Leninist ideology have the intention to end social inequality and also ask for their members to diminish inequalities between women and men; “the parties asked people to struggle against inequalities of class and sex in their daily practice. Just as training in the handling of weapons, in ideology and in theories of war were common practices, the avant-garde also encouraged sharing of household tasks” (2002:21). Amanda states that inside the PCP she was treated with respect and had the same rights as the men. She was also not excluded from making decisions:

“Right now I do not remember any circumstance where I was treated as a woman. You [can] not, because you are a woman! I do not remember any circumstance like that. I guess there was but I do not remember. I felt that I was treated with respect; I was given the same rights. [...] I never felt treated as if I had “no voice, no vote”
(Amanda)

Thus, the feeling of gender equality within Marxist- Leninist groups is connected to the fact that these groups had an ideology that allowed for a change in gender roles. Women therefore see that they fought two wars at the same time, one according to the party program and another fight against traditional structures suppressing women (Barth 2002:13). My interviewees on the other hand did not see themselves as having fought two wars. Although

they experienced equality in relation to their male combatants, the struggle for gender equality was not their reason to participate in the PCP. My interviewees say that they did not join the party because of a need to break with “macho society” (Fiorella), or for gender empowerment (Marisol). My informants on the other hand claims that things like gender questions, ethnical and racial questions would all be taken care of when the problem of social class was solved. This way of thinking about gender issues is not exceptional, but quite similar to other Marxist-Leninist movements in both Africa and Latin America (Barth 2002 and Kampwirth 2002). As Barth highlights “Marxist theory looks at class as the basic unit for analysis. Rather than being discussed as a group of particular needs, women have been subsumed under the class analysis, and feminists argue that class-based capitalist oppression is not synonymous with the oppression of women” (2002:12), this was also the case in the PCP. When gender questions were discussed it was on a political level with the idea that a solution to the class solution would solve the gender issue, Guzmán stated that “the struggle for the emancipation of women is part of the liberation of the proletariat – this is the Communist way of understanding the problem” (Coral 2005:352).

Although there has been a degree of experienced gender equality from my interviewees’ point of view in the PCP is, the picture more complex. According to Cordero (2005) women who were able to act as men were celebrated inside the party. At the same time techniques of gender humiliation that stigmatized the feminine remained a practice within the party. Words like “war as the work of *macho*” and naming their male opponents things like *maricones* (fags) and *mujercitas* (little women) was commonly used throughout the war (2005:349). According to Coral, the PCP tactic to disgrace enemy female leaders was even harder, calling them “prostitutes, women of ill repute, and lovers of male leaders” (2005:350). This stigmatization of femininity is contradictory to the PCP’s ideology and program that put significant effort in recruiting women. The party also constituted a women’s committee within the party¹⁶ (Cordero2005). Cordero claims that the acceptance of women in the PCP “did not imply changes in gender relations” and that “traditional gender relations were reproduced and even reinforced” (2005:35). This was done in a patriarchal way, where the leader in the PCP controlled the private lives of its member, such as where they lived, life style choices and their choice of mates (Cordero 2005). This knowledge presented by Cordero (2005) is not consistent with my own data. My interviewees claim that they felt respected inside the PCP

¹⁶ Movimiento Popular de Mujeres, The popular women’s movement

and claimed to have enjoyed respect and gratitude for their contribution. However there might be inconsistencies between the women I interviewed and other women in the party. This conflicting experience might be because of the position the women held / hold in the party, their relation to the party today, level of education etc. Still as Kampwirth argues, even though women's emancipation was a goal for revolutionary movements this does not mean that these movements were perfectly egalitarian or free of contradictions (2002:3).

5.3 Gender equality or female participation on male terms?

When my interviewees spoke of equality within the party, they thought of equality as having shared the work load, having been given the right to speak out and given the possibility to participate at all levels. Maria stated some of these components in her interview:

“PCP men and women were on equal terms. Women were even directing [...]. There were many women incorporated, they had important roles, and they [the women] were on three different levels [...]. The [party] politics were to promote women, so that they could take on responsibility, equal rights [...] there were no limitations because of our gender, there was none.”

Women in revolutionary armies are expected to act as men and *sameness* instead of *difference* in gender roles are encouraged (Barth 2002:15). In one way it appears as it was similar to the PCP, that women had to take on new roles, leaving behind their femininity, putting on uniforms, learning to handle weapons and military strategy etc. Cordero (2005) argues that the women in the PCP stepped in as soldiers first when they were needed because of the large number of male casualties; this indicates that women were not seen as valuable soldiers initially, but only when the war demanded their participation. Cordero (2005) also says that women were encouraged to act as men, to be brave macho warriors. My findings on this point are different from Barth's (2002) and Cordero's (2005), but similar to Hauge's (2006). Hauge states that in Guatemalan guerilla groups female soldiers reported “great generosity and understanding from their male soldiers during tough periods” (2008:306). This is comparable to my interviewees' experience and Maria's statement below.

“Everybody participated in all parts, there was no differences [...] it is the problem of physics, maybe I as a woman could not lift a lot, nothing else., There were no other differences, in all the other parts you perform, perform with the particularity [of being a woman or man] but you perform”.

Maria’s statement can be interpreted as if in the PCP women were fighting with their female characteristics and did not have to act as men. It also can be seen as an expression of the *sameness* that Barth (2002) found in guerrilla movements.

Not only women’s traditional gender roles had to change for women to participate as equals in the revolutionary party. For women to fight alongside men there was also a need to change male gender roles. To make men participate in domestic work like cleaning, washing dishes and repairing cloths, for example:

Question: “How do you change [the mindset of] men, to make them respect women, so that they do not only think that a woman’s place is in the house?”

Maria: “Men just like the women agree with the revolution. [...] They agree with a militant communist party, where women and men have the same rights. It is a process of transforming our ideas; we are a product of the feudal system, where the women are owned. So we have to change our mentality, it is also a process, it is not easy, it is not easy. It is an ideological debate, political, and a struggle. We are planting, criticizing, if I make a mistake I will know my mistake and I will correct others.”

Teaching new members and supporters about the politics of the party were done in sessions of “criticism” and “self-criticism”. These sessions were common in PCP as well as in other Marxist revolutionary groups in Africa (Barth 2002). In this session members were asked to evaluate their own contribution to the struggle and other’s contribution and actions. According to Barth (2002) it was a practice that benefited women, in the way that it made life easier, women could criticize men for underestimating women’s contribution and women could be criticized for going to the kitchen too often. Fiorella speaks of an incident where her group had to criticize a male combatant because he only wanted the women to help the revolution by cooking and taking care of the children:

The man said to his wife: *“ok, it is ok; you can help the revolution, but by cooking, only preparing the food and take care of our children. I will be in the revolution.”*

Fiorella says that; *“This was not the idea of the revolution. [...] We had to talk to him, tell him that she is equal to you, you are in the revolution in equal conditions.”*

According to my informants the sessions of “self-criticism” and “criticism” help the women inside the PCP, since it opened up a space for women to obtain support from other women and men. Still, Marisol says that it is not like the transformation in how to treat women and men as equals happened over night; it was part of the party politics and little by little it changed. Jane Fonda (2003) however argues that women in organizations like the PCP might have left their traditional sex roles but they have only been transferred to similar roles in the terrorist organization. “Rather than being liberated from traditional sex roles, female terrorists replace the restriction of marriage with a fanatic attachment to a leader or cause. [...] In negating conventional roles, they turn their traditional roles against themselves” (Fonda 2003:164). My data shows something similar, female fighters in one way left traditional gender roles in the sense that they put on uniforms, carried and used weapons and participated in the same tasks in the popular war as men did. However, my interviewees did not stop devoting themselves to someone constituted as worthy of their sacrifice. Although it might have not been a “fanatic attachment” (2003:164), there was a total devotion from my interviewees to what they saw as a worthy cause. The aspect of devotion will be discussed in next chapter.

5.4 The importance of education

Having gained new knowledge and consciousness about the reality of society, my interviewees felt they had to take action against the repression they witnessed in society. As Maya expressed in her interview, she could not stand around any longer and not take action: *“One matures politically, I understood the necessity to fight, we could not just talk, we had to take action [...] It is the best period in my life, it was like opening your mind, taking away the blindfold from your eyes and see the reality.”* Maya continues saying that she saw how she could change the system, and now the importance of her contribution was significant in the betterment of society. *See that you can change the system, change the reality, that you can fight for your village, you can serve it [the village]”*. My informants read and studied politics

of their country, they studied Marxist articles at the university, but also the political programs of the PCP. With this new knowledge Marisol obtained an understood that made her chose to act:

“I wanted to be a guerrilla soldier [...] I had studied, I had read, studied the conception of the materialism discussion, the conception of Marx and Engels. Look, do you know, it was like taking away a spider web from my eyes, I understood the reality better. So I recognized the need to change society”.

The knowledge that the members of the PCP acquired was influenced by academia and philosophy; the PCP’s social criticism had its origin among scholars like Marx, Lenin and Mao (Starn 1995:407). Universities like the UNSCH served both as a founding ground for the ideology of the PCP, but also as an arena for recruiting (Portugal 2008). All of my informants have university backgrounds, and most of them were recruited by the PCP at a university setting. The awaking that it was for my interviewees to study, made them see themselves as responsible to make changes. As Maria states: *“In my life I have had a greater clarity and a higher level of understanding [...] I left behind personal interests to enter the struggle where your know that you life can be over in any moment”* (Maria).

All my interviewees speak of an awakening because of their studies, and with the awakening came a felt responsibility to take action and make positive changes in society. From Fonda’s (2005) statement below we get the impression that the members of the PCP saw themselves elevated above the rest of the society, intellectually superior and critical of other intellectuals. Fonda argues, “They saw themselves as being consciously advanced and intellectually superior. [...] They thought of themselves as the beacons of world revolution and the vanguards of global communism. They sneered at other intellectuals whose weapons were no more than pens” (Fonda 2003:163). Whether my interviewees sneered at other intellectuals or not, I cannot say based on my own interviews. But my informants saw themselves as having reached a greater clarity in life, as the statements above by Maria and Marisol illustrate. In earlier years the city of Ayacucho was illiterate and isolated from the national political arena dominated by the traditional elite (McClintock 2001). The university expansion in the area contributed to changing this; young people were able to secure education and learn about the world and also became aware of the gross social and economic inequalities within their country (McClintock 2001). Maya, Maria and Marisol in their statements above stated that

they joined because of through their studies they reached greater knowledge and clarity. Because of their new understanding of the world they had the responsibility to take action. The constitution of “el pueblo” as worthy cause did not accrue without a relationship with the party program, but in relationship with it. As Guzmán made it clear in his speech “We Are the Initiators” the PCP was fighting for the masses, the peasants, the working class, namely “el pueblo”. Guzmán refers to this in his speech; “but triumph is ours. The masses will win. The peasantry will rise, and the proletariat will lead it. The communist party will be in command, and the red flag will be raised for eternity” (Guzmán 2005:328-329). There is doubt that the PCP claimed that it was state of the poor that was the main reason to start a revolution. The PCP fought to end social classes.

5.5 Deviation

Although several academics including, Starn 1995, Portugal 2008 and Cordero 2005, argue like Fonda (2003) that the women in the PCP were part of a patriarchal party, my interviewees felt treated as equal to their male co-combatants. My informants felt treated with respect and claimed that their time in the PCP was the best time in their lives. The incompatibility between my findings and other literature on the topic might have several explanations. One factor that might have influenced is the differences in methods, for instance the methods used by Portugal (2008) are different from mine. I conducted fieldwork and engaged in direct contact with my interviewees, while Portugal (2008) on the other hand relied on testimonies from the Truth Commission (TRC). Using the TRC testimonies Portugal (2008) was able to get information from a larger number of women affiliated with the PCP, since there is a total of 21 recorded testimonies¹⁷ from female members of the PCP. Another factor that might have influenced my findings is that all my informants had higher education at the time they joined the party and had vital positions inside the PCP. A third aspect is that - as mention in the methodology chapter - I ask my interviewees about past experiences, experiences that happened before they have spent more than 15 years imprisoned. Also my informants’ perspective on felt gender equality might have been different if they were lower ranked women or women that did not have higher education before joining the PCP. My finding

¹⁷ All of the women were imprisoned at the time of recording; there are no testimonies of women not captured by the state authorities.

shows the experience of six women in the PCP who all report a certain level of felt gender equality because of their affiliation to the party.

The important aspect to extract from this chapter is that my interviewees felt treated as equal to their male co-combatants, if they were equal according to a western point of view on gender equality or not, is not included in my discussion. I argue based on my interviews that the PCP with its flaws referring to gender equality represented a political space open to female political participation on different levels. My interviewee saw themselves as having been treated as equals within the party.

Chapter 6 Second finding:

The fight for the underdog

Chapter 5 treats the backdrop to explaining the sacrifice and devotion that my interviewees did for “el pueblo”. In the following chapter I will continue the discussion from chapter five as well as elaborate on my second finding. My second finding is that the women in the PCP only left some aspect of the female habitus. However, they continue the tradition and understanding of women as the devotion gender. I argue as a result of constituting “el pueblo” as worthy of my interviewees’ devotion, they acted in conformity with a popular understanding of what it means to be a woman.

6.1 Serving “el pueblo”

“My life could serve for something more, a greater cause” (Maya)

Maya’s statement above is characteristic of the comments from my interviewees. There is a focus throughout my interviews about how my informants served and gave it all for “el pueblo”; the poor people of the masses. My informants used words like “servir” (in English, serve) and “entregar” (in English, give over or surrender) to show how strongly involved and committed they were and are to the party. All of the five members¹⁸ emphasize how their involvement in the party has to be seen in relation to a wish to serve, a complete involvement, an absolute “serving” of “el pueblo”. Marisol says that her commitment to the party was complete. *“My ideal, my goal is communism, these are present in my heart, in my head, in my brain and they are still my goals. For a revolutionary, a communist, it has to be total interest, to serve “el pueblo” with all your heart”* (Marisol). It was during the popular war, and to a certain extent still is today, an unconditional “serving”, where one gives everything for “el pueblo” and the revolutionary war being the means. As Fiorella says, it is always about giving more, giving more until you give your life for the revolution: *“It is not about getting benefits, it is about giving more (entregar más), give from your time, it is breaking with the old society and dedicate you absolutely to the organization, with the risks that it implies [death]”*. From my informants’ point of view their commitment to the party was total, they engaged in a

¹⁸ Amanda claims to have been a supporter of the PCP, not a member.

revolutionary war. The complete surrender of your life in the PCP that I found in my interviews is consistent with what Gorriti (2005) explains as the action of “the quota”, a term that was introduced in 1981 in the fourth plenary session held by the Central Committee. “The quota” is “the willingness, indeed the expectation, of offering one’s life when the party asks for it” (Gorriti 2005:339). In the PCP members evidently gave their lives to the party, but this in itself is not unusual in communist parties (Gorriti 2005:339). Still, in most communist parties the self-sacrifice is restricted to certain situations and not a total resignation of one’s life, like it seems to have been in the PCP (Gorriti 2005:339). All my interviewees spoke about how they gave their lives for the revolution. Andrea said:

“Give your life and transform your society, the long road that communism is, you will not see it yourself, but serve so that there will be no more exploitation. [...]. What you give (entega) is always growing, until you give your life, for this road”.

Andrea expresses in this quote how she gave her life for the transformation to communism, knowing that she would not live long enough to reap the benefits. According to Gorriti, the members of the PCP from the instant they gave their vow - the vote to the party agreed to “the quota” - “the militants no longer owned their lives”, therefore they had to start to “prepare for death, renounce life” (2005:339). Gorriti’s findings correspond to my results; my interviewees from the PCP saw their involvement in the PCP as demanding a total renunciation of their own life for the revolutionary war. The total surrender of one’s life for the revolution, for the betterment of society as a whole - in other words “el pueblo” - brought them joy, happiness and meaning to their lives. Maya explained how serving “el pueblo” gave her faith in her ability to change the society she perceives her own involvement as the greatest thing she has accomplished in life.

“All this given to serve my “pueblo”, the Peruvian “pueblo” really makes me feel good. [...]. These years [that I have] given, have been valuable.[...] It was the best period in my life, it was like opening your mind, uncover you eyes and see reality, and see that you can change the system, that you can change the reality, that you can fight for your “pueblo” and serve it” (Maya).

Marisol holds a similar view, she expressed relief when she left her old life behind to join the PCP to become a “full-time” revolutionary. She sacrificed what she cared about the most for

the cause: *“There is a satisfaction when you leave, sacrifice, leave what you care the most about, to fight for something that is going to be great”* (Marisol). Marisol had children and was married when she joined the PCP. Marisol’s ability to leave her children might seem shocking. It is hard to imagine that a mom can do such a thing, but at the same time it is expected for a man to enter the army when society demands it. The women that made the tough decision to leave their children to engage in the PCP are severely criticized in Peruvian and International media and by academics – describing them as asexual, dehumanized, heartless (Portugal 2008 and Marisol). Marisol saw it differently, she was fighting for her children by participating in the PCP. Maria saw it the same way: *“our children are part of “el pueblo”, that is how it is”*. Marisol said it was hard to leave her children but she knew they would be fine with their dad, it was her duty to take care of all Peru’s children. *“I had millions of children, I had thousands of children”*. Some tears fell when Marisol talked about leaving her children, saying that:

“We can tell you how complex it is to make the revolution, the revolution is harsh and complex, it is wonderful, it is a large enterprise but it is complex and harsh too”.

In the poem written by Iparraguirre to her children cited in the introduction chapter, she explains why she left them. Iparraguirre claims that she had what other people needed, and she felt that she needed to give “el pueblo” what they lacked. This poem is referred to by Maria, one of my informants as words that describe how they felt about leaving the children, *“there has been an objective and goals of course, these have attracted us, but there have been costs, that is what we call it, costs, of course we care about our children”* (Maria). Fonda argues that women who entered “terrorist groups” gave up traditional roles as caregivers to look after the society at large, saying; “rather than revising the traditional female gender roles of caregiving and nurturing, terrorist women have played these same roles with greater fervor in a different direction. [...] Instead of the responsibilities of motherhood, they were burdened with passionate concern for society at large” (Fonda 2003:164). These women gave it all as they saw it, even though it had its costs, gave it all to fight for “el pueblo” wholeheartedly. Giving it all to fight gave some of my interviewees a feeling of been appreciated and respected for their sacrifice. Fiorella expresses that she was met with gratefulness by the masses and this made her feel good and satisfied with her surrender and devotion:

“I felt good, I felt good, I felt respected for the work, and for the surrender [that I did], this is what one receives when entering a revolutionary action and you [see] in “el pueblo” how people that you fight for show you gratefulness. [...] it is satisfying to be part of an organization that is doing something good for “el pueblo” (Fiorella).

Amanda was the only one of my interviewees that did not mention personal self-sacrifice for the party; she was never a member of PCP, but supported their ideas. What she does highlight in this aspect is how much she admired the surrender of the members of the PCP, she said *“in general it got my attention [...] how there are people that are able to surrender their life for a cause that will not give them personal benefits”* (Amanda). It is also interesting to see from Amanda’s perspective that 18 years spend in prison are not seen from her point of view as sacrifice for “el pueblo”.

6.2 “Devotion remains at the heart of modern female identity”¹⁹

Throughout my thesis I argue that my data illustrates that the women in the PCP, affiliated with a Marxist- Leninist party experienced gender equality and chose not to devote themselves to their partner or husband but constituted “el pueblo” as their subject of devotion. Miller argues that devotion has to be seen in relation to Bourdieus term habitus, and through Miller’s book he illustrate that devotion is transcendent through history. Claiming that “the ‘habitus’ that underlies the desire for sacrifice is so powerful that the main response to the critique of each subject of devotion is to find an alternative subject” (Miller 1998:127). Miller argues that when feminism knocked out women’s devotion to a patriarch, a total devotion to a women’s infant took over as subject of devotion (Miller 1998). According to Miller (1998) this illustrate that event though the subject of devotion changes the devotional need in the female habitus persist.

Miller claims that there exists “a relationship between an individual and a larger context understood as society or a social space, within which the possibilities for individual expression may derive their meaning and potential” (Miller 1998:140). When the women in the PCP made the decision to take up arms it might have seems like their left behind the

¹⁹ (Miller 1998:110).

traditional gender roles as care givers, and entered in to a new space traditionally seen as a male space. My informants made a radical break with the Peruvian perception of women and the perception of women's place in society. Why the war is not a women place Balbuena argues is because the feminine body is seen to generate life and not to generate death (2007:325). Balbuena claims therefore that the violence committed by a woman is seen as more disgusting than the same violence committed by a man (2007:325). This was also the case in Peru, and was the reason for the critic of the female members of PCP as insensitive and nymphets participation in the "senderista" orgies (Balbuena 2007:326). The Peruvian press was just not capable of understand that women could commit such un-feminine acts (Balbuena 2007:326).

According to Bourdieu is there a "social construction of the body" (2001:7). Bourdieu argues that the division of things and activities according to the oppositions between the masculine and the feminine is arbitrary (2001:7). However, inscribed in a system of homologous oppositions, it all gets an aura of objective and subjective necessity (Bourdieu 2001:7). These oppositions are inscribed in the universal applicable thought records, at the same time they are "naturalized" and becomes inscribed in a system of differences, that seems natural in its appearance (Bourdieu 2001:8). We apprehend the social world and its division, the social constructed separation between the genders as natural and self-evident (Bourdieu 2001). Women as life givers and men as life takers or women as peaceful and men as war like are part of this thought schema. So when certain women in one society step out of their gender expectations based on a social understanding of woman, they break with the culture that is seen as natural. Balbuena (2007) final argument is that the armed conflict in Peru showed that women and men could conduct violent acts and participate in war and this questioned the myths of women as peaceful and men as war like. Never the less Balbuena (2007) argues, that is seems to be a stereotype that lives on and is still valid, that women are the peaceful gender. However this rather shows how persistent the female habitus and cultural stereotypes about feminine and masculine is. Even though some women left behind certain aspects of the female habitus and take on new roles, other expectations connected to what it is to be a woman does not change.

Although the women in the PCP did break with certain aspects of the traditional gender expectations they carried on living out another aspect of these expectations; devotion. Women's need to devote themselves persists as an important aspect of the female habitus.

Miller claims that the women in Northern London substituted their partner as the object of devotion to the object of contemporary devotion, the infant. “Work is given up, sleep is given up, virtually any independent existence is given up [for the infant], in the desire not to interfere with ‘nature’” (Miller 1998:124). The total involvement in the PCP that the women participated in is similar. The women in the PCP did what the war demanded; everything else was put on hold. They left families, communities, university, work and their own children to commitment totally to the war - nothing less than total commitment was acceptable. It was a total surrender of everything for the purpose of improving the subject of devotion. As Marisol says “one could not be riding two horses at the same time” she had to choose, her involvement in the PCP or commitment to her own family. The devotional duties had to come before personal progress.

An object of devotion have the purpose as an inalienable object and becomes the objectification of what are alleged to be permanent values that transcend and recast the sacrifice, so that in the future the image is ennobled and maintained (Miller 1998:130). These objects have a symbolic value that is constituted of a larger social group (Miller 1998:130). “It is the memorial as inalienable object that then transforms a past war into a rite of sacrifice” (Miller 1998:130). If made relevant for the war in Peru these objects hold a permanent value to illustrate and transcend the sacrifice that has been done in the war. Miller states that “the more blood that has been shed on their (the subject of devotion) behalf the more sacred they become” (1998:130). These objects of devotion become “part of the objectification of larger social units within which the self is subsumed” (Miller 1998:132). What is valuable and an acceptable inalienable gift is constituted through culture values connected to the female habitus and commonly agreed upon, inseparable from the structure, produced and reproduced by women and men in the social group. The love and devotion that is part of the female habitus are shown to the subject of devotion through the inalienable gifts, like the life of my informants.

6.3 The Paradox

The PCP offered a political space for young, educated, provincial women to engage and participate. As shown in chapter five my informants experience equality within the party and they were well educated. Kampwirth argued that only a particular sort of woman can join

guerrilla movements. My informants are women that did step out of the traditional expected gender perception of women. They engaged in activities that are not seen as a feminine, speaking out with a public voice, taking up space in the public atmosphere and participating in violence acts. My interviewees opposed the Peruvian female stereotypy at the time, claiming their position by fighting voluntarily for a cause they believed in. Even though the position of women in the PCP is contested, the level of female participation did draw attention. According to my informants they were women that believed in a cause and stood up to fight for it. My interviewees claim that they no longer were willing to accept the injustice that they saw in society and to a certain level experienced. Portugal states that the women in the PCP “had a strong concern for others and a sense of duty, a personal mandate of doing something to change the unequal and unjust situation in which the majority of people lived” (2008:31). At the same time political affiliation was part of natural growth for a certain group of intellectuals in Peru (Portugal 2008:31).

In Miller’s book he states that there is a striking paradox “that it was precisely those women who had become most assertive about the centrality of career and autonomous self-development for women [...] These women are reborn as mothers [...] refusing the idea that this should be in any way subservient to a male figure, is replaced by an equal assertiveness [...] [That] nothing of their own desires should interfere with the obsession about the proper way to bring up their infant” (1998:125). What Miller (1998) claims is that the women most preoccupied with not being subservient to a patriarch, were the women that replaced it to an obsession about the proper way of bring up the child. This Miller sees as a striking paradox. I claim it is similar to the women in the PCP. I claim it is a paradox that my female informants had a joint experience of gender equality did not end their devotional habitus but merely changed their devotion to a total surrender of their life for “el pueblo”.

The paradox is that the PCP offered a space of experienced gender equality for my informants, where women and men fought side-by-side, a space where women were able to leave behind the traditional gender expectations and find new roles in an untraditional setting. However, women did not step-out of their female habitus. At the most, it only happened partially. Although there are some differences and changes in women’s image is it important according to Bourdieu, to acknowledge the “constancy of the structure of the relationship of domination [...] which is maintained beyond the substantive differences in condition linked to moments in history and positions in social space” (2001:102). Even though the women

experienced that they entered into a new space, where they saw differences in how they were treated, in opposition to the outside, they did not fully change their roles as women. Unconscious of their internalized habitus these women spearheaded a tradition as the devotional gender. “This experience apprehends the social world and its arbitrary division, starting with the socially constructed division between the sexes, as natural, self-evident, and as such contains a full recognition of legitimacy” (Bourdieu 2001:9).

Chapter 7 Concluding remarks

My thesis shows that although women engaged in a revolutionary party, fighting as soldiers alongside men in a revolutionary group and enjoying a sense of gender emancipation and gender equality, the image of woman as the devotional gender is still maintained. A woman's desire to devote herself to someone constituted as a divine worthy cause in need of their sacrifice has persisted throughout history. Although the subject of devotion has changed accordingly to political changes (Miller 1998:118), the devotional habitus has remained within our perception of women. The six women in the PCP that I interviewed state that they engaged in the "popular war" to fight for "el pueblo", which they claim was worthy and in need of their sacrifice.

My first finding is that although several academics (e.g. Starn 1995, Portugal 2008, Cordero 2005) argue that the women in the PCP were part of a patriarchal party. My interviewees felt treated as equal to their male co-combatants. My informants felt treated with respect and claimed that their time in the PCP was the best time in their lives. Barth (2002) argues that *sameness* is valued above *differentness* in relation to gender in guerrilla movements, and that this is opposite to the society at large. My interviewees were able, expected and allowed to do the same activities as men; this was a new experience for them. Although my interviewees might not have felt suppressed in the Peruvian society before they joined the PCP, the women claim to have been enjoyed more gender equality inside the party than before joining the PCP. The reason for this stated by my informants is that since there was a war going on, there was not much time to think about what female and male activities were, everybody had to participate regardless of their gender. A second factor that influenced the felt gender equality is that Guzmán and the PCP had an official agenda to emancipate women and women were recruited large numbers from the beginning of. Although my interviewees say they felt treated as equals to their male co-combatants, they claim that they did not fight for women's emancipation in society. My interviewees claim that their struggle was for ending inequity among social classes. In the PCP as other Marxist-Leninist groups, women's issues are subsumed under the class analysis and not given special attention (Barth 2002 and Starn 1995).

My second finding is, that engaging in the popular war against the Peruvian government demanded absoluteness in their servitude, it demanded a total devotion to the aim of the revolution - explicitly to create a “New democracy”. It was because of the awakening my informants experienced after having started a university education that they felt a responsibility to speak and act out about the inequalities they saw in society. And a revolutionary war was the only way that would lead to change according to the PCP and my interviewees. The means of violence to create a “New democracy” was supported because of this. In the popular war, the women claim to have unconditionally served the constituted subject of devotion, “el pueblo”. The sacrifices my informants made for the constituted subject of devotion was not mundane or a concrete materialistic item, as in Miller’s (1998) case. The object of devotion that my informants gave to “el pueblo” was their life, their willingness to die for the revolutionary cause. Through the object of devotion my informants strove to be in a relationship with the constituted subject of devotion, “el pueblo”. My interviewees experienced the existence of this relationship in the appreciation that they felt from “el pueblo”. There seems to be nothing more desirable to the devotees than being appreciated for their sacrifice. Being appreciated gave the women I interviewed meaning in life; they felt joy and happiness for their sacrifice because it was the wish of “el pueblo”.

7.1 The paradox

These two findings are contrasts. On one hand my informants experienced equality and *sameness* to their male co-combatants. In the PCP they left behind their traditional gender roles and participated in political life. The PCP, according to my informants, encouraged women to become active participants. To a certain extent women did participate actively. On the other hand women did as women have done throughout history, dating back to religious devotion: they devote themselves to a constituted divine, in this case “el pueblo”. This leads me to argue that there is a paradox in the engagement of my interviewees in the PCP. I found that although the PCP opened up a space of felt gender equality and possibilities for women to engage in a fight for the social improvement of Peruvian society, my interviewees were not able to construct a new understanding of the female gender role. I argue that my informants did not engage in the fight to improve their own position in society but for the betterment of “el pueblo”. My informants constituted “el pueblo” as worthy of their devotion and therefore enacted a set of dispositions attached to a traditional understanding of women.

By first impression, my interviewees appear to have left traditional gender roles behind. It was a shock to the Peruvian society that their women could take up arms and engage in war. But this was the impression that certain academics and the media had. To a certain degree it was true; women did step out of their expected space and engaged in a popular war, fighting alongside men, became military and political leaders, on local and national level. But the women in PCP were not the first ones to shift with the traditional picture of women's position in war, not in Peru and not internationally. However, taking a closer look at the women in the PCP, I find that my interviewees stepped out of the traditional gender roles only on the surface. According to Miller's theory, the devotional tradition inherited in the female habitus is not simply constructed in one historical period but is pre-historian to patriarchy, and rooted in religious devotion (1998:149). Taking a closer look on my interviewees reasons for participating, I see that they did not step out of their traditional gender roles but rather continued the tradition of women being the devotional gender, transforming the subject of devotion to a fight for a cause, "el pueblo".

7.3 Women and war

The main stream images in relation to woman and war portrays women as victims of war. That women were victims of the war in Peru is without doubt true; however, women were not only victims but also perpetrators, who fought in the war as soldiers. The case is even more complex since the women that made the decision to become members of the PCP are not only perpetrators but also victims in the war. These women have suffered from unjust trails by the Peruvian court system, degradation in newspapers and academic work, and physical abuse in prison (Amanda, Quehacer 1992 and Portugal 2008). I argue that women's active participation in war is something that academics and others working on the topic, women and war, have to take into consideration and can no longer ignore. Barth (2002) argues that a radical review of the stereotype that men go to war and women stay at home is need. As Afshar argues we have to leave behind the idea of the absence of women from the battleground (2004:43) and rather make a part of the analysis. Even more important academics and others must see the complex picture that war is not only an arena for men, but

can be an area for women as well. When leaving out women's contribution and perspective in war important aspect of war may be hidden in our analysis of war (Barth 2002).

When women and men engage in war, fighting together as soldiers the relationship between them unviable changes (Meintjes 2002:64). For the women in the PCP, the relationship changed so they experienced felt gender equality. The women in the PCP received a visibility never before seen in any political party in Peru (Cordero 2005:351), however their actions did not contribute significantly to gender changes in the Peruvian society (Balbuena 2008). Balbuena (2008) argues that the perceptions of women as peaceful persist in Peru. Even though women challenges certain gender perceptions, like participation in war, the stereotype about women as peaceful remains. Our images about war, if war is a masculine act or not, are changeable; however the image is tenacious.

My thesis is a contribution to understand the reasons why women in the PCP decided to leave traditional gender expectations and take on new roles as fighters for a communist cause, while simultaneously being unable to step out of the female habitus as the devotional gender.

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<http://www.yachana.org/research/sendero.pdf> acceded 14th of June 2010

Appendix 1

Lima, 16 de Julio de 2009

Estimado Jefe de Instituto Nacional Penitenciario:

Soy una estudiante de la Universidad de Tromsø, Noruega. En 2006 cursé mis estudios durante dos semestres en La Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. Las clases que llevé en dicha institución me inspiraron muchos deseos de regresar a Lima y hacer mi trabajo de campo en el Perú.

Mi maestría es sobre estudios de paz y conflicto, por lo que me interesa escribir mi tesis sobre las mujeres de Sendero Luminoso y sus razones personales para involucrarse en una lucha armada contra el estado del Perú.

Ahora estoy hacer mi trabajo de campo dentro del penal de Establecimiento Penitenciario de Máxima Seguridad anexo de Mujeres de Chorrillos (máxima seguridad). Por razones de mis investigaciones gustaría entrevistar a Manuel Rubén Abimael Guzmán Reinoso en el establecimiento Penal Militar de la Base Naval del Callao.

Por todo lo expuesto, solicito a Ud. se me conceda la correspondiente autorización para ingresar a la institución penal mencionada anteriormente con el fin de hacer las investigaciones pertinentes según surge de la descripción de mi proyecto, el cual adjunto.

Quedando a la espera de su respuesta, saludo a Ud. muy atte.

Kjersti Gausvik

RECIBIDA
INSTITUTO NACIONAL PENITENCIARIO
16 JULIO 2009
CALLE 100 N° 1000
LIMA

Appendix 2

Preguntas para las Senderistas en la cárcel de Santa Mónica de Chorrillos

1. ¿Qué hacía antes de conocer a Sendero Luminoso?
2. ¿En que año conoció al Sendero Luminoso la primera vez?
3. ¿Tenía experiencia política o conocimiento a partidos políticos?
4. ¿Como conocí de Sendero Luminoso?
 - a. A través de amigos, familia o otros maneras
5. ¿Qué es lo que la atrajo de esta organización?
6. ¿Cual fue la lucha más importante para usted? ¿Su asunto que valía la pena de luchar?
7. ¿Tenía razones personales para involucrase con Sendero Luminoso?
8. ¿Para usted la lucha era personal en la manera que las metas convenía a usted como persona o la lucha era para mejora la sociedad peruana, por ejemplo mejora las condiciones para los indígenas y los pobre?
9. ¿De ser parte de Sendero Luminoso se sentía empoderada como mujer?"
10. ¿Sendero Luminoso para usted fue una manera de salir sus papeles tradicionales?
11. ¿Usted se sentía que adentro la organización eran más igualdad entre los géneros que en la sociedad peruana?

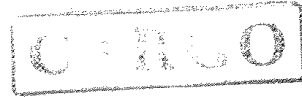
Appendix 3

60.N 2007 025625E

"AÑO DE LA UNIÓN NACIONAL FRENTE A LA CRISIS EXTERNA"



INSTITUTO NACIONAL PENITENCIARIO
OFICINA REGIONAL LIMA
SUBDIRECCIÓN DE TRATAMIENTO



Lima,

16 JUN. 2009

OFICIO N° 1135 -2009-INPE/18-05

Señora (ita)
Abog. Gloria ESTRADA TARRILLO
Directora del Establecimiento Penitenciario
Anexo de Mujeres de Chorrillos.
Presente.-

ASUNTO : Sobre facilidades de ingreso a estudiante para Realizar trabajo de investigación.

REFER. : a) Solicitud de fecha 03JUN09
b) Carta Presentación de fecha 28ABR09

Tengo el agrado de dirigirme a usted, en atención de los documentos signados en el rubro de la referencia, con relación al pedido formulado por la estudiante **KJERSTI GAUSVIK**, de la Universidad de Tromso Noruega, identificada con Pasaporte N° 26804294, a fin de realizar trabajo de investigación en el Establecimiento Penitenciario a su cargo. Al respecto, esta Subdirección considera:

1. Que, según el documento a) de la referencia, la citada estudiante manifiesta su voluntad de realizar un trabajo de investigación, para lo cual entrevistará a internas de Sendero Luminoso, a fin de desarrollar su estudio de Paz y Conflicto, y las razones personales para involucrarse en una lucha armada contra el Estado del Perú.
2. Que, se adjunta al presente pedido la Carta de la Universidad.
3. Que, la referida estudiante deberá reportar a su Despacho cada quince días de los avances realizados con relación al trabajo de investigación hecha por la misma.

Por lo antes expuesto, esta Subdirección declara atendible el pedido formulado por la citada estudiante a fin de que realice el trabajo de investigación en el Establecimiento Penitenciario a su cargo. En este sentido, solicitamos sirvase brindar las facilidades de ingreso los días Martes y Jueves de 08:30 am hasta las 13:00, debiendo su Despacho adoptar las medidas de seguridad, que el caso amerita.

Aprovecho la oportunidad para expresarle las muestras de mi especial consideración y estima.

Atentamente.



Abog. Rubén Oscar Ramon Ramos
Sub-Director
Unidad de Tratamiento Penitenciario ORL

Abog. Eduardo Lopez Orozco
Coordinador del Área Legal de la
Subdirección de Tratamiento - ORL



INSTITUTO NACIONAL PENITENCIARIO

ING. ESTER MARQUEZ PISCO URYA
SUBDIRECCIÓN DE TRATAMIENTO, ORL

INPE/18-05
ROR/leto
Reg. DT. N° 2679
12.06.09

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