Translocal Livelihoods, Networks of Family and Community, and Remittances in Central Peru

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1. Introduction

This chapter explores issues of migration and translocal livelihoods in central Peru. But rather than attempting to map out the general characteristics of past and present migration patterns, it seeks an understanding of the sets of interpersonal relationships and cultural practices involved in articulating migrants with their home-base families and paisanos (“fellow countrymen”). From this angle, migration constitutes an ongoing process of adaptation within networks of family and community over space and time, and requires an appreciation of the nature of translocality as experienced by the actors involved.

The main body of the chapter centers on two ethnographic vignettes. The first elucidates the usefulness of a diachronic genealogical case study method for understanding the intergenerational dynamics of multiple family enterprise and migration; the second illustrates the need to focus on how cultural practices and interpretations shape the ongoing lives and relations between family members “at a distance.” Insights derived from these illustrative cases are then applied, in the final part, to the question of migrant remittances. Here I aim to demonstrate the necessity of fully recognizing the socially constructed nature of remittances.

Migration studies often interpret the historical interplay of different migration flows and choices as shaped by a logic linked to transformations in labor markets, production and technological systems, and/or to cultural orientations and values associated with “modernity.” While not wishing to decry the usefulness of such “structural” explanations, this paper adopts a different stance by situating migration in relation to what Unni Wikan (1990) has called “compelling personal concerns” experienced and enacted by social actors. That is, underpinning this chapter is an actor-oriented

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1 I wish to extend a special word of thanks to Josh DeWind for his insightful and encouraging comments on an earlier inordinately long draft, which I was eventually able to slim down.

2 Sorensen’s (2002) edited volume adopts a similar livelihoods approach to internal and international migration, drawing upon Caribbean, Latin American, African and U.S. cases.
perspective\(^3\) that gives methodological priority to understanding migration processes through the exploration of everyday life situations wherein individuals and groups attempt to resolve their livelihood problems. Such an approach sheds light on how migrant networks, livelihoods, remittances and ideas of “community” and “belongingness” are intertwined.\(^4\) This point of view does not, of course, assume rational choice though it does accord full recognition of the agency, knowledge and organizing practices of the socially situated actors.

Before entering into ethnographic detail, let me situate the present research and identify briefly its key themes.

2. Migration Research in the Mantaro Region of the Central Highlands of Peru

In 1970, Bryan Roberts and I joined forces to launch a study of social change and development in the Mantaro region, an economically diversified area of Peru located in the Andes some 300 kilometers by all-weather road from Lima (Long and Roberts 1978, 1984). A central concern of the study was to analyze the interconnectedness of rural, urban and industrial mine locations and interests in the configuration of the region. As we explained: “By studying the existing interrelationships of localities and social groups within and outside the region we hoped to avoid making arbitrary cultural distinctions between rural and urban milieux or between modern industrial locations (in our case, the large smelting plant of Cerro de Pasco at La Oroya) and peasant villages” (Long and Roberts 1978, 13).\(^5\)

Central to the study was the movement of people, goods, resources and ideas across a variety of rural and urban spaces. One characteristic of these flows was that they did not conform to the model of a vertically integrated economic or rural–urban system. Although there was some evidence that, either in one generation or over several generations, people had moved from the smaller and more remote villages to Huancayo (the regional capital) and thence to Lima (the metropolis), more characteristic was a variegated

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\(^4\) The notion of livelihood “best expresses the idea of individuals and groups striving to make a living, attempting to meet their various consumption and economic necessities, coping with uncertainties, responding to new opportunities, and choosing between different value positions” and pursuing specific lifestyles (Long 1997,11).

\(^5\) The main findings of this team research are reported in Long and Roberts (1978 and 1984), Laite (1982), Altamirano (1984b), Smith (1989), and Altamirano and Hirabayashi (1997).
pattern of migration that, from the 1930s onwards, linked villages directly
to the mines, coastal plantations, tropical colonization zones, and the labor
markets of Lima and Huancayo. All villages in the region were involved
to some degree but it was in the more central valley villages that up to
as many as 80% of male heads of household had migration experience.
Circulatory migration consisted of two types – seasonal migration to the
plantations and colonization schemes, and longer-term (averaging three to
four years) migration to the Cerro de Pasco mines or to the textile industry
of Huancayo.

2.1 The Drive to Urbanize and New Modes of Migrancy: 1970s to
1980s

By the early 1960s, however, migration had shifted markedly towards the
larger urban centers, especially Lima, where efforts were afoot to establish
import-substitution industries and to strengthen the role of government
in job creation in both the public and private sectors. The demand for
additional labor that these policies entailed provided an important stimulus
for the migration of increasing numbers of rural people from the central
highlands to the metropolis. Coupled with this was the desire to secure
better educational opportunities for themselves and their children. Some of
these city-bound migrants had previously worked in the mines or at other
labor centers, but most made their move directly to the metropolis from
their home village or town. The earliest migrants were overwhelmingly
male (Altamirano 2003).

Eventually some families set up homes in Lima but many individuals,
or even entire households, shuttled regularly between Lima and the
Mantaro region. In fact the notion of settling down permanently in Lima
did not figure strongly in the vocabulary of many, since their perceptions,
priorities, and expectations changed significantly throughout their lives,
as they faced up to the vicissitudes and shifting opportunities associated
with their livelihoods and changing household/family needs. For instance,
many migrant families were confronted with critical problems that required
frequent visits to relatives or friends back in their village or town of origin.
These ranged from having to negotiate with siblings or other kin over the
partition of the inheritance of a parent, to helping with the solution of land
or other disputes, delegating responsibilities to others for the upkeep of a
house or some enterprise they owned, or providing information or advice
on questions of health or education.

By 1972 – and despite the drive to establish large-scale industries – almost
half of Lima’s economically active population worked in very small-scale
commercial, industrial and service enterprises; and of these a generous number of workers (including also apprentices, craftsmen, and owner/managers) came from the Mantaro region (only five hours by road) where educational levels were well above the average for highland locations. Moreover, a significant proportion of these small-scale enterprises, mostly operating in the fields of transport and commerce, were directly articulated with this highland region and its neighboring mining, agricultural and livestock zones. This context laid the groundwork for the emergence of several types of multiple family-enterprises that combined different branches of economic activity with networks of social relations that crossed the rural–urban divide.

Such phenomena pointed to the need to move away from simple bipolar models of migration that focused on the movement from “place of origin” to “place of destination,” or which represented the flows of people to new locations in terms of the “adaptation” or “adjustment” of new migrants to their so-called “host” societies. Instead one needed to treat migratory processes as essentially multi-sited and inseparable from the more general issues of translocal livelihoods and mobility.

Hence exploration of the increasing integration of the Mantaro region into the metropolitan area of Lima required a detailed understanding of the organizing practices and networks that accompanied this process. As many Andean specialists have repeatedly demonstrated, life in the Andes has always been characterized by a high degree of spatial movement between ecological zones producing a variety of products and through well-trodden pathways of trade and administration. Thus the notion of migrating for work to obtain access to additional resources and to improve one’s standard of living was a familiar option for many local householders and there was an abundance of examples on hand of those who had, to a degree, already “made it.” Nevertheless, for relatively poor rural dwellers, the hazards and possible benefits of moving to a shantytown or poor inner-city neighborhood of the metropolis were daunting, and required strong back-up from family, friends, compadres (ritual “co-parents”), and paisanos (“fellow countrymen”). This conglomeration of factors provided the breeding ground for the emergence and proliferation of migrant associations.

2.2 Migrant Associations and the Web of Rural-Urban Ties

As compared to the rest of Latin America, Peruvian urban life is striking for its large number of migrant associations and other kinds of civic organizations. Many of these can be traced back to earlier periods when
urban growth and planning was taking off. By the early 1970s, Paul Doughty (1970) estimated that there were about 5000 migrant associations in the metropolitan area of Lima. These associations can be distinguished from other types of voluntary associations, such as sports clubs, churches, political parties and social clubs, by their strong identification with the places of origin of particular migrant groups. Each association or club is identified by the name of a village, town, district or region and normally restricts membership to persons born in the locality or who have close connections to it (for example, through marriage or having lived there). Although the range of activities and frequency of interaction among members may vary considerably from club to club, the declared aims of each are usually expressed in terms of furthering the social, economic and/or political interests of the home community and of maintaining regular contact among migrants resident in the city. Many associations organize social activities such as dances and sports competitions, participate in religious fiestas which are celebrated in the home area and/or in the urban localities where they now live. Members meet regularly to plan and sponsor development projects for their home communities. Such projects range from major infrastructural projects such as the building of roads, bridges and hydroelectric plants to more modest renovations of municipal buildings, churches and the like. In addition, through the networks of members, who are likely to be related by kinship, affinity and compadrazgo (co-parenthood), individuals from the same village or region (paisanos) may help each other in finding employment or assist when someone is sick or suffers bereavement. Some clubs also operate loan facilities, baby sitting circles, and work parties for the construction of meeting places or for other group projects in the city.

2.3 At the Turn of the New Millennium

In 1997, we initiated a restudy of translocal livelihoods and organizations in the Mantaro region. By this time, it was clear that important shifts had

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6 Later Altamirano (1984) recalculated the figure, concluding that there were as many as 6000; but since then it seems that they have increased again by another 1000 (Doughty 1997,79).

7 In this respect they can be compared to the “hometown” organizations reported in other parts of Latin America and the U.S., as well as to similar urban associations based on ethnic or village affiliation in Africa.

8 See, for example, Adams’ (1959) and Grondin’s (1975) accounts of how migrant groups from the village of Muquiyauyo in the Mantaro valley raised a large part of the funds and recruited specialist engineers for the installation of a community-owned hydroelectric scheme.

9 The research was supported by NIRP (The Netherlands–Israel Research Program) and was coordinated by myself and Pieter de Vries (Wageningen University), Teófilo Altamirano (Catholic University, Lima) and Moshe Shokheid (Tel-Aviv University, Israel). Two Peruvian PhD researchers (Carla Tamagno and Manuel Gilvinio) and a Danish researcher (Ulla Berg) carried out detailed anthropological fieldwork (Berg 2001).
taken place in migration flows. These were triggered by the political and economic instabilities of the previous 15 years when Sendero Luminoso (the Maoist-inspired revolutionaries) and the Peruvian military battled for control of the highlands and strategic urban settlements throughout the country. This led to a large exodus of people from the countryside moving (or being moved) to safe rural zones or to squat on the peripheries of urban centers, thus generating more than a million internally displaced highland Peruvians. Once the political violence had subsided, refugees faced the option of returning to their home communities, staying where they were or moving on. A considerable number opted for “moving on” and for many this meant seeking a new life outside Peru as transnational workers or refugees. Indeed, by 2000, approximately two and a half million Peruvians (i.e., about 10% of citizens) are recorded as residing outside of their country of origin. The cases that follow concern two families from the Mantaro region who were part of this transnational diaspora.

3. Two Ethnographic Vignettes

The first vignette emphasizes the usefulness of a genealogical case-study method for understanding the dynamics of multiple family livelihoods. The second brings out the need to look at how cultural practices and interpretations shape the ongoing lives and relations between different family members who are physically located across national frontiers as vast distance from each other.

3.1 Multiple Enterprise: From “Local” to “Transnational”

The first case concerns that of a family-based multiple enterprise centered in the village of Matahuasi of the Mantaro valley where I first carried out research in the early 1970s. The enterprise combined a number of economic activities ranging from small-scale commercial agriculture and livestock production, to the running of a retail shop, a restaurant, a petrol station, and a fleet of lorries. This multiple enterprise functioned on the basis of a distribution of tasks between members of the Jiménez family. It also financed the education of several sons who eventually migrated to the U.S., while others of the family moved to Lima and Trujillo on the coast.

At the time I was primarily interested in exploring how specific social networks based on kinship, affinity, compadrazgo and friendship functioned both to open up and to close down certain strategic business decisions. This was heightened by the fact that Jiménez was in conflict with the Community of Matahuasi over the legitimacy of his purchase of community managed cofradia (or church) land. The case revealed that the decisions he took were primarily the result of his responding to certain contingent
dilemmas and exigencies, rather than the outcomes of premeditated, well-planned strategies. In this respect it was the mobilization of existing or the development new social ties that was critical. What I was not so aware of at the time was how Jiménez’s investments in his sons’ education would both generate new effective external relations and at the same time lead to the demise of the original enterprise.¹⁰

Genealogy 1 (see appendix at the end of this chapter) depicts the Jiménez family in 1972, indicating the family members who were active in the enterprise and their places of residence.

Almost three decades later, much had happened. The violence brought by the Shining Path movement (*Sendero Luminoso*) reached its height in the highlands between 1989 and 1994, when the leader was captured and imprisoned. The economy had run into serious decline, exacerbated by an increase in the national debt due to large imports of cheaper foodstuffs, and agricultural and livestock production dropped. The younger generation of the Jiménez family was now dispersed through internal and international migration, and the trucking business, under the management of the son Atílio, had moved its center of operations to the port of Trujillo on the northern coast of Peru.

At the beginning of 1998 when I last saw Jiménez, the father, he was a frail and sick old man of 93, who struggled to and from the mass to celebrate the fiesta of San Sebastián, the major annual religious festival of the village of Matahuasi, his daughter Hilda by his side. Although the infrastructure of the garage was still intact, it no longer served petrol. However, the shop at Hilda’s house was well stocked with fruit, bread and tinned goods. In the 1980s, Hilda had opened a beauty salon in the nearby town of Concepción, which functioned well for some years; but by the early nineties, at the height of the violence, it and the rest of the enterprise went into sharp decline. By 1995, the restaurant, shop, garage and beauty salon were all closed, though the restaurant and the office attached to the garage were rented out. The only remaining income-generating activity of the former family enterprise was the farm managed by the son Walter and the trucks used for transporting merchandise under contract by the daughters Allica and Hilda.

Genealogy 2 (see appendix at the end of this chapter) shows the situation in 1998. Only three of Jiménez’s 11 children remained in the village attending

¹⁰ As many previous studies have demonstrated, intergenerational differences in family enterprises frequently cause them to “self-destruct.” For more detail on the early history of the Jiménez enterprise, see Long (1979).
to what was left of the original enterprise. The other survivors now lived in Lima and Trujillo and in the southern part of the U.S. and in Europe. The skeleton Genealogies 2a, 2b and 2c provide information on the different branches of the third generation of descendants. These enable one to appreciate how educational, occupational, marital, and spatial mobility factors – especially international migration – have combined to bring about the demise of the original highly successful multiple enterprise, while at the same time spawning a wholly new set of extra-local businesses and professional occupations (both in Peru and the U.S.).

3.2 Three-Generational Family Genealogies

Although it is impossible here to present a full account of the dynamics of the businesses and careers of the younger generations of the Jiménez family, the case highlights the advantage of adopting a diachronic intergenerational case study method that traces the livelihood trajectories and migration histories of individual family members. In so doing it is useful to focus on the reshaping of networks and exchanges between the individuals and families of the senior generation and their descendants. In this instance I was fortunate to be able to build upon baseline data from the 1970s.

Several anthropologists have underlined the importance of three-generational genealogical enquiries for the study of kinship relations and for identifying differential work careers, access to resources and family organization. This method is clearly of importance too for understanding the emergence of specific migration movements and for mapping out the shifting livelihood commitments to “home” and the reconfiguration of family solidarities “at a distance.” The changes that take place over time reflect changes in types of work, income levels, education, marriage patterns, social status, cultural lifestyles, as well as language use and sentiments of “belonging.” While it may be possible to track these in a general way through identifying the flow of migrants to their destinations and describing the degree to which they retain contact with their “home” people, a more discriminating analysis requires comparison of different types of persons and their family situations. This can of course be achieved, to a degree, through drawing a sample of migrants representing different social characteristics and circumstances but, in my opinion, a more satisfactory way of framing comparisons is by reference to a common genealogical tree spanning several generations. This allows for the exploration of different social and cultural components as well as destinations. It will also highlight

a central issue in the interpretation of genealogies, namely the patterns of differential response manifested by the different family branches. The Jiménez case brings this out graphically.

The decline and imminent disintegration of the original Jiménez family enterprise over the past thirty years can be attributed in large part to the internal dynamics and social differentiation of the family. It is also due in no small measure to the more general economic and political forces at work in Peru during that same period.

The enterprise fared reasonably well until the beginning of the 1980s, when it was plainly clear that earlier government policies aimed at redressing the inequalities of landholding and property ownership, first through land reform and revitalizing co-operative modes of organization, and then through encouraging the privatization of community lands and market-led enterprise development, had failed to bring any prosperity or stability to the highlands. The first scenario had resulted in an increased presence of the state in the shaping of regional and local development. The second was marked by a decrease in direct state intervention, leading to a severe cutback of government services relating to activities such as extension, credit and technical inputs. Hence both policies contributed to a worsening of the economic conditions in the highlands and the country at large, and to a growing national debt exacerbated by financial and other mismanagement. This increased the vulnerability not only of the rural and urban poor but also of the middle sector, including teachers and other government employees, the self employed, and owners and workers in medium and small industries.

In the face of increasing livelihood difficulties and poverty, which was especially concentrated among the rural highland population and in the poor urban settlements surrounding the large cities throughout Peru, there emerged various forms of social unrest. Eventually this took the shape of direct-armed resistance to the state, mounted primarily by Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). Although in the early days the insurgency did not unduly affect the Mantaro region, by the end of the 1980s and until it peaked in 1992 it had massive repercussions for the people of the Mantaro valley, its surrounding pastoral highlands, and the city of Huancayo.

Not surprisingly these economic and political events disrupted the running of Jiménez’s enterprise. It must also have affected decisions made by members of the family as to whether to return to Peru from the U.S., or to the village from Lima, or concomitantly to leave Matahuasi for safer havens. At certain times members of the Jiménez family in Matahuasi...
sought refuge in Lima. It was not practical to move to the nearby city of Huancayo, since this had also become a center of violence and was filling up with refugees from the surrounding southern highland regions, where Sendero had its garrisons. The Peruvian military, in a bid to dislodge them, evacuated or drove out a large proportion of the population.

Under these conditions petrol was difficult to obtain and many garages were unable to find or pay for spare parts, including that of the Jiménez family. In addition, income from petrol sales had dropped because of the reduced road traffic in the zone, and this undoubtedly affected the restaurant linked to the garage. There were fewer passers-by and families or groups were less willing to hire the location for receptions because it had become dangerous to gather in public, especially at night. Support from a wide spectrum of Matahuasino residents was crucial throughout these years but Jiménez and his family did not always find this forthcoming because of ongoing tensions between them and the community and municipal authorities. The out-migration of Jiménez’s sons was also a critical factor since this reduced the amount of labor available for the various branches of the enterprise. By 1998, only three of Jiménez’s children remained living in Matahuasi.

From a family united around a multiple enterprise in Matahuasi, the Jiménez family is now spread over a large part of central and southern Peru and into the U.S. and Belgium. This widespread network has resulted in significant social and cultural differentiation within the family, with some members and branches retaining greater contact than others. While a few individual families still retain an interest in their Matahuasino roots, traveling back to play a role in village celebrations and Patron Saint fiestas, others have detached themselves from these influences and have sought to “re-invent” themselves as Americans, choosing English American names for their children, putting them through American educational institutions and building household living styles around American values. Except for “Eric Hutton,” the second generation of Jiménez’s sons has accommodated itself to both Peruvian/Latino culture and American values. That is, they perform some kind of balancing act by marrying Latinos based in the U.S. and living a mixed Latino/American way of life. For first generation migrants family life was difficult, and particularly hard for the women to survive without the close support of their natal families. Thus it is not surprising that the daughters-in-law married to Jiménez’s sons living in the U.S. have each had marital problems leading to divorce and their return to Peru. On the other hand, his daughters remained living in Peru.

The days of the Matahuasi-based multiple family enterprise are now numbered. The interconnections between its various branches of activity have broken apart; it is undercapitalized and will undoubtedly be dissolved.
on Jiménez’s death when his children attempt to claim their inheritance. The branch of the family that is involved in the running of transport enterprises in Trujillo and Lima may benefit from this, but in any case they will certainly continue their own entrepreneurial activities. Those in the U.S. are heading for new social lives. From the humble roots of a highland village in Peru, the children and grandchildren of Jiménez are carving out important business and professional niches for themselves in the U.S., and as a consequence are likely to become less “transnational” than they were before. Their families are now firmly rooted in Hispanic-American life worlds and appear to be more culturally, socially and emotionally at home and secure there than they could ever be in Peru.

4. Transnational Lives in Italy and Peru

The second vignette centers on the experiences and communicative practices of a mother living in a poor neighborhood of Huancayo city and her two daughters working in Milan, Italy. The case highlights how the mother at home successfully inserts herself into the transnational worlds of her daughters, thus influencing their daily decisions, livelihood strategies and social commitments; and on the other hand, how her daughters reshape the life circumstances and dreams of the mother. The means of communication (i.e., weekly phone calls backed up by letters giving news from both ends) keep both parties in close contact and make it possible for them to engage with each other’s ideas, feelings and plans for the future. During these exchanges various cultural modes of practice and understanding concerning family welfare and solidarity are conveyed and reaffirmed. The example is especially interesting because it demonstrates the considerable extent to which close kin separated by thousands of miles and experiencing very different daily routines can nevertheless shape each other’s aspirations and conceptions of the worlds in which they live. This kind of process of course lies at the heart of transnational lives. Only detailed ethnographic research of the kind described below can reveal the intimacies of such “compelling personal concerns.”

4.1 Camila and Her Two Daughters in Milan

As I mentioned above, Camila lives on the outskirts of the city of Huancayo. She fled, together with her husband and five children, in the early 1980s from Huancavelica to Huancayo to escape the mounting violence inflicted by Sendero and the army. She eventually became separated from her

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12 This example is taken from the research of Carla Tamagno who was a member of the research team put together by myself, Teófilo Altamirano and Pieter de Vries to carry out research on “Migrant Networks, Livelihoods and the Cultural Construction of ‘Community’ in the Central Highlands of Peru”. For further details on the conclusions of her research, see Tamagno (2002 and 2003).
husband who sought refuge and work in the *selva* (tropical region of the Amazon). At that time a large population of refugees from Huancavelica and Ayacucho had built temporary shelters on the fringes of the city, where they occupied a piece of unused private land. Gradually, the space was transformed into a new neighborhood composed of a mosaic of small wooden and adobe houses and numerous small shops and workshops (e.g., tire-repairers, hardware shops, restaurants, hairdressers, retail stores, bars and informal market traders). A large proportion of the population worked as day laborers in construction, transport and agricultural enterprises. Yet despite all this economic activity, most households continued to face a precarious living, especially those without adult men.

4.2 Critical Moments in the Lives of the Daughters in Milan

Eventually, after some years of schooling and a period working as child minders and domestic servants in Lima, Camila’s two daughters (first one and then the other) seized the opportunity to leave Peru to find work in Italy. This came through Ines, their mother’s brother’s wife, for whom they had worked as nannies for her children. Ines has many relatives abroad and two cousins who operate a business in Lima recruiting Peruvians for domestic work in Europe. She agreed to assist them to leave the country and it was proposed that they head for Italy. The cost of the migration arrangements were guaranteed by Ines and her husband, who offered their house in Lima as security for the 6,000 dollar loan needed to finance the first journey. Once in Italy and working, the first daughter was able to pay off the full sum in only eight months, and on the basis of this, the second daughter could join her. Each of them was routed through Spain and France to reach their final destination of Milan. Thus, by 1997, both were settled there working as domestic carers for the elderly.

Since then Camila’s daughters have exchanged regular news with their mother, describing the “unforgettable experiences” they had undergone, and assuring her that they were doing fine. The writing of letters plus regular contact by telephone once a week became the *modus operandi* for keeping in touch. Something of the content of these exchanges is captured in the following extract of a letter written by Rita, the elder daughter, in 1998:

Mum, now I have got used to being here, there’s everything here. Nothing is lacking: food is plentiful and everything is delicious. Now, I only have to clean two living rooms and the bedrooms and serve young Santiago [the handicapped son of the Italian family], who curses me when I don’t understand
him but after your helpful advice [concerning “winning affection”], he’s been more quiet. I’m also in charge of the laundry. I use the washing machine and clothes come out dry.

Someday I will buy you one. I have to do all this. But, since I finish quickly, I help Karina (the cook). She is just like you and always gives me the best food….. Mrs. Marina (the owner of the house) already loves me because, she says, I am a good worker. I’ve told them that you taught me all that I know and they say: “Your mother must be a good woman”. That is why she gave me the clothes I sent you. That is why I want you to buy them alpaca sweaters and send them to me. Could you also buy them some nice handicrafts from Peru (tell Pedro [one of the sons] to choose them) and send them to me.\textsuperscript{13}

In replying to this letter, Camila re-emphasizes the importance of “winning affection” (\textit{debes ganarte su cariño}) from one’s employer and significant others when encountering difficult life circumstances, especially those associated with being a migrant. She also mentions the need to enroll the help of employers in the struggle to legalize one’s work and residence status. On other occasions, she offers advice on how to proceed as regards social contacts and boyfriends. In one particular instance – when one daughter is lauding the virtues of her new “handsome Italian” boyfriend – the mother decides to test the propitiousness of this relationship by means of divination through casting grains of maize. From this she concludes that going out with him would not be a particularly good idea. She telephones the daughter to instruct her to “drop him” immediately! On another occasion, she argues, again on the basis of divination, that the elder daughter should now present her documents for legalizing her residence – she stresses this is a positive time to do so, but suggests that the other daughter should hold back and present her documents much later. If not, then events may go awry!

These snippets of social life communicated internationally by letter and telephone present a snapshot of the ongoing two-way flow of information, ideas, values, understandings, images, discourses, influences and beliefs.

\textsuperscript{13} Later the mother did send the alpaca sweaters and craft gifts as requested. She also got her washing machine and several other items for her house. In 1998, the daughters sent $1,500 to have the telephone installed; a further $5,500 were deposited in her bank account which they had recently opened, of which $2,000 was to cover the costs of buying amulets for good fortune for each of the daughters and the presents they gave to their employers. Hence the letters and telephone calls that functioned to reaffirm regularly their bonds of family solidarity and affection were buttressed by relatively large cash remittances.
that take place between migrants and their kin and friends back home. The case offers interesting insights into this process. In the first place, it brings out the degree to which “home-grown” cultural practices can penetrate the ongoing everyday lives of distant migrants and thus shape their decisions and social relations. Secondly, it suggests how migrant perceptions of their host society and even their attitudes towards specific persons can be shaped by the information and advice they receive from their “home” communities and “homeboy” migrant networks. And, of course, the reverse holds for the influence that migrants have on their relatives and friends at “home.” Although none of this is peculiar to transnational situations – since similar observations can be made in respect to migration within countries – how this works in transnational contexts remains a major challenge for research. Indeed one can argue that the advent and dissemination of new high-speed modes of communication throughout the globe has the potential of strengthening rather than dissolving identities based on locality, ethnicity and nationality. In this way, the benefits of transnational networks and communication may be utilized for the pursuit of more parochial ends.

A further implication is that, just as families and community groups spend a great deal of time and effort maintaining connections with overseas kith and kin, so too is the Peruvian state deeply concerned with maintaining relationships – political and economic – with its national diaspora. Currently, Peru has one of the highest rates of out-migration in Latin America (UN 2002; Altamirano 2000). Recently the Ministry of the Exterior, through its network of Peruvian consulates throughout the world, has been pursuing new policies aimed at extending its reach into the diaspora to encourage its nationals to invest some of their considerable financial and social resources in joint development ventures in Peru.14

All this points to the importance of carrying out detailed studies on the types of communicative practices and their symbolic contents used by migrants for maintaining home contacts and for processing their everyday experiences. Previous research on Latin American migration – both rural-urban and transnational – has documented how migrants in external settings maintain their connections with their home communities while also forging new kinds of individual or collective ties in their “receiving” locations.15

14 This can be compared with Mexico’s attempts to develop effective state-citizen programmes aimed at encouraging entrepreneurial partnerships with U.S.-based businessmen of Mexican origins. During his period of Governor of Guanajuato, Vicente Fox spearheaded the Mi Comunidad program (Byrnes 2003); and there exist similar initiatives, such as Tres Por Uno in the State of Zacatecas that matches remittances with government grants, and in Guerrero migrants can also apply for similar assistance.

15 An excellent illustration of this dispersed pattern is Paerregaard’s (1997) detailed migration ethnography that explores the interconnections and cultural universes of rural and urban families.
There are, for example, many studies that highlight the importance of *compadrazgo* (ritual kinship) relationships, group cooperative efforts (entailing the organization of *faenas* or collective work parties), fiesta sponsorship, and participation in “hometown” associations (what in Peru are called village or regional migrant clubs), religious brotherhoods, and public festivities. These continue to be important for understanding the social organization of translocality but are nowadays underpinned by new forms of media communication – initiated at both ends of the migration chain – such as e-mails and other forms of internet communication, satellite-based phone calls, circulating photographs, and the making and viewing of videos. We should add to this exposure to global radio and TV programmes – especially those that explore topics that are close to the situations and experiences of migrants. That is, we need to know precisely how these help shape and maintain the various social, political, economic and emotional connections between migrants and their relatives and friends at home. What memories, sentiments and ideas about “progress” and “modernity,” for example, are communicated and reinforced? What cultural commitments, world views and specific social relations are represented and reasserted in the migrant situation through these new media communications? And how do the “old” and “new” communicative practices gear into each other? To answer these and related questions we need to build more effective ways of constructing multi-sited ethnographies of migration.16

Below, I extend these observations and queries to underline the significance of remittances in maintaining translocal relationships and their impact on processes of local and regional development. Once again, the argument draws upon data from central Peru.

5. **Social Embedding of Remittances**

Several recent publications have emphasized the importance of extending the notion of “remittances” to cover the social and cultural components involved in migrant transfers of cash, capital or goods to relatives and friends in their home community (Levitt 1996; Goldring 2004; Sørensen 2004, 2005). A second argument is that remittances should not be conceptualized simply as a one-way process since obviously we need also to pay attention

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16 Ulla Berg of New York University is currently carrying out ethnographic fieldwork among Peruvian migrant communities in the U.S. with a view to exploring these kinds of questions. As anthropologist and documentary filmmaker, she is well placed to capture the performative and communicative dimensions involved.
to the flows of goods, resources and socio-cultural items from the home base to individual migrants and their families. The dynamic of remittance flows is essentially a dynamic two-way process. Indeed the very idea of remitting benefits between families and communities entails understanding how these transfers are symbolically framed and practically enacted. A third critical point concerns the distinction between individual/family transfers as against more collective ones. The latter of course embraces the organized collection and donation of funds, materials, technologies, and advice based on specialized forms of knowledge. Such collective endeavors have been especially important in supporting local development projects in the Peruvian highlands and many were planned and launched by formally recognized migrant clubs and regional associations.

Savings or investment capital amassed by individual migrants or organizations has sometimes been channeled through a system of matching funds by government development agencies. Banks and financial exchange institutions have pushed for more efficient modes of transferring migrant funds, with a view to reducing dependence on private brokers who tend to charge high fees. The exercise of making these transactions much more transparent and fair, however, also has some disadvantages for the migrants themselves, since the stress on greater transparency and control naturally gives governments increased leverage on how these financial resources are to be channeled and used. Due to distance and international frontier problems, these latter issues are far more critical for international migrants.

In the Mantaro examples, I provided a few snapshots illustrating the flow of remittances between migrants and their families and between migrant associations and village authorities or local organizations. Such flows are commonplace throughout Peru for all types of migrants, although precise details on their form, quantity and frequency are often lacking. For centuries the Andean region has experienced a constant movement of people between different ecological zones and centers of employment,

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17 Pnina Werbner’s study of capital, gifts and offerings among British Pakistanis provides an insightful benchmark for analyzing the issue of remittances. As she puts it: “Labor migration as a social relationship spanning distant countries has itself generated its unique expression of gifting. Labor migrants are, in a sense, incomplete persons, who must re-establish a bond of substance with persons left behind” (Werbner 1990, 203).

18 These matters have recently been of great concern to a number of international development agencies, since the level of international migrant transfers has sky-rocketed over the past decade. In 2004 alone, more than 45 billion U.S. dollars flowed from the rest of the world to Latin America and the Caribbean in relatively small amounts of between $200 and $300 dollars each month. Workers mostly send remittances via money transfer companies or local neighborhood operators and not through banks. This makes it difficult to include these flows in formal financial statistics. For a fuller discussion of the economic and social dimensions of migrant remittances, see de Vasconcelos (2005).
whose length of stay has varied according to regional circumstances and type of activity (that is, whether agricultural, pastoral, mine- or trade-based). Some movements eventually led to the resettlement of families and even of whole communities, thus reshaping the social landscape.¹⁹ These processes deepened in the twentieth century as urbanization accelerated.

One useful source of information on remittances is the extensive anthropological literature on Peru, which contains much useful data on the interlocking of rural–urban and local–global livelihoods. Consider for a moment the case of Camila and her two daughters in Italy. This example draws attention to several additional components. In the first place, they are single women, which is not at all exceptional since the number of unmarried females migrating for work in Europe has recently increased markedly. Even though they were required to repay the costs of transport and administration to the brokers in Lima who arranged their travel and illegal entry into Italy, between them they managed to do this, as well as to bank a total of US$35,000, within only four years. A principal reason for this was that, as carers of elderly people, they received, on top of their wages, free board and lodgings. This meant they could save a fairly large part of their wage-packets. Thus, with diligence and much hard work, they managed to accumulate considerable savings. Eventually they were able to remit to their mother about $300 each month, and in 2000 they funded, to the tune of $30,000, the building of a new house for her. This placed the mother in the top rank of housing for her neighborhood, and by dint of this she became the brunt of envy and sorcery (brujería). Of course, remitting so much required the daughters to keep a close tag on the mother’s expenditures, especially in regard to earmarked investments.

The two daughters were strongly committed to improving the life conditions of their Huancayo family. As they put it: “We must progress. We want our brothers to become professionals and to achieve better social positions. We wish the best for them.” Like most other households in Huancayo and the villages of the Mantaro, Camila used a portion of the monthly remittance she received to supplement her consumption needs: that is, to buy food, pay for the education of her remaining children and to purchase clothing. The rest of the money was destined for major investments that would be of benefit to the daughters on their return from Italy.

In contrast to this individual family case, Tamagno (2003: 315-30) provides an account of how the Mayor of Huachac (a rural district with high out-

¹⁹ Thierry Saignes (1995) documents, for the seventeenth century, the central importance of internal migration, resettlement and social change in the southern Andes, emphasizing the strong bonds maintained between migrants and their places of origin.
migration and close to Huancayo) organized to get different groups from his municipality living and working in Milan, Los Angeles, and Lima, to commit themselves to raising funds for public works. In August 2000, the groups were visiting the pueblo to take part in the annual celebrations of the district’s Patron Saint (Santo Domingo de Guzmán). The mayor invited the leaders of each migrant club to attend a special meeting at the municipality to discuss ideas for local development projects and to suggest particular projects for which each group would be responsible. The interest was great and many of the leaders and key “movers” from the three migrant groups arrived with ideas for priority projects. However, in putting forward their priorities, each revealed their own ideas of what “development” entailed. All showed interest in maintaining links and strengthening their own internal solidarity as migrant clubs, but in the end their ideas for local projects diverged strikingly. The Italian group opted to fund an up-to-date telecommunications center in Huachac with a central telephone exchange and internet booths for public use. This they saw as a practical way of strengthening their ties with family and friends back home, thus making it easier for family members to make calls or send emails from the village. The American “Huacquinos” chose the idea of building a commercial center modeled on some U.S. type of mall or gallery of shops and service centers, including restaurants, grocers, and stationery shops. And those from Lima argued for an Instituto Superior that would fill a major gap in the provision of educational courses and vocational training for the young of the municipality. This, they argued, would better prepare them for obtaining skilled and professional jobs. The argument was of course premised on the notion that it was principally through education that one achieved social mobility, just as they themselves had done in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet, in arguing this in 2000, they chose to ignore the fact that, in the 1980s and 1990s, most professionals in Peru had in fact suffered a real decline in their incomes and purchasing power.

As Tamagno shows, these contrasting development narratives expose the self-images of each group and how they envisage the needs of the village. At the end of the meeting, each migrant group was required to pledge itself to collect a certain sum of money earmarked for a specific local development project. These offers were then recorded formally in the Libro del Oro (the village financial ledger) as a way of sealing the agreements. Some 50 persons from outside (from Lima, Spain, Italy and the U.S.) attended this meeting and witnessed the commitments made. In addition, Andres, a key leader in the Italian group, boasted that he had already raised, from relatives and friends in Italy, some US$3000 towards the costs of this year’s fiesta and had himself donated an additional sum of US$7,500.
5.1 Remittance Flows between Cajatambo and Lima

Let us now consider a contrasting case involving remittances within the context of internal migration (Rodríguez Doig 1994). The study is unusual in that it identifies and measures the types, quantity and frequency of the two-way flow of remittances between a central Andean region and the city of Lima/Callao. The highland region in question is Cajatambo located northeast of Lima. The zone is predominantly a livestock and milk producing area, combined with the cultivation of wheat, maize, potatoes and vegetables. It is located about a four-hour journey by road from Lima.

In comparison with the Mantaro region, the area is much less diversified and dynamic economically and educational standards are also lower. There is regular migration of (mainly) young men to Lima seeking work and educational betterment. Out of a sample of 613 persons associated with the Club Juventud Cajatambo (Cajatambo Youth Club), 63 percent were recorded as living in El Cono Norte de Lima among a number of urban squatter settlements (often called asentamientos populares) that were originally founded through land invasions in the mid-1980s.

In 1989/1990 research was conducted to map and analyze the economic, social and cultural flows between the region of Cajatambo and the urban settlements close to Lima where Cajatambo migrants live. Some 35 households on the outskirts of the metropolitan area were selected for detailed interviews, and various documentary sources were examined for information on the flow of goods, parcels and letters. Interviews were also conducted with key traders involved in the commercialization of livestock and agricultural products. Finally, twelve weeks of messages and information put out by a special “outreach” radio program (Programa Radial “Amanecer Cajatambino”) targeting people from Cajatambo were reviewed. The main results of the household interviews were as follows:

Food products (or what the author calls “productos de subsistencia”) consisting of potatoes, maize, meat and milk products were sent by families in Cajatambo to relatives in Lima and the latter reciprocated by supplying them with a range of processed food items, medicines and clothing. 68.6 percent of the sample said they received products from Cajatambo and 74.3 percent said that they sent items home. In both cases these were for direct consumption. Information on the frequency of flows indicated that 62.5 percent of households sent items every month (some as often as once a week), 8.3 percent once every three months and the remainder (29.2 percent) only at the time of Patron Saint fiestas and for New Year celebrations.
In some cases, families would regularly send a large volume of foodstuffs. One exceptionally large household based in Cajatambo with several sons and daughters living in Lima, for example, sent once a month a huge package of about 50 kilograms of food made up of 6 kg. cheese, 1 kg. butter, ½ kg. manjarblanco (blancmange), 8 guinea pigs, half a lamb, 4 to 5 kg. fresh beef (when available), 25 kg. potatoes, 6 to 7 kg. maize cobs, and about 3 kg. each of wheat and maize flour. Yet even so, the average for the sample was still calculated at around 20 kg. consisting of potatoes, maize, wheat, beans, dried meat and cheese.

Rodríguez Doig (1994) comments that many of these foods were highly-valued culturally by migrants because the foods formed part of the favoured cuisine of the Cajatambo region. However, several interviewees also pointed to the fact that this was a way of saving on expenses since the prices of some items imported into the region were in fact lower in Cajatambo than in Lima. Although on occasions relatives from Cajatambo would visit Lima households and vice versa, the study reveals that much of the movement of goods was organized in bulk. That is, in order to reduce the costs and speed up transportation, families would cooperate in preparing packages together and delivering them to microbuses that run regularly to and from Lima. It is normal practice in Peru for long distance bus services to carry parcels and assignments of goods for special delivery. The registry of goods transported to Lima from 1988 to 1989 kept by the Empresa Municipal de Transportes Cajatambo indicated that the monthly volume of packages (canastas familiares) varied between 20 and 50 a month, each weighing around 20 kg.

On the basis of these figures and an estimate of the basic food consumption needs for migrant families in Lima, Rodríguez Doig concludes that around 50% of migrants’ subsistence requirements were met by such remittances. Although this may seem a high figure, it is worth recalling that the study was undertaken at a critical period when Sendero was still active in the poorer urban settlements of Lima and the nearby highlands. It was also a time of deepening economic crisis when industries shed a lot of jobs, real wages dropped sharply and the percentage of households in Lima living in chronic poverty had grown from 5 percent in 1985/1986 to 20 percent in 1990 (Ypeij, 2000, 26). Hence the high level of food remittances from

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20 For example, between 1987 and 1988 the Municipality of Cajatambo offered lower subsidized prices for sugar and rice produced in the coastal zone and transported to the highlands.
21 Rodríguez Doig records that at the time of his study (in February 1990) Sendero attacked two vehicles in Cajatambo, killing five policemen and three peasants.
22 In August 1990, the newly-elected President Fujimori implemented a package of tough economic measures designed to tackle the rapidly deteriorating economy. During this period, Annelou Ypeij (2000) undertook field research on small-scale entrepreneurs (male and female) in Lima to document how they responded to these worsening conditions. She concluded that, although
the countryside appears consistent with the urgent need to supplement the livelihoods of city-based migrant households.

In the same manner in which urban households were assisted with food items by their families back home, so were migrants remitting products to them. These were generally products that were highly priced, scarce or non-existent in Cajatambo. Fifty percent of senders declared that they mainly dispatched food provisions and clothing, while the rest included also medicines, agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides, and money. As for the frequency of dispatch, this was much less often: 30.8 percent said they sent items at least each month, 19.2 percent each three months, 42.3 percent “occasionally” and 7.7 percent did not know precisely. In contrast to the types of products sent from Cajatambo, the goods dispatched from Lima were by and large acquired through the market; and even if home-made or home-grown, their ingredients or raw materials would most likely have been purchased. Hence, the picture that emerges for the early 1990s is that about three-quarters of urban households with roots in Cajatambo sent considerable quantities of processed foodstuffs and other consumer items to family members in Cajatambo.  

A similar two-way process applied to cash remittances. Of the total household sample, 22.9 percent reported sending regular money payments to Cajatambo, of which half claimed to remit in fixed amounts every one or two months, while the rest said they sent money only occasionally. The majority of these payments were made to fathers or fathers-in-law (62.5%) and the rest to sons living in the highlands. However, the study encountered some difficulties in establishing the precise amounts transferred, since it emerged that there was a wide variety of ways of sending cash, both formal and informal. Frequently amounts were sent as needed via relatives or friends, though it was impossible to calculate with any accuracy the amounts.  

Like the goods dispatched, the peak transfer periods for cash coincided with the timing of fiestas and New Year celebrations.

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23 Unfortunately, due to the sheer heterogeneity of industrialized food and consumer products packaged for delivery to Cajatambo, the study was unable to provide a breakdown of the volume and contents of shipments.

24 The estimates for money transfers via the Empresa Municipal de Transportes Cajatambo were very low. Rodríguez Doig estimates for the 35 households, for the period May to December 1988, that on average a total of US$ 375.5 were sent from Lima to Cajatambo, as against only US$132.6 from Cajatambo to Lima. This makes sense since it is the migrant household that is likely to have greater access to regular cash earnings.
Furthermore, the precise composition and volume of products and cash sent varied according to the strategic priorities of the families involved. For example, if a close relative needed urgent medical attention, or children school uniforms, books and stationery, or the father or mother required support to fulfill their obligations as sponsors of some social or religious event, then the urban-based family member/household would normally do its utmost to respond to these needs. On the other hand, dramatic changes in the national economy, such as runaway inflation that grew at an average rate of 30 percent per month in 1989 or the newly imposed policy measures known as Fujishock that followed clearly impacted on both rural and urban livelihoods and their interconnections. The deal that Fujimori struck with IMF entailed the ending of subsidies on primary subsistence goods, increases in taxes and an overnight unimaginable 3000 percent increase in the price of petrol which had knock-on effects on the price of public transport, electricity and medicines. Even, the more positive decision to hand-out one-off bonuses and to increase the legal minimum wage by 400 percent did little to alleviate the impoverishment of much of the population (Ypeij, 2000, 27). Thus, as one small-scale shoemaker summed it up:

I didn’t have much stock on the day of the paquetazo (Fujishock). I had about three dozen shoes, that’s all. I didn’t have any food either. We managed to survive because my cousin (who shares the same house) had just come back from the mountains and he had potatoes, grain and that kind of thing with him. That was our biggest help. It was enough to get through the paquetazo. We spent very little money. I did all I could to sell. I ran up debts and used the money to buy food. When the paquetazo was over all I had was debts, I had no materials (to produce) in the house, I had nothing. I didn’t make anything for two or three months. I just sold, because I had borrowed money from friends and used it to buy items for trade. (Ypeij 2000, 28)

In the face of such economic and political vagaries, many poor and even middle-income households become extremely vulnerable to chronic poverty and illness. It is only through the nourishing of close social ties with kin, paisanos and friends in the city and countryside that they can find a way out. The critical component of such networks is the pattern of regular exchanges involving goods, services, information, ideas, and social commitments that evolve between the parties concerned. As illustrated at several points in this paper, such networks are not simply composed of individual sets of ties. They also often entail group activities and associational relationships based on some pre-existing and negotiated values or modes of social practice.
For all the above reasons, the exploration of the nature and significance of remittances requires an in-depth understanding of the flows, meanings, organizing practices and interconnected lifeworlds of migrant and non-migrant actors. We also need to examine how these interlocking livelihood arrangements are shaped and reconfigured by the various contexts in which they take place. It is important, therefore, not to abstract remittances from the rest of the social fabric. Flows of particular goods and money are framed by the values and meanings that are attached to them and by the nature of their specific transactions (Long and Villarreal 1998). This requires that we enter, once again, into that difficult terrain surrounding the issue of “commodity” versus “non-commodity” values (Long 1997, 226-44; 2001). While economists may continue to insist that goods and cash payments are best understood in relation to market principles and commodity prices, the social scientist needs to stand his or her ground and argue that an understanding of remittances in the context of migration and multiple livelihoods necessitates a good grasp of issues of social and cultural embedding.

6. Conclusion

This paper has stressed the need for a perspective on migration that addresses both the multiplicity and interconnectedness of different types of spatial and geographical movement and livelihoods, as well as the significance of transnational processes as enacted and perceived by the social actors involved. Underlying such a view are misgivings as to the usefulness of drawing sharp distinctions between types of migration – for example, between “internal” and “international” or “temporary” and “permanent” movements – since such typologies tend to segment and obscure the kinds of cross-generational relations that link different family branches and individuals engaged in migratory experiences at different stages in their lives. Moreover, as the ethnographic vignettes show, there is no great ontological divide between those living “at home,” or in some “distant city” or “transnational world.” Indeed, their life courses intersect through the translocal dynamics of familial reproduction and change. This is particularly striking when family groupings are implicated in a diversity of livelihoods or multiple family enterprises. Such modes of translocality of course play a critical role in shaping both local and transnational development processes.

25 Here we must acknowledge the extensive anthropological literature on gift exchange and “gift economies” in which both commodity and non-commodity values are intimately intertwined. For a detailed critical assessment of this work and how it relates to the commodification of culture in contemporary societies, see Frow (1997, Chapter 3: “Gift and Commodity”).
This suggests that, instead of aiming to categorize migration into types, we might do better to explore migration flows and patterns of geographic mobility from the standpoint of how they relate to the reproduction or transformation of family and community livelihood strategies and the kinds of social identities or “belongingness” they generate. Migration itself is too gross a starting point.

This issue is, of course, fundamentally methodological because the validity of the argument turns upon how one investigates these complex processes. Even if we are primarily interested in comprehending, for example, the impact of the broad economic, political and cultural changes associated with the emergence of an increasingly “global” and “globalizing” world, wherein geographical mobility, rapid transportation, and instantaneous communication of information are the norm, might it not be better to begin at points where specific actors and sets of actors experience, grapple with and attempt to give meaning to these processes in their everyday life circumstances? This, in short, is to make the case for in-depth ethnographic studies that enable the researcher to capture the making and remaking of the social and cultural lives of those “on-the-move” as well as those who remain at home. It also allows us to comprehend better how remittances in the form of goods, money, messages and services are embedded within ongoing social relations and moral imperatives. In order to facilitate this approach we need not only to develop appropriate field methods but also to evolve a suitable analytical vocabulary for conceptualizing the processes entailed. Hence underlying and framing the main empirical findings of this paper is my commitment to an actor-oriented theoretical approach. It remains for others to explore further the usefulness of this analytical framework in relation to the growing body of ethnographically-based materials dealing with translocal and transnational phenomena.
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- **MARIO**: retired mechanic in Lima
- **HUMBERTO**: D. 1958 accident at work in Huancavelica
- **LUIS**: died as a baby
- **HILDA**: manages family farm in Matahuasi
- **ATILIO**: D. 1997 owned transport company in Matahuasi
- **ANTONIO (TONY)**: owns construction company in Los Angeles
- **ALFREDO (ERIC)**: owns construction company in Miami
- **ALLICA**: farms family land in Matahuasi
- **LUIS**: construction supervisor in Los Angeles
- **CELSO**: employed by Antonio in Los Angeles
- **WALTER**: farms family land and transport in Matahuasi
Genealogy 1: Jiménez Family in 1972

- Enrique: meat trader, Matahuasi
- Máximo: meat trader, La Oroya
- Eduardo
- Isabel: works on family farm, Matahuasi
  - shopkeeper, Matahuasi
- Eustaquio Jiménez: owner of multiple enterprises, Matahuasi
- Juana Meza
- Mario: mechanical engineer, Lima
- Humberto: carpenter, Lima
- Luis: Miami
- Raúl: Miami
- Hilda: shopgirl, manager, Matahuasi
- Isabel: runs restaurant, Matahuasi
- Atulio: drives tanker, Matahuasi
- Antonio: textile engineer, Miami
- Alfredo: university student, Miami
- Allicia: works on family farm, Matahuasi
- Luis: student, Lima
- Celso: student, Matahuasi
- Walter: at school, Matahuasi
- Llama: timber merchant

* = those actively involved in running Eustaquio's enterprise

- = male
- = female
× = deceased