POLITICAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICES OF FEMALE TEXTILE ARTISANS IN LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

by

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(Under the Direction of Katalin Medvedev)

ABSTRACT

This study provides a current assessment of the social and political environments of female artisans in La Paz, Bolivia. The primary purpose of this study is to understand how the lives of urban female artisans in La Paz, Bolivia are affected by the social movement *Suma Qamaña* and its appropriation by the Bolivian government. Specifically, this study aims to understand whether these artisans are inspired by the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology, if the cosmology affects resource management in craft production, and if ethically-based ideals can be understood as a model for sustainable resource management in the fashion and craft industries. Using ethnographic methodologies such as qualitative interview techniques, participatory observation, and haptic engagement, this study provides a nuanced understanding of contemporary artisanship in Bolivia.

INDEX WORDS: craft, Bolivia, sustainability, textiles, ethics

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B.A., Indiana University, 2015

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2019

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May 2019

DEDICATION

I dedicate these efforts to my mother, without whom a project of this kind would not be possible. She is a magnificent woman, a caring doctor, and an adventurous artist. If anything she is too selfless. She set the mold—a person both intensely studious and chaotically creative. I dedicate these efforts to my father, without whom I would have surely given up by now. With emotion and logic, he guided me with kindness and encouraged me to be accountable for my mistakes. He set the mold—a person both brilliant and humble. I dedicate these efforts to all of my siblings and the rest of my family, all over the world. Technology keeps us connected, but we know it runs much deeper than that.

I dedicate these efforts to Dr. Katalin Medvedev. It would be misleading to refer to her solely as my major professor or advisor. She has been far too patient with me, but above all she understands me both intellectually and emotionally. She encouraged me to take classes outside of our department, submit papers for publication and abstracts for international conferences, and study and conduct research abroad. There were moments in which I was ready to accept failure but she never permitted it. She has made me a stronger and more accountable person.

I dedicate these efforts to the artisans of *Artesanía Sorata*, Ms. Diane Bellomy, and all of the warm and vibrant people I met in La Paz. It is a period of my life that I still haven't quite processed. The love I received from the city and its people, I will never forget.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Katalin Medvedev, who has challenged me, guided me, and comforted me in these past two and a half years. Dr. Medvedev has assisted me in countless grant applications and publication manuscripts. She always encouraged my bohemianism but knew when to tell me to slow down and stop traveling. She is a brilliant mentor and an honest, kind, and flexible human being. She has made me a better writer and a harder worker. But above all, she has encouraged me to be proud of who I am.

I would like to also acknowledge the help and guidance of my committee members, Dr. Fausto Sarmiento and Dr. Laura McAndrews. Dr. Sarmiento encouraged my budding interest in the *Suma Qamaña/Sumak Kawsay* movements in the Andes and assisted me in obtaining the LACSI grant that first brought me to Bolivia. His academic guidance and personal encouragement were vital in maintaining focus and excitement for this project. He is a kind, brilliant, and hardworking man. Dr. McAndrews has provided excellent guidance in constructing methodology and following format, two subjects that are not my strong suits. Her time, encouragement, and organization are highly appreciated in the culmination of this project.

I would like to acknowledge the guidance and cooperation of Dr. Ron Balthazor, the Sustainability Certificate staff, and the Office of Sustainability. I am so proud to be the first Graduate student graduating with the Sustainability Certificate and the 2018 recipient of the Sustainable UGA Outstanding Graduate Student award. Thank you all.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is a word often used to signal necessary change in our global power structures and individual lifestyles. Conventional definitions of sustainability phrase the protection of the world's natural resources in terms of human-centered utilitarianism (Chapman, 2005; Taylor, 1981). This instrumental view of nature positions humans as mere consumers, rather than integrative parts of the natural ecosystem. Conventional definitions of sustainability ignore the multitude of highly productive societies that have maintained a reciprocity with their natural environments and contributed to biodiversity (Schmidt, Brown, & Orr, 2016). These societies demonstrate that humans can form ethical and spiritual feelings toward the natural environment which result in mutually beneficial resource extraction behaviors (Nazarea, 1999).

In contemporary discussions of sustainable fashion, ethical decisions are primarily exercised through the rational decision making of consumption (Collins & Murphy, 2014). Although consumers may self-identify as ethical or conscious, the price point is still the greatest influencer at time of purchase (Rothenberg & Matthews, 2017). Within the current fast fashion system, the externalization of environmental and social costs of producing such inexpensive, fast, and low-quality garments is hidden from the consumer. In the absence of an ethical or spiritual praxis, these practical decisions, no matter how harmful, are often upheld. Ethics may reconcile the cognitive dissonance that consumers experience when they theoretically do not want to support the destructive consequences

of the textile and fashion industry, but do not change their purchasing and lifestyle behaviors (Thomas, 2014).

While the application of ethics and spirituality can guide consumers to address their consumption habits, traditional artisanship can address the integrative paradigm of human-nature relations in a more fundamental way. Traditional artisanal craft reflects the surrounding environment and natural resource profile of its origin (Carruthers, 2001). By living with and understanding the boons and constraints of an environment, over time artisans develop highly sophisticated knowledge systems and practice sustainable resource management to ensure their future livelihoods (Carruthers, 2001; Nazarea, 1999). At present, these practices require resiliency, as environmental degradation and economic instability force artisans to adapt to drastic changes in their local natural environments and respond to the vagaries of the global market (Scrase, 2003).

The artisans' everyday situated practices, their traditional knowledge base, and the inherently sustainable characteristics of craft production –flexible, small-scale, localized, and resilient systems – reflect potential trends and future alternatives for the apparel production industry. The experiences of urban female artisans in La Paz, Bolivia allow us to observe resilient behaviors and solutions that inspire design and systems thinking, environmental adaptation, and cultural negotiation (Manzini & M'Ritchaa, 2016). This is a form of sustainability that is defined and practiced by producer communities and does not rely on the current dynamics of Western consumption practices to alter natural resource management. Ethical and spiritual attachments to nature can help us expand our identities as humans beyond our role as consumers (Fletcher,

2014; Thomas, 2014). Creative communities, such as artisan groups, have the potential to generate solutions for everyday life, society, and well-being in general.

Statement of Purpose

The primary research question of this study is to understand how the lives of urban female artisans in La Paz, Bolivia are affected by the social movement *Suma Qamaña* and its appropriation by the Bolivian government. Specifically, this study aims to understand whether these artisans are inspired by the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology, if the cosmology affects resource management in craft production, and if ethically-based ideals can be understood as a model for sustainable resource management in the fashion and craft industries. Thus the primary purpose of this study is to assess the current social and political environments of female artisans in La Paz, Bolivia.

Justification

A comprehensive understanding of beliefs, behaviors, and everyday lives of female artisans in La Paz provide a nuanced perspective of how we interact with local natural environments. In the literature on sustainability in fashion, the current discourse is primarily focused on the realization of ethics through consumption (Collins & Murphy, 2014; Delmas & Burbano, 2011; Scammell, 2003; Shen, Wang, Lo, & Shum, 2012; Shen, Zheng, Chow, & Chow, 2014; Tseëlon, 2011), rather than how ethics and spirituality can fundamentally change our views and behaviors toward consumption (Carruthers, 2001; Nazarea, 1999, 2006; Thomas, 2014). There is a dearth of inclusivity in discussions and definitions of sustainability and current consumption habits must be questioned. In this study, I gather and analyze information for a more nuanced understanding of how ethical

and spiritual attachments to nature can inspire a paradigm shift that repositions humans as but one part of an integrated eco- and fashion system.

Objectives

The main objectives of this study are to understand how ethical and spiritual attachments to nature can motivate sustainable resource and land management behaviors, to examine how artisanal craft can inspire future sustainable production systems, and to contribute to the sustainable fashion literature by augmenting the discourse on bottoms-up, everyday forms of sustainability.

Conceptual Definitions

A cooperative is defined as "an organization founded to provide mutual assistance in economic enterprises for the benefit of their members" (Wethey, 2005, p. 10). Their purpose is to ensure fair working and trading conditions rather than the maximization of profit, which is in contrast to capitalist enterprises

Neoliberalism is an economic system that grants international market institutions such as the World Bank the authority to override national and local governments and enforce global market rules (Busch, 2014).

Decolonial scholarship seeks to "make visible the struggles and strategies against coloniality", both in paradigm and from the social and political praxes of people in post-colonial societies (Walsh, 2012).

Global south and global north refers to the disparities in capital, technology, and development between developed and less-developed economies (Kacowicz, 2007).

La conquista refers to the Spanish colonization of the Americas (Galeano, 1997).

Subaltern refers to populations or groups that are outside of the hegemonic power structure—economically, geographically, socially, and politically (Spivak & Guha, 2003).

The *marea rosada* is a collective response of many national governments—namely Venezuela and Bolivia– to the economic imperialism of the United States and international governing bodies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Specifically, this defines a marriage of an increase in state regulation–out of opposition to neoliberalism–and participatory democracy–out of opposition to 20th-century socialism (Fontana, 2013; Kennemore & Weeks, 2011).

Craft contains one, some, or all of these characteristics: "specialized knowledge, systemic thinking, localization, authenticity, and continuation of tradition" (Zhan, Walker, Hernandez-Pardo, and Evans, 2017, p. 869), all of which I argue are congruent with sustainability

Indigenism is a rights-based discourse negotiating space, time, and a historical sense of injustice. It refers to the ritual practices that are rooted in a particular way of life, such as communal natural resource management, and are used as politicized symbols that relate to ongoing demands of indigenous political organizations (Canessa, 2014).

Indigenous Biocultural Heritage (IBCH) contends that loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation are not merely biological, but economic and political (Graddy, 2013).

An *ayllu* is a traditional indigenous community in the Andes that practices subsistence agriculture and has localized political and social structures. Well-being and

development of the community involves not just the humans, but the plants, animals, and the rest of Nature (Gudynas, 2011).

Ayni characterizes the division of labor and resources in the rural *ayllus* that enables communities to support one another with mutualism and resiliency (Ashwill, Blomqvist, Salinas, & Ugaz-Simonsen, 2011).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

How is sustainability defined?

The most widely accepted definition of sustainability comes from the United Nations' Brundtland Report, which states that sustainable development "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987, p. 23). In mainstream discussions, sustainability is understood having three "pillars"—environmental, economic, and social (Gibson, 2006). Environmental sustainability primarily describes the safeguarding of human welfare by protecting the quality and continuity of natural materials used for our needs. Economic sustainability describes the maintenance and equal distribution of capital in local and global communities. Social sustainability describes the healthy maintenance of social capital—the cohesion of community, civic participation, identity, morality, and many other traits (Goodland, 1995). Sustainability is a concept that holds an urgent relevance because of global inequalities in wealth and resources and the rapid degradation of the global ecosystem (Gibson, 2006). It is a word often used to signal necessary change in our global power structures and individual lifestyles.

While international institutions have attempted to create a fundamental definition for sustainability, its meaning is still contested. Sustainability relates to the precaution, minimization of negative effects, and corrective actions necessary to ensure a viable and pleasant future for future generations. Increasingly, academics and professionals

recognize that the applicability of sustainable solutions, while globally necessary, is highly context-dependent (Gibson, 2006; Kossoff, 2015; Ostrom, 2010). That is to say, although there are many negative effects of global practices on the environment and society, the solutions that arise will be highly specific to their localities (Kossoff, 2015).

In the literature on sustainability, the three pillar system is largely regarded to be outdated. Fourth and fifth pillars have been added, making the five pillars to be economic, environmental, social, political, and cultural sustainability (Gibson, 2016). However, contemporary approaches to sustainability typically do not focus on the pillars as independent, but rather interdependent and integrated (Gibson, 2006). In contrast, while the mainstream definition of sustainability focuses on people, planet, and profit—reflective of the three pillars of social, environmental, and economic sustainability—certain factors such as welfare and happiness are immeasurable. Scholars suggest that sustainability should only refer to the environmental pillar, while "well-being" should refer to the other two pillars (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). This debate is constant, with some scholars arguing for the integration of the pillars in order to understand the complexities of contemporary issues (Gibson 2006; Goodland, 1995). Others persist each pillar can only be understood in relation to itself, as ecological, economic, and social mechanisms all function differently (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010).

Using principles of ethnoecology to define sustainability

The role of ethics

The field of ethnoecology and its theories of sustainable resource and land management provide the theoretical backbone for defining sustainability in this study. Ethnoecology is a field primarily located in the discipline of anthropology but is

interdisciplinary in nature. Ethnoecology is broadly defined as "an integrative study of beliefs, knowledge and practice of a given social entity" (Barrera-Bassols & Toledo, 2005, p. 9). It is the study of how humans interact with their natural environment and historically has been utilized to understand how traditional agriculturalists practice sustainable landscape use and management. Ethnoecologists ask theoretical questions about human beings and their relationship with the natural environment in order to address global problems such as sustainable rural development, poverty alleviation, health care, and conservation of human and biological diversity (Gerique, 2006).

Most of these theories developed by studying resource-dependent and/or indigenous communities (Gerique, 2006). These communities are chosen for study because they are still living in close conjunction with the local natural environment, using resources that are closely available and subsisting in a manner that is very similar to those that came before them (Gerique, 2006; Martin, 1995; Nazarea, 1999). This is in contrast to contemporary lifestyles, as we subsist by consuming materials–both raw and manufactured–that were produced in geographically-distant locations. In these communities, two of the primary drivers of traditional land and resource management are spiritual and ethical attachments to nature. These attachments are formed by a repeated level of interaction with the local natural environment and create tangible benefits in regards to conservation and sustainable management (Nazarea, 1999). An ethic of respect for the natural environment tends to foster agency and stewardship of natural resources.

The application of ethics to natural resource use is related to the contrast between intrinsic and instrumental value (Taylor, 1981). When nature is valued intrinsically, it is valued for its own sake rather than what benefits it can bring–or how it is instrumentally

valuable–to humans (Sarmiento & Hitchner, 2017; Taylor, 1981). This perspective moves away from definitions of sustainability that solely phrase the protection of the world's resources in terms of human-centered utilitarianism (Chapman, 2005). That is, the dignity of nature is considered outside of its human use of it. This integrative paradigm considers humans as just one part of a complex ecosystem (Taylor, 1981). By intrinsically valuing nature, humans can form ethical and spiritual feelings toward the natural environment which result in mutually beneficial resource extraction behaviors.

A repeated level of interaction with the natural environment, in typical of resource-dependent communities, forms local knowledge systems. In ethnoecology, this is referred to as "traditional ecological knowledge" (TEK) (Nazarea, 1999). TEK systems also involve a particular "sense of place", or the spiritual, historical, and personal meanings of physical spaces and also the political economy of a space throughout time (Chapin & Knapp, 2015). To be rooted in a sense of place, people need to understand the limits of their environment. For personal attachment to develop there must be multigenerational and prolonged exposure to a landscape (Nazarea, 1999). Therefore, indigenous and resource-dependent communities are strongly shaped by their surrounding environment, holding it to be a vital part of their collective identity, resulting in a "rooted" sense of place (Chapin & Knapp, 2015; Hay, 1998).

However, it is important to note that modernity has translated into large migrations of people, disrupting traditional conceptions of a sense of place and challenging the existence of rootedness. Heritage has become disassociated from a sense of place as transnational communities of people find nuanced ways to maintain and express their rootedness (Hay, 1998). There are no longer economic incentives associated

with remaining rooted in a place and developing a deep, intergenerational bond with the local environment (Carruthers, 2001; Hay, 1998). This is because in a global free trade market, imported goods are often less expensive and more convenient than locally-produced products (Scrase, 2003). In addition, increased urbanization has reduced the viability and security of traditional rural lifestyles. Therefore, this highly specific knowledge of human-nature interaction, or TEK, is increasingly threatened by industrial destruction and the current mechanisms of the global economy (Carruthers, 2001). This acknowledgement, that TEK is threatened by structural inequalities in the global economic and political systems, is a central tenant of Indigenous Biocultural Heritage (IBCH) (Graddy, 2013).

Non-regulatory sustainable resource management

TEK systems describe a reciprocity that is inherent in any community that continually and successfully subsists within a particular ecosystem. The sense of place is incorporated into the ethics, cosmology, and identity of a community, promoting a regulatory function that is highly specific to local human and biological cultures (Nazarea, 1999). In fact, Andean social and political networks are considered unique and particularly strong because of the "profound moral and material obligations" (Koch, 2006) that are inherent in the cosmology. In the field of anthropology, TEK systems have formed a model for understanding the potential of non-regulatory and local decision-making processes (Nazarea, 1999). In contemporary life, centralized institutions have replaced local communities as the primary decision-makers for resource use and management, community needs, and economic participation (Ostrom, Chang, Pennington, & Tarko, 2012). The most extreme example of this is our collective

dependence on nation states to form agreements on climate change and enact global measures, rather than taking empowering steps toward individual lifestyle changes and reduction of energy consumption (Ostrom, 2010). Top-down regulatory approaches have led to complacency, as a minority of the world's population consumes a majority of the world's resources while the poor are left to struggle against the existing and impending effects of global warming (Guha, 1989).

The field of ethnoecology tells us that in the absence of regulation, communities can still make mutually beneficially decisions regarding resource use, both amongst each other and with the natural environment (Nazarea, 1999; Ostrom, 2010; Ostrom, Chang, Pennington, & Tarko, 2012). For example, amongst the *Itzaj* people of Guatemala, cognitive models–such as beliefs about the animistic spirits of plant and animal life–inform adaptive behaviors toward resource use, even in the absence of formal regulatory institutions (Nazarea, 1999). During rituals and celebrations, community members adorn themselves in costumes of jaguars and birds in order to become transformed into these animals through the union of spirit. These animistic beliefs reinforce the human's integral role in the ecosystem, rather than establishing a hierarchy among the many forms of life in their local communities. Because of this, the *Itzaj* practice much more sustainable resource extraction methods than the surrounding communities that have adopted more contemporary lifestyles (Nazarea, 1999).

In contrast, our collective histories under hegemonic industrial capitalism have strengthened the nature-culture divide and created a perception that humans are inherently destructive toward the natural environment and thus must be regulated and kept from pristine nature reserves (Radcliffe, 2009; Schmidt, Brown, & Orr, 2016). This

dichotomy results in a misjudgment that the world's growing population is the sole cause for current strains on the earth's resources. However, contemporary technology enables increased resource utilization and we must readdress our relationship to how we extract resources and design, manufacture, and consume products (Chapman, 2005). By understanding the diversity in lifestyles, a more inclusive type of sustainability emerges, one that is holistic, integrative, and dedicated to equality (Guha, 1989; Nazarea, 1999; Schmidt, Brown, & Orr, 2016).

The connection between craft and ethnoecology

Each material culture is a representation of the specific nature-culture interaction that it was birthed from. In particular, traditional artisanal craft reflects the surrounding environment and natural resource profile of its origin (Carruthers, 2001). Although communities traded and offered particular tools and food in exchange for quality fibers, the traditional craft and dress of each communities are reflective of the surrounding natural species—both cultivated and foraged (Zorn, 1992). Larger social and economic shifts have effected this dynamic in the Bolivian Andes, as artisans are more reliant on factory-produced and imported materials to produce high volumes of textiles for the global tourist market (Wethey, 2005).

Within the sphere of hegemonic industrial capitalism, many artisans experience difficulties in gaining access to raw materials used for their traditional crafts. That is because these materials are often prioritized for mass production or have become too expensive to obtain for small-scale, artisanal production (Scrase, 2003). Artisans are increasingly reliant on middlemen to procure these raw materials, which disrupts the traditional connection to the local environment and possible subsequent sustainable

extracting behaviors. Artisans might not take resource depletion as seriously when they do not have direct involvement with their means of production (Carruthers, 2001). This creates a dilemma in which artisans are placed at a distance from resource depletion and its ability to undermine their livelihoods. There is an "externalization of environmental costs", meaning that the destruction of the local natural environment no longer directly affects the livelihoods of the local community (Carruthers, 2001). It is evident that the further an artisan is from the source of their raw materials, the fewer incentives an artisan has to maintain a rooted sense of place, extend ethical considerations to their surrounding environment, and practice sustainable resource management (Carruthers, 2001).

Craft production that is rooted in and dependent on the local natural environment can provide livelihood for local communities, although there are still challenges associated with this type of production. While proximity to raw materials can maintain a sense of place, it can also disadvantage artisans in the global economy because of complications arising from poor infrastructure, transportation, and time constraints (Grimes & Milgram, 2000). In the 1960s and 1970s, the isolation of rural areas in Bolivia enabled middlemen to exploit traditional weavers, undervaluing their time and technical expertise and placing women in practical slavery by commissioning weavings for the price of input materials (Cohen, 1998; Stephen, 2005; Wethey, 2005). Existing gender dynamics further exacerbate these problem, as female artisans have greater difficulty in asking fair prices, obtaining timely delivery of materials, and tracing the supply chain of their materials (Grimes & Milgram, 2000). While extending ethical and spiritual consideration to nature can strengthen the resistance to "monolithic capitalist culture" (Hay, 1998) in defense of a rooted way of life and traditional ecological knowledge

systems, larger social and economic forces often further disadvantage the role of the indigenous artisan through forced exposure and participation in the global economy (Kellogg, 2005).

Sustainability in Fashion and Craft

Mainstream discussion on sustainability and craft

The emergence of the field of sustainable fashion created a deep investigation into the many problematic consequences of the global fashion and textile industry. This is a discourse that spans both minute details–such as the types of fiber used–and global macro issues–such as the fracturing of the supply chain and impossibility of traceability (Farley Gordon & Hill, 2015; Fletcher & Grose, 2012). The emergence of sustainable fashion can be linked to the three pillars of sustainability. For example, primary environmental consequences of the global fashion industry include exorbitant amounts of textile waste, the use of petrochemicals in fabrication and dyeing operations, the pollution of fresh water by the dyeing industry, the deforestation of virgin and old-growth forests for the production of cellulose-based fibers such as rayon, intensive pesticide and water use in conventional cotton cultivation, and many more (Earth Pledge, Co., 2007; Farley Gordon & Hill, 2015). Primary economic consequences of the global fashion industry include the exploitation and suppression of labor in producer regions such as Central America and South Asia, the intellectual property theft and cultural appropriation of indigenous designs and motifs, and many more (Black, 2012; Earth Pledge, Co., 2007). Consequences of the global fashion industry related to social sustainability involve public health crises in producer villages and communities, social isolation and abuse of female migrant workers, overconsumption, and devaluing of high-quality products, among many

(Black, 2012; Earth Pledge, Co., 2007). Like the three pillars of sustainability, these problems must be understood in relation to each another.

Mainstream discussions of sustainability and fashion in the academic literature are largely focused on consumer-driven or market-based solutions. That is, the majority of research conducted relates to the motivations and barriers of Western ethical consumers: why they choose to purchase "green" products, why they choose not to, and how to increase consumer demand in order to motivate the supply chain to become more sustainable (Collins & Murphy, 2014; Scammel, 2003; Shen et al., 2012; Shen et al., 2014). As it relates to craft, this research is primarily focused on Western, ethically-minded consumers and their perceptions of artisanal craft (LeMare, 2008). The literature states that concerned consumers can form bonds based on ethics of social and environmental responsibility and demand change from corporations (Collins & Murphy, 2014). However, this research indicates that although consumers may self-identify as ethical or conscious, the price point is still the greatest influencer at the time of purchase (Rothenberg & Matthews, 2017). In addition, academic research conducted on companies large and small reveals many barriers in creating more sustainable products and manufacturing standards (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012; O'Rourke, 2014; Shen et al., 2014). Barriers for large corporations include the need for increased state regulation, consumer desires for fast and cheap fashion, lack of legal accountability, financial disincentives of change, and lack of communication between industry professionals and producers (Dauvergne & Lister, 2012; O'Rourke, 2014). Additional barriers, particular to smaller firms, include difficulties in sourcing sustainable fibers and textiles, insufficient capital

for bulk orders, and consumer desire for cheap, low-quality clothing (Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik, 2015).

Gaps in the sustainability discourse

The current discussion of sustainability is largely reflecting the point of view of the Western ethical consumer. This focus on ethical consumption and its potential effects on transparency and production standards typically fails to challenge current consumption levels in the West (Tseëlon, 2011). "Green washing" has been identified as a way for corporations to present a responsible public image while stalling the necessary process of creating a more transparent and communicative supply chain (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). The current economic model is not designed to address structural inequalities, but rather views the success of an individual to be based upon her/his economic competitiveness. This does not take into account the diverse needs of producers and views access to the global market as the primary mechanism of social change (Bee, 2011). If we only study craft from the perspective of consumption, we reinforce the essentialism of free market capitalism by positioning consumption as the only solution for environmental degradation, economic inequalities, and the safeguarding of artisanal craft (LeMare, 2008). Consumer education is largely regarded as the main strategy for encouraging more sustainable behaviors–such as consuming less, mending clothing, reducing waste, etc. (Scammel, 2003; Shen et al., 2012; Shen et al., 2014). There is little to none acknowledgment of the role that spirituality and ethics can play in creating more sustainable lifestyles. Ethics may reconcile the cognitive dissonance that consumers experience when they theoretically do not want to support the destructiveness of the

textile and fashion industry, but do not change their purchasing and lifestyle behaviors (Thomas, 2014).

In addition, producers and consumers in the Global South might not relate to mainstream discussions of environmental sustainability. American consumers, for example, might consider sustainability to involve purchasing products that have been ethically sourced, maintaining national park reserves, and placing trust in environmental regulatory institutions (Guha, 1989). This is reflective of the essentialism of Western industrial capitalism, as our collective histories under this hegemonic system have created the perception that humans are inherently destructive toward the natural environment and must be regulated and kept from pristine nature reserves (Guha, 1989). The environmental issues that hold the primary position in our public discourse are carbon emissions and population control. While these issues do involve the majority of the world's poor, their livelihoods–often highly dependent on local environmental conditions–are directly affected by crises such as soil erosion, pollution of land and water sources, and overconsumption and waste (Guha, 1989).

Because of this, the collective histories of the poor in Latin America might define sustainability in a completely different way. They prioritize "grassroots sustainable development", cultural and biological diversity, inherited ecological knowledge or indigenous knowledge systems, distributional equity, and popular participation (Carruthers, 2001). These discrepancies can form misinterpretations that heighten social and economic inequalities. For example, factors such as extreme poverty and resource dependence prevent Southern communities from practicing "sustainability" in the Western sense of conservation (Guha, 1989). Communities that are not able to practice

traditional land and resource management might resort to cutting down old-growth forests, for example, or to cultivate a monocrop to sell on the global market. A system that seeks to reserve natural resource access for industrial purposes can fragment humans' relationship with nature and prevent natural systems of sustainable resource extraction from taking place (Nazarea, 1999; Radcliffe, 2009). This demonstrates the importance of fluidity and inclusiveness in defining sustainability, as the health of cultural and ecological systems are interdependent (Schmidt, Brown, & Orr, 2016).

The market-based approaches to sustainability can undermine ethical and spiritual incentives that encourage beneficial behaviors and actually contribute to the biodiversity of lived landscapes (Chapin & Knapp, 2015). In fact, humans have maintained incredibly productive, reciprocal relationships with the natural environment, as is observed in traditional communities of the Bolivian highlands (Gudynas, 2013). By maintaining ethical considerations of nature and practicing localism, artisans can resist the pressures of commercialization and homogenization of the global market, in addition to conserving resources at a sustainable rate. Despite the Western nature-culture dichotomy, maintaining biodiversity is vital for preserving cultural diversity and reinforcing local identities in the face of a hegemonic capitalist culture (Chapin & Knapp, 2015).

Prioritizing regulatory and market-based approaches over local knowledge systems ignores a score of highly productive societies that have not only maintained a reciprocity with their surrounding environments, but also contributed to biodiversity (Guha, 1989; Nazarea, 1999; Schmidt, Brown, & Orr, 2016). By living with and understanding the boons and constraints of an environment, local peoples have developed sophisticated knowledge systems and can provide grassroots approaches to sustainability

that do not rely on consumption or top-down regulation (Nazarea, 2006). The failure to incorporate such knowledge reveals the inherent inequities of our political and economic systems, as this local knowledge is not considered useful in terms of the priorities of global industrial capitalism (Mazzarella, Escobar-Tello, & Mitchell, 2016; Scrase, 2003). Top-down developmental approaches have regarded traditional ecological knowledge as backwards, which has bred resentment amongst indigenous peoples who do not have the opportunity to modernize on their own terms (Scrase, 2003). Non-regulatory or local decision making is often disregarded considering the scale and velocity of the global fashion industry. However, complex, global problems such as the destructiveness and fragmentation of the fashion and craft supply chains are not being resolved by macro-level, standardized, top-down approaches (Mazzarella, Escobar-Tello, & Mitchell, 2016). Local levels of agency and trust continue to be replaced with regulatory auditing and systems of measurement to conformity (Busch, 2014). Indeed, the standardization that results from these systems is reflective of a global loss of diversity in culture, species, and lifestyles.

In conclusion, sustainable solutions that come from the bottom-up and are grassroots in nature are solutions that accommodate local knowledge at hand (Fletcher, 2008). Over years of exposure and adaptation with a local natural environment, the local and/or indigenous populations develop specialized knowledge systems that provide models for sustainable development (Nazarea, 2006). It is this knowledge that must be utilized in ensuring the resiliency of our economic, ecological, and cultural systems. Regulatory, standardized solutions often ignore the richness of TEK and impose solutions that have little to do with the nuances of a local ecosystem and culture.

The role of craft in sustainability discourse

Research on traditional artisanship in the Global South is leading to an acknowledgement of the congruence of craft and sustainable production systems (Hyland, 2016; Kossoff, 2015; Manzini & M'Ritchaa, 2016; Zhan et al., 2017). From an economic perspective, revitalization of craftsmanship can be understood as an innovation toward small-scale, flexible economic systems (Manzini & M'Ritchaa, 2016). Indeed, since the political and economic crises of the 1970s, a post-Fordist industrial model that moves from large-scale factories and mass assembly to smaller firms, the combination of craft-skills and hand-held technologies, and kin-based labor networks has emerged in global supply chains (Chu, 2016). Therefore, it is not necessarily the revalorization of handicrafts that has spurred this gradual shift to flexible, small-scale production models but rather an adaptation to the demands of a rapid global economy. Equally important to acknowledge is the neoliberal misuse of the "local", as capital becomes even more free of the State and production is decentralized. This rhetoric is related to the emergence of microfinance, as it claims to assist impoverished communities with a bottom-up approach by catering towards local cultures and demands (Bee, 2011). However, in neoliberalism the decision making still lies with large, international institutions (Busch, 2014).

Nevertheless, production of traditional craft already has critical features–such as flexibility, customization, and locality–that anticipate future trends in production and marketing (Zhan et al., 2017). These aspects are congruent with contemporary desires of Western consumers, who exercise their civic values via ethical consumption and demand higher levels of authenticity, transparency, and customization (Collins & Murphy, 2014; Scammel, 2003). Theoretically, consumers in industrialized countries cannot consume

indefinitely. Once we have met most of our basic wants and needs, we become more attracted to beauty rather than quantity. This, along with the recognition that business thrives in democratic environments, is encouraging certain corporations to become responsible in addition to trying new, decentralized approaches to meet consumer demand (Scammel, 2003).

If managed equitably, small, localized production models are economically and socially resilient and allow more flexibility for artisan communities to strengthen the bonds with their material cultures and participate in the global market with agency (Mazzarella, Escobar-Tello, & Mitchell, 2016). This resiliency is formed out of necessity, as artisans must adapt to drastic changes in their local environments and the unpredictable global economy for artisanal crafts. The same reciprocity, or *ayni*, that characterizes the division of labor and resources in the rural *ayllus* enables urban artisans to support one another with resiliency (Ashwill, Blomqvist, Salinas, & Ugaz-Simonsen, 2011). Due to the prevalence of out-migration and the reduction in local resource-dependent communities, artisans use a nuanced definition of "local" in their craft production. When traditional lifestyles are disputed, migrants often construct a new identity derived from a common sense of "place"–a shared history and sense of unity out of solidarity with other migrants (Bastia, 2011). In their economic choices and nuanced identities, textile artisans are responding to globalization. By negotiating the global and local, urban artisans are embodying a "cosmopolitan localism". This term represents an openness to global flow of ideas, information, and money while remaining rooted in a literal or metaphorical "place" (Manzini & M'Ritchaa, 2016). This fluidity between the local and the global is currently touted as a future necessity for sustainable development

(Manzini & M'Ritchaa, 2016). In regards to the fashion and craft industries, it represents the marriage of global communication and trade with highly local systems of cultural production that can respond to necessary changes on their own terms (Kossoff, 2015).

Frustrations with the worldwide geopolitical deadlock on climate change has led to a backlash, in which the importance of everyday life is highlighted (Ostrom, 2010). The solutions that arise from everyday life are increasingly being recognized as an important domain for sustainability (Fletcher, 2014; Zhan et al., 2017). For example, Kate Fletcher's current "Local Wisdom" project examines the ways that crafters repair their garments in order to understand how new items are created with what we already have. These habits are analyzed and used as models to understand how to infuse these practices of use and repair into design thinking. This project is a recognition that everyday practices, such as mending and extending the life of a garment, can inspire widespread change (Fletcher, 2014). Additional factors of this phenomenon include the deskilling of labor and ubiquity of mechanization, which have created a societal desire to reengage with everyday, personal objects in a more active way. This desire reveals a frustration with the lack of consumer interface in the products that we purchase (Chapman, 2005; von Busch, 2013). These divergent themes unite in their focus on integrating local demands for control with powerful global processes (Kossoff, 2015; Manzini & M'Ritchaa, 2016; Ostrom, 2010). The experiences of urban female artisans reveal resilient behaviors and solutions that inspire design and systems thinking, environmental adaptation, and cultural negotiation. A focus and commitment to making everyday life more sustainable offers a community greater autonomy on all levels of scale–local, national, and global. These are solutions that are emergent, participatory, and

semi-autonomous (Kossoff, 2015). Creative communities, such as artisan groups, have the potential to generate solutions for everyday life, society, and well-being in general.

Current State of Artisanal Textile Craft in the Global South

Historical discussion in literature

It is important to establish the conceptualization of craft in the literature of dress studies. Modern craft studies emerged as a coherent discipline only in the last ten years. It is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing collaborations with anthropology, postcolonialist studies, feminism and women's studies, and art and design history ("Modern Craft Studies: The Decade in Review," 2017). The study of craft has typically been isolated from modern and contemporary art history because of the devaluation of skill and labor in favor of articulating intellectual concepts (Smith, 2016).

From the 1700s, Western culture pronouncedly became reflexive and aware of a sense of history. The rapidity and standardization of industrial processes created a sense that traditions are being lost (Crook, 2009). Textile production in Europe moved labor and production from the home and workshop to the factory (Tortora & Marcketti, 2015). The symbolism of labor changed drastically too in this period. Karl Marx's theories of "un-alienated labor" describe the medieval craftsman's ability to completely utilize her/his technical and artistic knowledge to produce an object, in a form of integrative creativity and freedom (Roberts, 2012). The shift toward capitalism and wage labor alienated individual workers in the division of labor of the industrial process and led to the devaluation of time-intensive craft processes (Bratich & Brush, 2011; Roberts 2012). In addition, Marx's theory of commodity fetishism elaborates on the devaluation and alienation of labor. According to Marx, once a handmade object becomes a commodity,

its value is decided by money, the universal determinant of value. Commodity fetishism aids in the qualification of the social relations of labor solely in monetary terms (Marx, 1959). Though Marx did not intend to romanticize the medieval craftsman, his theories were championed by John Ruskin and William Morris, the pioneers of the *Arts and Crafts movement* in England. Once craft was forced out of the market by industrialization, it took on a decidedly symbolic definition and has often been embraced by reformist tendencies (Bittner, Padt, & Klement, 2017).

From the 1800s, craft has largely functioned as the antithesis to industry and as a way to cope with modernism. As a response to modernity, craft has been associated with humanism, traditionalism, individualism, romantic anticapitalism, and nationalism ("Modern Craft Studies: The Decade in Review," 2017). The three primary objectives of the *Arts and Crafts movement* were to elevate the status of decorative arts (in this case, craft) to the realm of fine art, to find a sense of pleasure and freedom in work, and to reform design manufacturing (Crawford, 1997). Although the leading members of the *Arts and Crafts movement* were affiliated with the early Socialist movement in England, commitment to true social reform varied amongst members (Winter, 1975). Common narratives of the Arts and Crafts movement in England equate its use of craft with "social romanticism, a rejection of mechanization, and backwardness" (Bittner, Padt, & Klement, 2017, p. 17), avoiding and ignoring the political and social ideologies that accompanied the movement. The movement's most prominent leader, designer William Morris, was primarily inspired by John Ruskin's call for a return to the bespoke, crafted object, as opposed to the "spiritually deadness" of machine-made objects (Minahan & Cox, 2007). These narratives conveniently avoided the fact that traditional artisans were crucial to the

success of industrial technologies, as mechanization sought to replicate the natural movements of the artisan's hands, albeit on a larger and faster scale ("Modern Craft Studies: The Decade in Review," 2017).

Craft has often been a vehicle to provide physical manifestations for the values that are seen as threatened by industrial production (Crook, 2009). In this way, it is frozen in history and assigned "imagined human virtues"–such as resistance, skill, authenticity, benevolence, morality, and self-determination (Morris, 2016). Still today, craft is often defined by what it is not. Craft is defined as the opposite of mass production, but its existence is in part dependent on the dominant production model, being what it is. Indeed, craft's definition relies on a complex web of connotations, which are often made apparent when their underlying structures reinforce the very economic, social, and political dynamics that craft intends to disrupt (Bittner, Padt, & Klement, 2017). This is reflected in the modern Fair Trade movement, which seemingly provides Western consumers with an ethical option to manifest values such as equality, specialization, and creativity but, in reality, often reinforces the inequality of the global market (LeMare, 2008).

It is important to note the emergence of fiber art as a discipline in the 1960s and 1970s, a time period that not coincidentally is marked by the second wave of political feminism (Fowler, 2014). As a discipline, fiber art emerged as fiber craft's answer to the popularity and mainstream acceptance of studio craft in the post-War period (Fowler, 2014; Smith, 2016). The materials and processes of textile production were enthusiastically embraced while emerging conceptual underpinnings moved its form into the traditionally masculine realms of painting and sculpture (Smith, 2016). As more

female artists began to demand representation and access to studios and galleries, they were often asked to combine the feminized practice of handicrafts with the modernist painting traditions (Fowler, 2014). More artists of this period moved away from the mechanics of the loom in order to create larger and freer works, leaving behind the connotations of labor and industry and allowing the medium of fiber to be reconciled with the more conceptual frameworks of studio art (Fowler, 2014; Smith, 2016).

Contemporary craft is now largely defined by the amateur craftsman, who is reacting to product standardization, neoliberal capitalism, exploitative labor conditions, and the loss of local economies through the production of DIY products (Bittner, Padt, & Klement, 2017). The modern movement craftivism indeed found its birth in the counter-culture and feminist movement of the mid-century, as activists reembraced handcrafts to express concerns about environmental degradation and signify a return to the land (Minahan & Cox, 2007). Today, contemporary forms of feminism invoke the belief that individual practices can be political if they promote feminist ideals and values (Schuster, 2017). This embrace of traditionally feminized skills such as handcrafts holds a different connotation than in the 1960s and 1970s, when the movement was largely focused on identifying instances of gender oppression in everyday life–such as the feminization of home labor–and enacting collective action (Minahan & Cox, 2007). Contemporary "craftivism" is theorized as a means of overcoming alienation in a mechanized information society. The fact that handcrafts are no longer a necessary domestic pursuit in the Global North has relocated craft to the public sphere, as popular collectives such as "Stich n' Bitch" meet in public to fabricate both craft objects and counter-culture ideals (Minahan & Cox, 2007).

There is a tension between the ideals of a radical local craft production and the reality of the contemporary political craft movement, which profits from self-promotion and neoliberal entrepreneurship (Bittner, Padt, & Klement, 2017). In reality, a large part of machine-made consumer goods–especially low quality fast fashion items–require handwork and are produced by young females under dire and forceful conditions. This type of factory production is not coded as radical and represents extreme forms of feminized and undervalued labor (Bittner, Padt, & Klement, 2017). While the artisan's or crafter's hands symbolize the virtue of all things anti-industrial and radical, the hands of female garment producers in the Global South are–like their labor and societal positions–alienated, undervalued, and exploited by the very movement that intends to champion them (Bittner, Padt, & Klement, 2017). This is an inherent contradiction of liberal feminism. Women's equal access to the economy is an empowering step in retribution for centuries of exploitation. However, participation in this very market is reliant on the exploitation of many other groups, revealing the superficiality of a feminism that does not consider other societal factors like race and class (Bee, 2011).

In addition, the "activist appropriation of craft vocabulary" has led to an upsurge of artisanal rhetoric in marketing, and not just in the fashion industry ("Modern Craft Studies: The Decade in Review," 2017, p. 9). Anything from a car to a beer can be "crafted" with excellence, connoting a level of attention, time, and personalization that, again, is not considered to be synonymous with industrial production ("Modern Craft Studies: The Decade in Review," 2017). The definition of craft remains problematic if its relationship with industry is not acknowledged. Certain aspects of decentralized manufacturing–such as low-volume piecework and hand-held technologies–highly

resemble many aspects of anti-industrial definitions of craft (Chu, 2016). Craft and industry are in fact mutually dependent.

In the literature, craft has largely been understood as a social activity rather than a physical object. The process of craft constructs personhood, defines social categories, and creates social relationships (Crook, 2009). Practicing craft represents the creation of a social identity, as artisans do not just create objects with their hands, but also a sense of self (Chu, 2016). Therefore, the relationship between producer and consumer is laden with social meanings (Crook, 2009). Considering the global nature of contemporary craft production and consumption, the craft object symbolizes the tensions between the Northern consumer and the Southern producer and highlights the economic and social imbalances of the global economy. Studying the social identity behind craft brings agency to the artisan as not just a producer, but a creator who conveys conscious and unconscious social messages in their craft objects (Crook, 2009). Artisans explore "embodied relations, materiality, affective knowledge, place, sensory intelligence, and self" (Morris, 2016, p. 8). Craft is a physical object that allows humans to project hopes and anxieties, connect with peoples of the past and present, and construct individual and community identities.

Critical analysis of hegemonic discussion

Since the introduction of neoliberalism into the markets of the Global South, much literature has been written on the state of artisanal craft production in the global economy (Dickie & Frank, 1996; Le Mare, 2008; Murray, 2010; Scrase, 2003). Craft production inhabits a unique space in the global economy and has held nuanced value since ancient times. Today, craft represents a "premodern capitalism with cultural

globalization" (Carruthers, 2001, p. 658). In a technological world, handmade craft often represents a more "earthy" and idealized time, when objects could be made for the sake of beauty and profit considerations were not primary (Scrase, 2003). However, the reality differs greatly.

Craft is a primary conduit for Western consumers to connect with producer communities in the Global South who experience very different lives (Scrase, 2003). The symbolism that a artisanal item holds harkens back to a pre-Industrial era, which makes it very attractive to Western consumers experiencing a saturation of standardized, mass-produced items (Ger, 1999). However, many scholars warn that this ethical consumption of craft is "neoliberalism lite" and ignores larger systems of oppression and the increase of State negligence (Morris, 2016; Scrase, 2003). Under the hegemony of global capitalism, consumers are bereaved of a moral framework from which to exercise and challenge their ideals. They are left with an "ethical self-determination" and the only mainstream solution is Fair Trade (LeMare, 2008; Zick Varul, 2008). Economic inequalities between the Global North and Global South–referring to the disparities in capital, technology, and development between developed and under-developed economies–and within Latin American countries are "fundamental obstacles" to social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Lalander, 2016). Despite efforts in Fair and equal trade, these obstacles are exacerbated considering the disadvantageous social and economic status of most artisans–especially women, the vagaries of the global apparel market, the threat of craft commercialization, global competition, and the lack of bargaining power (Scrase, 2003). Loss of workers' rights and corporate control are also primary reasons for the devaluing of artisanal labor, which cannot be solely attributed to

a complete loss of skill or a dearth of technology (Morris, 2016). A critical analysis of the role of ethical consumption concludes that these well-meaning efforts are merely symptomatic and reinforce the hegemony of resource-extractive, global industrial capitalism.

In addition, a critical analysis of artisanal craft in the Global South reveals that items that are produced for the global market are generally simplified and devoid of specific cultural meaning (Murray, 2010; Scrase, 2003; Wethey, 2005). Weaving for a global market allows artisans to support themselves while reinforcing a cultural identity. However, this is dependent upon the existence of different types of textile production—production for the tourist market and production for local communities (Wethey, 2005). Although global demand for handmade crafts has encouraged artisans to continue producing, what is produced is often not considered authentic by producer communities. This phenomenon has reduced the locality of traditional crafts, especially with the increasing commercialization of crafts (Murray, 2010; Scrase, 2003; Wethey, 2005). While informal craft production often offers rural Bolivian women an opportunity to enter the marketplace, they are significantly disadvantaged by mass-produced outsourced "craft" products, posing a threat to the practice and maintenance of indigenous knowledge systems (Bittner, Padt, & Klement, 2017).

In contrast, craft can be a vehicle for cultural preservation. Artisanal craft that is produced for a local market is often intended for ritualistic or celebratory use, communicating the continuation of a culture and the transference of knowledge (Wethey, 2005). Ideally, artisans are given agency in determining what aspects of culture can be shared and appropriated by global consumers and what symbols remain sacred and

meaningful (Dickie & Frank, 1996; Murray, 2010). Craft production can encourage artisans to continue to produce both locally and globally, providing income for society's most despondent while reinforcing localized cultural traditions (Scrase, 2003). Therefore, there is a potential for producers to participate, resist, and critique the global capitalist economy through the production of both local craft and craft intended for the global economy (Scrase, 2003).

Feminist interpretations of the phenomenon of global craft have participated in the critical analysis of the social and economic inequities that are manifested in the dynamics both within producer communities and the global interactions of Northern consumers and Southern producers (Scrase, 2003; Zick Varul, 2008). The majority of this research focuses on the ability of female-led cooperative groups to gain access to global markets, demand social and economic equity, and resist backlash from their local communities, all with the help of microfinance loans (Bee, 2011; Jones, Smith, & Wills, 2012; Stephen, 2005). Microfinancing coincides with the move toward market-based approaches of development. Theories of feminist geography relate this to the flows of capital from the state apparatus onto the bodies of women (Bee, 2011). Both in large export-oriented garment factories and in unequal power structures between middlemen and craft artisans, the body–and specifically, the hands–are meant to operate as tools while the male intellect commands (Bee, 2011). Exploitation by middlemen can disempower women by separating skills and reducing the autonomy of individual artisans. In other words, the role of the artisan is reduced to the skill and mechanism of their hands and there is no cultural, social, or economic value to the work being done (Page-Reeves, 1998).

Indeed, cooperative-based development may have unintended complexities in the local and global markets. This includes misrepresentation or denial of local economic variability, the marginalization of poorer sections of a community, and the limitation of rational decision-making due to kin-based social networks (Cohen, 1998; Jones, Smith, & Wills, 2012). Microfinancing in reality is very complicated, as it assumes that all participants are rational economic actors (Bee, 2011). These problems are further exacerbated by existing gender dynamics, because female artisans typically have less power to demand fair prices and timely delivery of resources and they are faced with increased difficulties in obtaining sustainable sources of materials (Grimes & Milgram, 2000). In addition, female artisans that achieve more agency through cooperative-based development often have to resist resentment, anger, and even violence in their private lives (Koch, 2006). Feminist interpretations have linked this phenomenon with global issues of family violence and the feminization of home labor (Jones, Smith, & Wills, 2012; Koch, 2006; Page-Reeves, 1998; Stephen, 2005). Indeed, it is important to balance the benefits of accessing the global market with disadvantages that women specifically face in fully benefiting from the trade relationship.

To conclude, in an analysis of craft, sustainability, place, and identity, we must maintain a critical view toward social and cultural dichotomies of nature and culture by rejecting all binaries and adopting a dialogical perspective (Crook, 2009).

Bolivia Political and Social Context

Colonial and post-colonial treatment of indigenous peoples

Although some economic and social structures of the Spanish colonial period were related to preexisting cultural patterns, the objective of the *conquista* was the

exploitation of natural and human capital. In Bolivia, this economic and social exploitation has traditionally been focused on the extraction of Bolivia's rich mineral resources, in addition to the creation of textiles for the colonial economy (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015; Galeano, 1997; Zorn, 1997). Spanish colonial operations were largely located in the capital cities, consequently leaving rural areas to neglect, and in some cases, complete abandonment. As the feudal colonial systems of land management– *encomienda* and later *hacienda* systems (colonial Spanish labor systems that granted land to settlers, who claimed ownership of all natural and human capital)–were focused in valleys, indigenous populations in Bolivian Andes and Altiplano were pushed to higher altitudes and rugged slopes (Galeano, 1997). Here, the traditional *ayllu* system persisted, and in many communities still does (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015). Upon the arrival of the Spanish colonizers, the human capital of Bolivia experienced devastating population collapse, although indigenous communities of the Andes were in part more protected than those in more coveted lands. The *indio* (indigenous person) was at the bottom of the social ladder, and experienced slavery, torture, starvation, disease, discrimination, and horrific poverty at the hands of their Spanish colonizers. This has, for hundreds of years, spurred repeated revolts and insurrections, most of which have been suppressed by the powerful ruling class (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015; Galeano, 1997). The colonial period was a time of irreconcilable change in human demographics, power structures, and environmental resources. Bolivia was the last country in the Andean region to be liberated from the Spanish and followed a post-colonial path similar to other Latin American nations. Until the 1952 Revolution, indigenous peoples in Bolivia experienced a level of discrimination and poverty that differed little from their statuses in colonial

times. Until the 21st Century, Bolivia, a nation of majority indigenous peoples, was ruled by white, or *mestizo* (mixed-race, primarily of Spanish and indigenous origin) leaders and governments (Jackiewicz & Bosco, 2016).

It is extremely important to note that indigenism must be understood as more than an ethnicity; rather, it is a concept that encompasses the political and cultural ideals of the indigenous peoples of the Americas (Hennessy, 2017). In the spirit of a dialogical perspective, it is vital to emphasize that many ethnically indigenous people in Bolivia do not self-identify as indigenous, or might reject the term indigenous in favor of *pueblos originarios* (indigenous peoples) (Bastia, 2011). In a critical analysis, an essentialist definition of indigeneity must be avoided. Instead, the designation "indigenous" is understood as a rights-based discourse negotiating space, time, and a historical sense of injustice (Canessa, 2014). In addition, depending on the use of politicized symbols–such as the craft object– to define indigeneity must be avoided. Rather, ritual practices that are rooted in a particular way of life, such as communal natural resource management, are used as politicized symbols that relate to ongoing demands of indigenous political organizations (Canessa, 2014). A dialogical perspective must be maintained in order to understand the fluidity of craft, indigeneity, place, nature, and Bolivian society in general.

Neoliberalism, the struggle over ancestral lands and natural resources, and the rise of indigenous political engagement

Neoliberalism is an economic system that grants international market institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) the authority to override national and local governments and enforce global market rules (Busch, 2014).

Bolivia has suffered from neoliberal development schemes, which allowed foreign multinational corporations' access and control over the country's rich natural resources, such as natural gas and tin. After World War II, many countries in Latin America adopted a method of economic policy, called import substitution industrialization (ISI), which is based on the principle that under-industrialized countries in the Global South should reduce foreign dependency by producing most products locally, in an internal market (Hirchman, 1968). ISI took its form in Latin America as "Latin American Structuralism" and refers to a period of nationalization, subsidization of staple products–largely agricultural, and protectionist trade policies (Galeano, 1997; Jackiewicz & Bosco, 2016). By the 1980s, the ISI method of economic policy was abandoned at the insistence of larger Western markets and governing bodies such as the IMF and World Bank. These institutions replaced ISI with imposed privatization and shrinking of the state. The IMF and World Bank bailed out bankrupt state economies and imposed open trade policies. Liberalization of Latin American markets was destabilizing for society as the traditional welfare state diminished and local markets could not compete with cheap American imports (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015; Jackiewicz & Bosco, 2016).

This "logic of the market", or the assertion that unregulated free-market capitalism will naturally lead to development in the Global South, leads to a general de-politicization of inequalities and a reduction in State accountability and autonomy (Busch, 2014). Typically, issues once accountable to the State–such as workers' rights, community concerns, environmental protection, production standards, Fair Trade–are now addressed with market solutions, or more accurately, through multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) (Busch, 2014). In addition, NGOs (non-governmental organizations),

both in cooperation with the State and privately, began to absorb the majority of duties that were once the responsibility of the State to provide (Gill, 1997). This also coincided with the decline in labor and popular organizations, reducing the access that many Bolivians once had to voice their grievances and desires with the State (Gill, 1997).

The rise of ethnic politics in Bolivia began partly as an assertion of local autonomy and a challenge to the neoliberal policies of the 1980s and 1990s (Alberti, 2015). In particular, in the 1990s indigenous political organizations began to demand a new kind of State–one that includes the active participation of indigenous political groups, or plurinationalism (Gudynas, 2011). With this rise in ethnic politics and increased political participation, the demands for "ethnic forms of governance" and institutionalization of "cultural rights" has defined Bolivian politics in the 21st century (Alberti, 2015). These demands have been manifested in many ways, from the cultural recognition of the dignity of the *pueblos originarios* (indigenous peoples) to an increase in national participation of indigenous political leaders. In many rural areas of Bolivia, decisions about political support and policies are still made collectively, under public scrutiny (Alberti, 2015). Indigenous activists continue to fight for the institutionalization of these traditional social and political structures. This is inherently related to the struggle for ancestral rights of land, as indigenous communities in colonial and postcolonial society have little power to negotiate and form decisions about resource use on their own terms (Galeano, 1997).

In Bolivia, mainstream definitions of economic development have brought environmental havoc, social inequalities, and a loss of cultural diversity (Manzini & M'Ritchaa, 2016). The development of a contemporary political movement called *Suma*

Qamaña in Aymara and *Sumak Kawsay* in Quechua is indicative of the ubiquity of communal development and the demand for more representational forms of governance. The movement is a response to this "historic mal-development" and extends a rights-based model to individual well-being, natural entities, and resource management (Radcliffe, 2012). *Suma Qamaña* is a concept that seeks to redefine what "well-being" is. In the Andean tradition, well-being can only be achieved communally through the reciprocal management of resources and labor, referring to the concept of *ayni* (Ashwill et al., 2011). The Andean concept of the *ayllu* extends well-being to all of nature, which is in stark opposition to Western ideals of a nature-culture dichotomy (Gudynas, 2011). Under *Suma Qamaña*, humans and nature cannot be considered separately.

The *Suma Qamaña* cosmology is a combination of traditional ethical principles of the *pueblos originarios* of the Andes, the cultural critique of Latin American intellectuals, and the institutionalization of these concepts into the Bolivian Constitution (Vanhulst & Beling, 2014). It positions economic activity as only one part of a fulfilled life, which contains many other noneconomic components. These noneconomic factors include the intrinsic value of nature and its ability to improve human quality of life in relation to "spirituality, family, creativity, and relationships" (Sarmiento & Hitchner, 2017, p. 70).

Capitalizing on the movement, the current Bolivian government–the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS)–has codified *Suma Qamaña* into the Bolivian Constitution and the Law of Mother Earth, which contains language that positions the natural resources of the country as the spiritual blessings of the ancestral people (Gudynas, 2013).

The Rise of MAS and its effects on Bolivian society

The Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) is the dominant political party in Bolivia and is currently in power. The MAS first emerged in the Bolivian political sphere in 2003 by combining forces with *Movimiento Indígena Pachakutik*, another prominent indigenous-rights political party (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011). The MAS came to power on a wave of mass protests and "wars" directed at the former establishment, fighting against outstanding increases in commodities such as water and gas (Jackiewicz & Bosco, 2016; Kennemore & Weeks, 2011). In 2005, Evo Morales was elected president, following the resignation of the former president and a series of country-wide protests and blockades. By 2009, a new constitution established Bolivia as a plurinational and communitarian state, institutionalizing policies to address equality and sovereignty (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011).

The Movimiento al Socialismo has promoted the direct participation of previously excluded social groups while integrating traditional practices of indigenous groups into formal institutional structures (Fontana, 2013). The emergence of MAS is touted as an example of the move from free-market capitalism to a combination of developmental and 21st-century socialism–the *marea rosada* (pink wave) of Latin America (Fontana, 2013). This is a marriage of an increase in state regulation–out of opposition to neoliberalism–and participatory democracy–out of opposition to 20th-century socialism (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011). Since the election of Evo Morales in 2005, decolonization, nationalization, and pluralism have been the main rhetorical messages of the MAS (Fontana, 2013). Once in power, Evo Morales promised to reverse neoliberal economic principles, nationalize the industries, end the US-backed War on Drugs, and increase trade partnerships with

other Latin American and Asian economies, all in order to reduce dependency on the United States (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011).

The MAS has led a move from a strictly representative form of democracy to a participatory and communitarian model, one that accounts for the decision-making processes of traditional indigenous communities (Fontana, 2013). The new constitution brought legitimacy to both the MAS and its governmental structure, but social unrest in Bolivia continues. This is in part due to the raising of expectations and unresolved structural problems such as poverty, exclusion, and discrimination–all remnants of the colonial structure (Fontana, 2013; Jackiewicz & Bosco, 2016). The MAS faces increasing opposition, as it must organize against the old elites while responding to oppositional social movements involving the environment, corruption, and social identity.

Indeed, the GDP has risen while poverty has dropped, but the continuation of resource extraction in the name of development has spurred unrest from opposition groups. Indigenous communities, who have endured hundreds of years of devastating natural resource extraction at the hands of the colonizers and later the State, are demanding full rights to their ancestral lands (Canessa, 2014; Fontana, 2013; Galeano, 1997). When the MAS came to power, the national revenue was increased by nationalization of the hydrocarbon and mining industries. However, foreign countries continue to extract resources from the country, but a larger portion of revenues are redirected to the State. Critics assert that this is not true socialism, but rather a way for the government to secure capitalist surplus and bolster government spending and developmental projects (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011).

Critics also maintain that the MAS is not truly inclusive, referring to Evo Morales as an "Indian face" on the same underlying political structure (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011; Regalsky, 2010). For example, the MAS is accused of recruiting indigenous community leaders to inspire mobilization amongst indigenous communities while continuing to cater to the middle-class Ministry for Policy Decisions (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011). This recruitment of indigenous support is often encouraged during times of stability. In the wake of anticipated opposition, prominent indigenous leaders have been co-opted into the new government, subordinating their causes and organizations to the MAS (Regalsky, 2010). The MAS came into power by questioning the legitimacy of territorial configuration in the nation state and the traditional elite class of landowners. The MAS is attempting to balance indigenous demands for ancestral land ownership with those of the dominant and still powerful landowning class.

Lastly, critics believe that in the name of "Evismo", the push for plurinationalism has actually created a hegemonic collective identity, one that is based on an essentialist definition of Andean indigeneity (Fontana, 2013). This is a multiculturalist approach, which is the product of postmodern neoliberalism and considered nothing more than a top-down acknowledgement of cultural differences (Burman, 2001). Decolonialism, which the MAS claims to uphold and advance, is largely understood to combat multiculturalism, as it is opposed to neoliberalism, capitalism, and imperialism and dedicated to the revalorization of the subaltern (Burman, 2001). The MAS utilizes decolonialist rhetoric along with the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology in order to position indigenous peoples as the rightful protectors of the country's natural resources and gain popular support among the educated middle-class (Regalsky, 2010). However, urban

middle-class is using ancestral rights of the land as only a trope for indigenous political engagement without allowing full participation of indigenous political organizations (Canessa, 2014). These critiques all reflect a growing trend of decolonial scholarship on the disparity between the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology and its appropriation by the MAS (Mollinedo, 2017). When faced with decisions about resource use and infrastructure development, the government often acts against the wishes of grassroots indigenous organizations to the benefit of the State (Mollinedo, 2017; Regalksy, 2010). In reality, it appears that the ethic of *Suma Qamaña* is being corroded by the economic and political priorities of the State (Canessa, 2014).

Bolivian Textile Craft

Importance of Andean textile culture

Since pre-Hispanic times, woven cloth has been one of the most socially, politically, culturally, and economically important items in Andean culture. Cloth functioned in individual and community identity formation, as tribute to local leaders, as currency, and to mark celebrations and rituals (Costin, 1998; Zorn, 1997). Woven patterns in the Andean textile tradition are inherently communicative—they communicate local cosmologies, histories, and even agricultural methods (Zorn, 1992). In Latin America, prior to the establishment of a cash economy, textiles were the primary method of bartering; in rural areas of the Bolivian Andes, this transition was only made some decades ago (Wethey, 2005).

In Andean society, crafts and in particular, complex woven structures, have played a significant role in identifying with the sacred. In the Inka state, the majority of women worked hard to produce ceremonial textiles that were circulated around as gifts or

for important religious rituals (Kellogg, 2005). Primarily, the uniqueness of the traditional double-sided woven structure reflects the fundamental cosmology of the Andean people. The Andean cosmology is concentric, or coaxial, referring to a series of circles or spheres that share a center, with the larger circles surrounding the smaller circles (see Figure 1). The concentric worldview is one that perhaps refers to the reciprocal, integral role of humanity in the greater ecosystem in addition to belief that time and space are cyclical and thus determined by the relative point of the observer (Martin, 2006). The "fourfold rotational symmetry" of Andean woven structures correspond to this cosmology, as the direction of the images and woven patterns change relative to the viewer's position (Martin, 2006). The three-dimensionality of Andean woven structures allows weavers to work within the constraints of fabrication to produce sacred items that cannot be inverted or turned on a wrong side. This is possible by wrapping the warp threads with wool, which allows images and patterns to be seen from both sides of the woven cloth. The complex patterns in Andean woven structures also depict the coaxial symmetry of the universe, in addition to more literal illustrations of women weaving or spinning, referring to the reproductive capabilities of women in the broader cosmological vision (Kellogg, 2005). These images may have served as calendars, as the patterns and motifs helped mark space and time, informing communities when to plant and harvest their crops. In summary, both in fabrication and imagery, the Andean woven cloth serves as a "condensed reflection of the universe" (Martin, 2006, p.336).

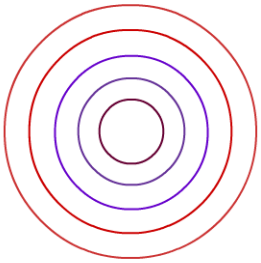

Figure 1: Concentric circles

Since pre- and colonial times, indigenous craft production in rural communities was often redirected from communal and household use to larger kingdoms and colonial cities as surplus (Costin, 1998; Radding, 2001; Zorn, 1997). In pre-colonial times, this served to devalue the status of the weaver as artisan to weaver in service of the State (Costin, 1998). However, some scholars argue that prior to Spanish invasion, weaving was done by the elites; it was not until after the *conquista* that local traditions emerged, forming the precursor for our contemporary understanding of Andean textiles (Zorn, 1997). In colonial times, forced craft production–especially woven cloth–was required as tax to the Spanish Crown, providing wealth to the colonists and increasing economic competition with the dominant British textile industry (Radding, 2001). Indeed, textile production in the Andes has always functioned as a source of cultural pride for localities, in addition to being a tool of exploitation of indigenous communities.

Middlemen entered isolated weaving communities in the 1960s and 1970s in order to purchase indigenous textiles for the tourist market. These relationships were exploitative from the start, but were stalled by the many civil wars in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s (Wethey, 2005). The introduction of the cash economy and middlemen increased the pressure to produce woven textiles to meet tourist demands,

challenging the non-market value of craft objects. Communities often ceased to have enough time to produce for their own internal needs and changed designs and working methods to meet the demands of the middlemen (Wethey, 2005). The 1980s represented the decade of change for traditional textile production in the Andean communities, as rural-to-urban migration and massive socioeconomic transformation resulted in a loss of traditional textile skills knowledge, homogenization of local cultural identities, and specifically, a move toward modern, Western dress (Zorn, 1998). In addition, the removal of antique traditional weavings from individuals, homes, and entire *ayllus* during the 1980s removed physical references for weaving models and advanced the disappearance of technical knowledge in communities (Zorn, 1998). Ecological disaster also made access to fiber and dyes extremely difficult and cash was needed to obtain factory-produced synthetic fibers (Wethey, 2005). Starting in the 1990s, the activities of NGOs, along with financial support from larger institutions, began to level the power relationship between producers, middlemen, and consumers (Wethey, 2005). NGOs working in this field often try to assist artisan communities in developing a simple and inexpensive commercial product to cater to tourist demands while maintaining the production of textiles for community use, to protect the identity and beliefs of the indigenous peoples from commercialization and commodification (Eversole, 2006; Wethey, 2005). It is important to note that pressures to continue producing "traditional textiles"—that is, textiles produced in the same way as always, with natural fibers and dyes and using technologies and patterns from the ancient communities—are actually inflicted by the tourist market. Pressures to meet global demand for "ethnic products" has

led to the hybridization, standardization, and simplification of communities' techniques and designs (Wethey, 2005).

Over the past few centuries, indigenous craft communities have adopted certain textile technologies imposed by colonial Europe–such as the spinning wheel, the Spanish vertical loom, and synthetic yarns (Zorn, 1998). This hybridization also describes the clothing that communities produce for themselves. These designs and structures tend to be more time-intensive and complex–indexing a higher quality–but contemporary artisans often prefer to use synthetic colors and fibers for aesthetic reasons (Wethey, 2005). Many indigenous groups in Bolivia have embraced synthetic yarns and colors, creating knitted and woven textiles with contemporary motifs and methods in order to reject the commercialization of their community's traditions (Wethey, 2005; Zorn, 1998). The Sakaka community is famous for their nuanced take on dress. Young migrants, returning from work in the lowlands, began to introduce Western, factory-produced clothing into the rural communities. As the majority of production was rerouted to the commercial tourist market, fewer local and traditional textiles were being produced. Rather, a new form of dress combining factory-produced traditional clothing, synthetic fibers and dyes, and Western clothing emerged (Zorn, 1998).

In conclusion, the fundamental mechanisms of producing cloth involve interaction with the natural world by cultivating plants and animals for fiber and dye. These traditions have remained because they transcend the demands of the market. Rural communities that continue these practices understand that by harvesting these natural bounties and producing a craft from them, they are exercising their inherited knowledge systems (Radding, 2001).

Gendered aspects of textiles in traditional Bolivian Andean societies

Andean complementarity is imbedded in the cosmology and way of life of the traditional *ayllu*. Labor and symbolism is heavily gendered, but considered complementary (Koch, 2006; Zorn, 1998). In colonial times, this duality was reinterpreted in labor, albeit the forms that is took were different from the traditional division of labor. For example, after the introduction of the European vertical pedal loom (*el telar español*), men typically adopted this technology and wove on the mechanical loom. Today, women continue to weave primarily on horizontal makeshift looms (Radding, 2001; Zorn, 1998).

This complementarity has been reembraced by indigenous collective action movements, acting as a model for drawing upon pre-Colonial social structures to reimagine Bolivian society and specifically, gender relations (Burman, 2001). However, there is a current tension between decolonial activists, who define gender relations in the Andean non-hierarchal complementarity, and middle-class feminists, who worry that their indigenous sisters will be relegated to the same patriarchal treatment at home that they experience in society. This reveals a tension in discerning what particular social behaviors are remnants of colonialism and what can be attributed to traditionalism (Burman 2001). While the new Bolivian Constitution is unprecedented in its recognition of the rights of women, it also grants indigenous autonomy and "communitarian administrations of justice", meaning these indigenous socio-political institutions and norms are reinforced (Burman, 2001). Decades of research in gender relations in the Andean region of Bolivia reveal a spectrum of experiences, from women who exercise agency in their lives and achieve complementarity in the household, to women who suffer

the same mistreatment and exploitation that middle-class feminists are warning against (Kellogg, 2005; Koch, 2006). Additional hardships involve barriers of class, language, literacy, and the persistent racialization of indigenous women as dirty, passive, and deserving of abuse (Kellogg, 2005).

In Andean society, the traditional community structure is operated by the married couple. The process of gendering is vital in identity construction and is realized upon the successful union of a marriage (Koch, 2006). In many rural indigenous communities, it is still considered mandatory for a young woman to be highly skilled in weaving, sewing, and spinning in order to demonstrate her eligibility to marry (Kellogg, 2005; Zorn, 1998). In the literature, there is an agreement that women in Latin America are comparatively more politically active than in other regions of the world and regularly perform collective action both in public and in private (Jacquette, 1973; Kellogg, 2005; Koch, 2006). This narrative is challenged when considering the power that rural-to-urban migration has in the nuclearization of families. This phenomenon describes a move from the community structure of the *ayllu* and the family unit consisting of extended family members to a life of increased isolation as a conjugal unit in urban centers (Koch, 2006). This isolation is both private and public, as domestic violence rates are very high in La Paz and women working in domestic labor experience sexual exploitation and mistreatment in negotiating employer-employee relationships (Kellogg, 2005; Meekers, Pallin, & Hutchinson, 2013). Indeed, the burdens and benefits of migration and inequality are unequally shared by women (Bastia, 2011)

Migration to the city is also the primary way that rural women can join the citizenry and participate in the political discussion (Bastia, 2011). Textile crafts in rural

and urban spaces have provided an outlet for many indigenous women, both rural and urban, to challenge oppressive power structures both in indigenous communities and in the post-colonial urban society. Denise Arnold, a leading anthropologist on gender and textiles in Bolivia, has stated that although Andean women might not be interested in verbal political participation–as a result of being silenced by the dominance of male oral discourse–they utilize the loom to create a symbolic language and manipulate the woven text. This material production references the reproductive powers of their gender, in addition to their roles in the household and society in general (Arnold, 1997). However, these "female" skills of articulation are devalued in a neoliberal market, as these handmade garments are typically only used for ritualistic or symbolic affairs (Burman, 2001).

The effects of globalization on Bolivian textile craft

Processes of globalization and free market capitalism, such as the introduction of foreign goods into the Bolivian market and increase in infrastructure development, have drastically changed the production and role of textile crafts in Bolivia. These changes range from the type of textiles being created, the materials used to make textiles, the creation of an informal industrial textile sector, and migration patterns and their subsequent effects on gender dynamics in Bolivia.

Contemporary craft items that are produced for the global economy have been commercialized and abstracted from their original symbolic, ritualistic, or practical meaning (Murray, 2011; Scrase, 2003). Rather, these items maintain certain aesthetic similarities in order to identify with the cultural or ethnic group of origin, but they are largely simplified and at times not even made by hand. Indeed, there is a trend of

producing these craft items in mass, completely abstracted from their original cultures and materials. These mass produced "craft" items are often made in peripheral markets outside of the cultures that they are intended to represent and sold and used out of context, challenging the existence of authentic artisanship (Mazzarella, Escobar-Tello, & Mitchell, 2016; Murray, 2011). However, it is obvious that in some communities, women are still weaving for communal and ritual purpose. In fact, tracing the life of a woven object shows that often women will "debut" a new woven belt during a community celebration and wear it once or twice more. After that, the object is either saved and stored for family inheritance, used daily and eventually worn to tatters, or sold to local cooperatives or merchants to be sold on the international tourist market (Zorn, 1992).

Textile production in Bolivia, both industrial and artisanal, is largely characterized by the use of natural fibers—primarily alpaca wool, sheep wool, and cotton (Frasier, Bruss, & Johnson, 2004). However, the introduction of acrylic yarns and bright synthetic colors has made its mark even on artisanal textile production, as most artisans prefer to produce items for themselves and their families with synthetics, due to its novelty and practicality (Zorn, 1998). Today, artisans utilize both natural and synthetic fibers and both hand- and factory-spun yarns to produce textiles depending on the type and purpose of product.

Textile production in Bolivia can no longer be assumed to be only artisanal and handmade. Indeed, an informal, small-scale industry of textile workshops is active in large cities such as La Paz. In contrast to artisanal craft, these small-scale, informal workshops primarily produce casual apparel for local and neighboring South American markets (Frasier, Bruss, & Johnson, 2004). Although the textile sector is the third largest

national industry after mining and agriculture, the majority of textile producers are not registered with the government, due to the high cost of registration and taxes (Frasier, Bruss, & Johnson, 2004). Many textile producers find that it is more advantageous to pay bribes to local tax auditors than pay official taxes. These small-scale producers are typically family owned, informal, and provide a supplementary income for an extended family (Frasier, Bruss, & Johnson, 2004). Because the apparel industry is largely informal, little research exists on the perceptions of these apparel producers toward their work. Textile production has lifted many societies out of poverty, so there is a general assumption that Bolivian textile producers want to capitalize on participation in the formal textile economy. There is indeed a great opportunity in attracting more industrial textile manufacturing to Bolivia because of cheap labor costs, pre-existing skill sets, and the need for job creation in rural areas (Borsdorf & Stadel, 2015; Frasier, Bruss, & Johnson, 2004). Indeed, large buying companies have expanded the outsourcing of production to smaller, informal enterprises for lower production costs, flexible manufacturing, and speed (Chu, 2016). This is synonymous with the arguments made in support of the inherently sustainable aspects of small-scale craft production. However, these operations typically yield low returns for the informal producers, who are disadvantaged in the bargaining process and must compete with cheap imports in the local economy (Jones, Smith, & Wills, 2012). Additional barriers to attracting textile manufacturing investments include the lack of industrial infrastructure and government policies (Frasier, Bruss, & Johnson, 2004). These barriers also impact the ability of artisanal craft cooperatives in achieving greater success in the global market.

In addition, the effects of globalization have drastically effected resource use patterns and migration. Environmental degradation in rural areas of Bolivia is influencing migration to the major cities and disrupting traditional knowledge systems in traditional communities on the Altiplano. Structural adjustment programs that began in the mid-1980s drastically disadvantaged the lowest-income class of Bolivians in order to reduce the national deficit and reduce inflation. As thousands of male workers in the agriculture and mining industries fled to urban centers in search of work, women increasingly entered the informal market to respond to this new burden of providing a household income in addition to keeping the house and caring for the family (Balán, 1996; Bee, 2011). Indeed, existing gender dynamics can disadvantage female artisans that remain in rural communities as men migrate to more economically-profitable regions, leaving the women to manage the farmland, in addition to providing for an extended family (Gisbert, Painter, & Quitón, 1994). As men leave women behind in rural areas, the women acquire new labor-intensive duties in addition to the usual keeping of the home. Specific causes of rural-to-urban migration include reduction in productivity of the land, subdivision of farmland, over-exploitation of resources, soil erosion and drought, devaluing of agriculture products, and high costs of production (Balán, 1996). Other causes include difficulties in obtaining loans and implements to improve the productivity of small, rural businesses and farms, drastic changes in climate, and improved transportation to Eastern Lowlands (Bee, 2011). This increase in adequate infrastructure has connected the communities of the Altiplano to the fertile and prosperous East, drastically reducing the practice of a traditional rural lifestyle.

Increasing population pressures on the land in local communities has, in past decades, promoted specialization and intensification of agriculture, rather than diversification. This supports the trend toward monoculture and away from traditional communities practicing sustenance. These pressures, along with land subdivision, have spurred mass out-migration to the lowlands of Bolivia, primarily to participate in the coca agribusiness (see Figure 2). Only through migration can many households generate the money necessary to continue to engage in agricultural activities at home (Balán, 1996; Page-Reeves, 1998; Zorn, 1998). In addition, young, unmarried women in rural provinces have, since the 1980s, migrated to urban regions in order to earn money and build a dowry. This is necessary because of rural poverty–the commercialization of agriculture, unequal land distribution patterns, and the decrease in viability of maintaining rural, subsistence lifestyles (Lawson, 1998). As the sons typically inherit what little land there is, daughters are left to migrate to the cities in order to earn wages, often in informal and unsafe conditions, in order to become valuable in the marriage markets of their villages (Lawson, 1998). Younger generations do not necessarily want to work with their hands and ideally seek professional experiences in the formal economy. In reality, education in rural areas is often seen as a long-term investment and economic conditions are often so dire that short-term benefits, namely precarious wage labor in the city, is preferred (Punch, 2015).

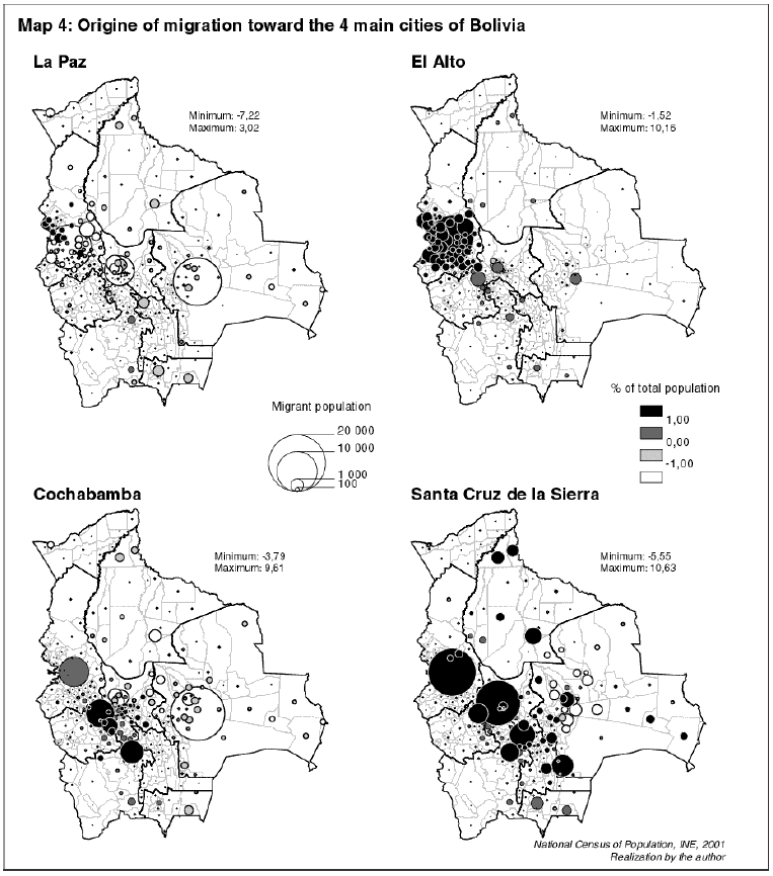

Figure 2: Migration of Highland Bolivians to Eastern Lowlands

Faced with the necessity of supporting extended family networks, more and more rural artisans are migrating to large cities such as La Paz in order to professionalize their craft skills and join cooperatives and artists' associations (Bee, 2011). Handcrafts provide rural female migrants an ability to begin producing an informal wage upon arrival to La Paz and El Alto, an eastern suburb of the capital city (Gill, 1997). However, once in the city, new foods, clothing, and lifestyles significantly alter and mesh with the traditional way of life (Bastia, 2011). Nevertheless, it is very common for indigenous women to re-adopt or maintain the use of the traditional clothing, while the majority of urban indigenous men wear Western clothing (Burman, 2001). The term *cholita* specifically refers to an urban woman who wears a traditional costume, consisting of many *polleras*

(long, colorful skirts), a bowler hat, two long braids tied together, and a large crocheted *manta (*shawl*)*. The dress of the *cholita* is highly contested, as it is an identity-marker that incites both discrimination and hatred from *mestizo* society while also being an emblem of cultural pride for urban women (Kellogg, 2005; Zorn, 1998).

Efforts to combat changes resulting from migration and preserve textile artisanship

In Bolivia, artisanal textile production has been utilized as a developmental tool for rural and marginalized urban populations (Eversole, 2004; Gill, 1997; Wethey, 2005). This is largely attributed to pre-existing skill sets, particularly among indigenous communities. The required technology is typically low-cost and the products created hold a personalized and romantic appeal to Western consumers (Eversole, 2006). There is a variety of approaches to improve the economic competitiveness of artisanal textile products. These strategies include ethnodevelopmental approaches, government-sponsored microenterprising efforts, and artists' associations. Economic efforts to revitalize artisanal craft production in Bolivia are often centered on ethnodevelopment. Ethnodevelopment is the concept that economic developmental efforts should be created and managed by non-dominant and indigenous cultural groups (Eversole, 2006). This approach can be applied to cooperatives in Bolivia that consist of indigenous artisans and produce traditional textiles, but are managed by well-meaning anthropologists and cultural specialists from the West. The levels of ethnodevelopment can be placed on a spectrum, from production that is commercialized and abstracted from its symbolic meaning to production that allots as much control as possible to artisan communities (Eversole, 2006; Murray, 2011; Scrase, 2003). The concept of ethnodevelopment is derived from the need to balance the cultural capital of non-dominant groups with an

economy that typically values material culture by its potential profitability (Eversole, 2004). In sum, ethnodevelopment often depends on accountability from the State to facilitate an environment where "culture precedes commerce" (Morris, 2016), and not the other way around.

While State-led microenterprises can enable women to “squeeze out” an income from an already poor living, they do not seek to drastically change the indigenous female’s role in society (Bee, 2011). The approach of many government-sponsored microenterprise initiatives in Bolivia has prioritized economic development over everything. In general, these efforts have not emphasized cultural revitalization but rather categorized urban indigenous populations as a target population because they are recently arrived and economically disadvantaged (Eversole, 2006). Government-sponsored policies are often viewed as paternalistic because they are seen as ploys to register workshops with the government, gain taxes, and profit off of informal production, in addition to being considered irrelevant and unsuccessful (Scrase, 2003).

Artists’ groups and cooperatives also serve as a tool for female empowerment in Bolivian society. They are often encouraged and supported by local NGOs that receive funding from international aid organizations, the local and federal State, and religious and/or humanitarian organizations (Gill, 1997). For example, the *Club de Madres* organizations—organized by the Catholic Church—served to gather mothers, provide free milk and rice, offer sanitation and health assistance, and even teach knitting and sewing. Some craft-related NGOs and entrepreneurs used the clubs as opportunities to recruit and encourage women to make marketable crafts in their own time in order to supplement their incomes (Koch, 2006). Benefits of cooperatives include the opportunity

for women to educate themselves, produce at home, subvert middlemen, access external sources of capital, increase control of productive activities, and incorporate themselves into foreign markets (Page-Reeves, 1998). More specifically, working cooperatively can allow women to "pool resources, access inputs, credits, services, and information, offer economies of scale, knowledge-sharing, and increased bargaining power" (Jones, Smith, & Wills, 2012, p. 15). Female artisans that save money to collectively purchase land is an example of how a collective enterprise can pool resources and be in greater control of their means of production (Jones, Smith, & Wills, 2012).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Ethnographic Approach

The methodology used for this research study can best be described as an ethnography. An ethnography is a form of qualitative methodology that studies knowledge creation (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Ethnographies have been deemed appropriate to study "beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, emotions, verbal and nonverbal means of communication, social networks, associates, fellow workers, and colleagues, use of tools, technology and manufacture of materials and artifacts; and patterned use of space and time" (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 4). Ethnography is a methodology utilized in all branches of anthropology—linguistic, cultural, and biological—and also other fields such as history, sociology, and communication studies (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The ethnographer is a constant observer who collects and interprets seemingly isolated data to understand relationality and integration of knowledge (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2008). Ethnographies work with the premise that facts are not waiting to be discovered, rather, facts and knowledge systems are created through social interactions and intercultural exchange. Ethnographies investigate "situated knowledge" systems. They acknowledge the agency of the individuals they study in knowledge creation and how they organize knowledge in complex systems (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2008).

Ethnography makes no large claims about universal human behavior; the underlying motive of most studies is to validate and strengthen local cultures. In ethnography, "specificity leads to universalism", meaning no direct, causal relationships are formed in data collection (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). The process of ethnographic research starts with approaching the field with a preexisting theoretical background for observation. It continues through accumulating evidence to further adapt and mold theory, and collecting data again (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2008). In this sense, ethnography differs from quantitative data collection methods. For example, a survey relies on random samples that represent populations that are unrelated to one another. In contrast, ethnographic inquiry is interested in the interrelation and integration of these units, which is something that cannot be measured alone in a numerical survey (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2008).

This study is a critical ethnography. Critical pedagogy challenges the underlying causes of "class exploitation and economic oppression within the social, political, and economic infrastructure of capitalist social relations of production" (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008, p. 237). Critical methodology has been used to provide critical discourse, advance the politics of liberation, and facilitate open-ended dialogues that are multi-voiced and participatory. The function of a critical ethnography is to disrupt the status quo and reveal "underlying and obscure operations of power and control" (Madison, 2011, p. 5). In practice, critical ethnographies have often utilized specific methodologies such as community-based participatory research (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008).

To honor the developments in critical anthropology, this study involved the participation of the researcher in the lives of indigenous people. It aimed to support the

struggles of indigenous people and advance their causes (Nash & Buechler, 2016). A critical and indigenous methodology is committed to dialogue, it is community-based, and aligned with cultural autonomy (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). My research was guided by the above principles. However, such research is not just an approach to understand inequalities between individuals or social groups. My inquiry was meant to investigate the current relationship between humans and the natural environment and challenge the human-culture dichotomy that asserts that humans must control, rather than live reciprocally with nature. Indigenous people might agree that the current crises of the world go beyond the effects of neoliberalism and the fracturing of democracy. Their way of life suggests that the primary global crisis is a spiritual one that challenges the role of humanity within nature (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008).

Reflexivity of the researcher and participants

In a study involving ethics and conducted in the Global South, a researcher's positionality must be addressed. However, a traditional discussion of positionality would only lead to a never-ending battle between perceived objectivity and inevitable subjectivity. Critical ethnography, utilized in this project, accepts that the tension between the researcher and the studied is every-changing and fluent (Madison, 2011). Therefore, in my data collection process I have felt the need to be self-reflective and challenge my own positionality. I have not excluded myself from the group that I studied. In fact, I continually sought ways to integrate myself into the group, to remain open to new knowledge and traditions, and allow myself to be shaped by my surroundings.

The data collected in this study must be interpreted with consideration of the societal, cultural, and economic positions of all participants. The artisans of *Artesanía*

Sorata are women, many of whom have migrated from rural, traditional communities. As women in a postcolonial society, the artisans are often given the responsibility of safeguarding their native cultures, whether they want this responsibility or not (Silverblatt, 1988). The artisans physically perform their communities' and nation's histories and traditions by sewing, knitting, and weaving. However, rural-to-urban migration to La Paz enables many women to decide what traditions are brought to the city and what traditions are left in the countryside. The artisans exhibit great agency in their negotiation of their traditional skill sets in their participation in the urban informal economy. They capitalize on their inherited skill sets while finding new ways to build community and participate in the formal political and economic culture of Bolivia. Because of their gender, ethnicity, and migrant status, many of the women interviewed might not feel fully incorporated into the urban citizenry of La Paz and therefore might speak from the position of being "outsiders". Their positionality as members of Bolivian society is highly unique, as the artisans are females practicing traditional craft skills in a rapidly urbanizing society.

As the majority of the artisans do not participate in the formal economy, it is understandable that they might not look favorably upon the MAS's economic policies, which have prioritized industrial agriculture and natural resource extraction. As many artisans stated that Bolivian people are not currently interested in their local craft traditions, the women of *Artesanía Sorata* are primarily focused on introducing their products to the global market and tourist economy. Their expectations of their national government might include increasing trade agreements with foreign markets and augmenting the flow of tourists that come to Bolivia. However, as many interviewees

stated, the MAS has sought to lessen Bolivia's dependence on the American economy. This has resulted in decreased access to foreign markets and fewer tourists visiting from the United States and Israel, due to hostile relations between these governments. Understandably, the artisans of *Artesanía Sorata* hold unfavorable opinions of the MAS's economic policies as they have not directly benefited from them. This frustration is magnified considering the optimism and faith that accompanied Evo Morales' historic election in 2005. As expectations initially rose with an anti-Imperialist, pro-Indigenous president, the current disappointments are heightened. While there are certainly demographics that have benefited from the MAS's economic policies and political culture, the artisans of *Artesanía Sorata* are representatives of the informal, non-salaried, and non-Unionized laborer who has not benefited from these monumental shifts in Bolivian society.

In addition, the positionality of the business owners and artisans of the group *"El Sendero que te Llama"* must be addressed, as most of the members of this group were small business owners that have above all suffered from the decrease in tourism experienced in the past decade. While not all members of the *"El Sendero que te Llama"* group expressed negative opinions about the effects of the Movimiento al Socialismo on their livelihoods, the decline in tourism, frustrations with accessing outside markets, and the mandatory rise in wages were grievances frequently expressed. As small business owners, the members of *"El Sendero que te Llama"* represent a segment of the Bolivian society that has not flourished with the economic policies of the MAS, a fact that colors their perspectives in this study.

The two interviewees from the West, Dr. Denise Arnold and Ms. Diane Bellomy, have been living in Bolivia for over forty years. However, it is vital to acknowledge that their statuses as English and American women, respectively, must color their experiences in Bolivia. For decades, Dr. Arnold trained and worked intimately with Elvira Espejo, who is the current director of MUSEF, the *Museo Nacional de Ethnografia y Folklore* (National Museum of Ethnography and Folklore) in La Paz. Dr. Arnold met Ms. Espejo when she was conducting research on the rural Altiplano. She stated that as a young child, Ms. Espejo approached the Western anthropological researchers, asking, "Why do you all never ask the children for stories?" Dr. Arnold recognized in Ms. Espejo a strong tendency for storytelling and began to train her in field research once she reached adolescence. Ms. Espejo lived with Dr. Arnold and her husband in La Paz, attending the university and eventually replacing Dr. Arnold as the director of MUSEF. The two researchers have published several books together on the ancient weaving structures and material practices of indigenous communities on the Altiplano. However, Dr. Arnold stated that the political culture of the MAS has discouraged professional indigenous people from mingling with *mestizo* or white professionals. According to Dr. Arnold, there is a backlash against Western, white, *gringo*, and *mestizo* society. Because of this pressure, Ms. Espejo has had to distance herself professionally from Dr. Arnold in order to build her career as an indigenous woman in La Paz. This anecdote is told from the point of view of Dr. Arnold, who—despite her decades of residency and research in Bolivia—has lost credibility as an Englishwoman and faces increased difficulty in navigating the new political culture of Bolivia.

During my time in La Paz, I was repeatedly told that the Andean people are known for speaking with a *boca callada* (literally "shut-upped" mouth). This refers to the quiet, hushed tones that the indigenous Andean people—especially the women—speak with. When I inquired why this is the dominant speaking style in La Paz, I found that this was a defense mechanism that indigenous peoples have formed over hundreds of years to address their colonizers. However, this behavior should not be regarded as merely submissive. Hundreds of years of exploitation, in particular exploitation disguised as "research", have formed a counterhegemonic evasiveness to protect indigenous culture and knowledge systems (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). Perhaps there will always be a divide between the researcher from the West and the studied indigenous population. After all, Dr. Arnold mentioned that due to the highly racialized political culture of the MAS, many Bolivians now hate that people like Ms. Bellomy love native Aymara weavings. A protectiveness of Bolivian culture might pose an inherent and unsurmountable barrier to truly penetrating and understanding Bolivian society for both women and myself.

Indeed, the perspectives of Dr. Arnold and Ms. Bellomy are from the point of views of outsiders. Their decades of close interaction with Bolivian society and culture and namely textile artisans provide an invaluable understanding of Bolivian material culture. This statement is particularly relevant for Dr. Arnold, who is by training a cultural anthropologist and has published extensively—in Spanish and English—on Bolivian material culture and her experiences conducting research in the Andean countryside. A high degree of sensitivity is mandatory in navigating the positionality of a Westerner conducting research with indigenous communities. In the data collection and analysis of this study, I consistently challenged my own positionality as a Western

student and textile crafter. In particular, I attempted not to fall victim to the simple valorization of all things handmade and traditional. After all, I am one of those foreigners that loves the traditional Bolivian crafts and natural fibers and dyes. This is reflective of my own overexposure to mass-produced, synthetic items. In addition, I approach sustainability from the perspective of choice, as I live in a country where it is actually more convenient to have a wasteful lifestyle. With these insights, I sought to have an open mind and not moralize or pontificate my views on artisanship and sustainability. This created a deepened respect for the material practices of the artisans, who above all practice decide what traditions they seek to perpetuate and what traditions that they adapt for contemporary lifestyles.

I went into this research project not expecting Bolivian female artisans to be passive. I was also fully aware that as a young, faired-skinned, female American student, I would not be able to be a "fly on the wall", nor was it my intention to study these women as if I was not there. However, I was also conscious of the fact that I am more than just an American student representing the University of Georgia, just as these artisans are more than just indigenous women "representing Bolivian crafters". Something that I share with my research subjects is beyond the institutional–it is cultural, physical and also universal. I inherited textile crafts from my mother, just as these artisans inherited the material culture and crafts of their communities from their mothers and grandmothers. It was my hope that in the shared space of sewing, spinning, knitting, and weaving, our social positions and roles in the world that appear to be fixed and hierarchical could be momentarily transcended through the sharing of skills and working together.

Ethnographic methods utilized in this project

Similar to most contemporary ethnographies, this was a short and narrowly focused research project. Knowledge production and writing often involves improvisation. Ethnographic research is heavily reliant on improvisation because researchers have to adapt to and heighten their sense of time and process in the field (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2008).

My implementation of ethnographic methods is an acknowledgement that in the world, events do not always follow one distinguishable logic. Multiple explanations and relations emerge at once or in retrospect. My research was interested in the relationship between systems and individuals. I was aiming for a holistic understanding of the social, cultural and professional status of female artisans and craft production in contemporary Bolivia, rather than a direct, causal explanation or generalizable knowledge production. My project meant to acknowledge the multiple paths of knowledge production and dissemination. This is most reflected in my choice of learning from the artisans haptically, through touch (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2008).

Similar to emerging forms of indigenous epistemologies, I was operating under theories of cyclical knowledge creation. I vacillated back and forth between familiarity and unfamiliarity, my plan and its execution, theory and discovery, and the present, past, and future. Ethnography, unlike most methodologies, is never followed to an exaction. Rather, I allowed my findings to inform my initial research questions, as the data that I collected differed greatly from my expectations. As ethnography is practiced, it is redone, redefined, and updated.

Preparation for field research

Ethnography was a fitting methodology for this research project because I was studying locally-specific behaviors. To be effective, I inserted myself socially, culturally, and geographically into a specific location as the primary research tool. Part of the preparation for field research is, typically, learning the field language, writing theoretical essays, reading area literatures and histories, analyzing other ethnographies, and taking exploratory trips to the field (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2008). I have engaged during my career as a graduate student with all these actions. I have been improving my spoken and written Spanish consistently over the last two years and have had immersive opportunities to practice it during trips to Uruguay, Bolivia, and Cuba. In courses such as Environmental Ethics and Ethnoecology I read and critiqued texts involving the rights of nature, ethnographies, and indigenous cultures through class discussions and written assignments. I have also taken coursework in the politics, environment, and culture of Latin America.

Research Population and Data Collection Sites

This study focused on female urban artisans in La Paz, Bolivia. Artisans who either work or have worked for the company *Artesanía Sorata* were the primary research participants of the study. In total, twelve female artisans were interviewed. Besides formal interviews, data collecting sessions took place during participant observation or, informally, in social settings. Most of the artisans employed by *Artesanía Sorata* also worked for other companies or cooperatives at some time. Therefore, their experiences are reflective of urban female artisans in La Paz in general, and not just working for *Artesanía Sorata*. In addition, eight supplementary interviews were conducted either in a

group setting or individually. These interviews involved business owners, visual artists, and anthropologists in La Paz, who provided additional data to arrive at my final conclusions.

Most interviews took place in the *taller*, or workshop, of *Artesanía Sorata*. Twice a week, Ms. Bellomy, the American owner of *Artesanía Sorata*, had drop-in hours for the artisans to bring their completed works for compensation and receive instructions and materials for their next order (see Figure 3). During these drop-in hours, interviews –both individual and group– were conducted. I had a weekly weaving and spinning lesson with Justina, the main weaver of the company. The classes were also used for collecting data. Other sites of data collection included the weekly *"El Sendero que te Llama"* meeting—a group of eleven business owners, artisans, and educators that formed out of a need to distinguish truly handmade artisanal objects in La Paz, the workshops and homes of various associated artisans, artists, and business owners, and the brick and mortar of *Artesanía Sorata*.

Figure 3: Diane and Alejandra discussing the next week's order

Table 1: Textile Artisan Research Participants

Research Participants	**Where is she from?**	**How did she learn craft?**	**How does she perceive her craft?**
Justina	*Mollo* community on the Altiplano	In community setting and also self-taught with spinning manual	With pride for continuing community's traditions
Paulina	Rural community on the Altiplano	In community setting, but professionalized skills in La Paz	With pride, especially for the natural fibers
Ana	La Paz	In a *materia* school	As a hobby
Juana	Sorata	From her mother, who was an artisan for *AS*	As work
Isabel	La Paz	From her parents, both artisans	As work and also an important cultural craft
Alejandra	La Paz	In a *materia* school and from friends	As work
Maria Concepción	Rural community on the Altiplano	From watching other women in public	As work and hobby
Victoria	La Paz	From her mother	As a hobby
Lily	Rural community on the Altiplano	In a community setting	As work
Claudia	Sorata	From her mother and grandmothers	With pride and as a hobby
Monica	La Paz	In a *materia* school	As work and hobby
Mercedes	Rural community on the Altiplano	In a community setting	With pride and as work

Case selection

Snowball sampling was used for this research study. Snowball sampling is a type of sampling commonly used in ethnographic, qualitative research. It occurs when, "the researcher accesses informants through contact information that is provided by other informants" (Noy, 2008, p.330). Snowball sampling has a cumulative effect, especially when employed in the study of social networks (Noy, 2008). The more contacts that I established in La Paz, the more opportunities I had to interview artisans and learn more

about textile craft in Bolivia. This method was well suited for this study as the goal was to understand the individual artisan's experience within contemporary Bolivian society.

Recruitment

Initial efforts of contact with artisanal craft businesses in La Paz took place through email prior to January 2018. Contact information was collected through the companies' websites. After determining the companies that have missions of preserving Bolivian craft and protecting the environment, four companies were initially contacted. In January, during my first trip to La Paz, upon face-to-face meeting two companies agreed to participate in this study. However, by May, Diane Bellomy of *Artesanía Sorata* was particularly committed to conducting the study together. My existing relationship with Diane Bellomy enabled me to establish contact with the artisans in her company. Through these artisans, I met family members and friends that are also artisans. The twelve primary interviews that were conducted with the artisans of *Artesanía Sorata* were became possible by chance because the only criteria for participating in the study was employment with *Artesanía Sorata* and availability. The economic and social realities of a large metropolis such as La Paz make scheduling extremely difficult. Therefore, the interviews that were conducted were often opportunistic and improvisational. Overall, flexibility and chance meetings were a major part of my socialization and characterized data collection in La Paz.

Data Collection

Ethnographic interviews

I primarily utilized ethnographic interview technique to collect data. Ethnographic interviews are especially helpful when one is interested in the intimate details of the

interviewees' personal histories, practices, and in the nuances of their cultural knowledge and beliefs (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Personal narrative inquiry techniques were used to understand the experience of being an artisan in contemporary Bolivia. Narrative inquiry is a "study of people's stories that involves creating, collecting, and analyzing written texts" (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 86). I also utilized informal focus-group interviews because my initial field research in January revealed that it was often practical to interview several artisans at once (while they waited to talk with the manager, for example). Utilizing such opportunities for data collection was not only productive, but also very enlightening because many of the artisans had unique personal histories. Sharing their stories created a space for the artisans to learn about one another, which in turn helped build trust among them and with me, the researcher. The intimacy of sharing personal stories also helped secure their involvement.

A benefit of conducting personal interviews is that it provides an opportunity for the interviewer to present the interviewee as a subject with agency, rather than an object to be studied (Madison, 2011). Rather than enforcing a binary between the researcher and interviewee, the two are able to form a partnership and create meaning together. Face-to-face interviews allow an individual's subjectivity emerge. They also provide an opportunity to share insights as representatives of their collective culture. The function of critical personal narratives is to disrupt official historical accounts and reveal how a particular individual has experienced these events (Madison, 2011). This aligned with my primary research goal, which was to understand individual artisan's experience within contemporary Bolivian culture.

Participatory observation

During the interview process, I was focusing on my interviewees' "embodied experience." I wanted to understand how their physical being participated in the creation of knowledge through their involvement in craft production (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). In the West, written tradition has been prioritized over bodily knowledge. While writing has traditionally defined civilization, the body has been equated with Nature, the "Other," the female, etc. The goal of "radical empiricism" that I have subscribed to as a researcher is to engage with the "Other" viscerally as well, though the senses, such as touch, smell, and sounds. It requires sharing in their bodily experiences, without being mediated by distance or detachment (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008).

Haptic knowledge co-creation

One of the goals of my fieldwork was to share the physical experience of knowledge production with the female artisans I studied. I wanted to experience the same feelings, using my body the same way they did when they created crafts. I was keen on understanding their work through the sense of touch as they primarily work with their hands. It was a deliberate choice on my part to absorb knowledge not exclusively through discursive means or mere visual observations, but also tactile means. I wanted to share the physical experience of touching fibers and partaking in fabrication techniques with my participants (see Figure 4). Being a crafter, I consider material objects to be material manifestations of thought processes and meanings. I also believe that woven "texts" allow artisans to use a physical object as a medium to tell life stories or experiences (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

Figure 4: Cecilia and I talking and knitting

Elicitation techniques

I also implemented elicitation in my research. Elicitation is a technique that is used in narrative inquiry. I used material items, such as a spindle, a loom, fiber, and woven object, to elicit individual and group responses to understand how these craft items and tools are used within Bolivian culture.

To summarize, data collection methods included ethnographic interviews, participatory observation, haptic knowledge co-creation, and elicitation techniques. The interviews with the artisans were part traditional ethnographic interviews and part life stories. I also conducted focus group interviews with the involvement of several participants and utilized elicitation methods with textiles and craft making tools and materials. I also had informal conversations with artisans and partook in craft socialization by participating in weaving and spinning classes. All interviews were conducted in Spanish, with Ms. Bellomy occasionally helping me translate certain words or phrases that were specific to the hybrid of Aymara and Spanish that many of my interviewees speak.

Instruments and their implementation

Prior to field research, I prepared a questionnaire and obtained IRB approval. Before the interviews started, I obtained verbal consent for all interviews. The questionnaire was developed with the help of the theoretical backbone of the literature review and translated into Spanish with the help of Mauricio Villa, a colleague and native speaker. The questionnaire was meant to assure that I ask the same questions of my interviewees. However, I did not use the questionnaire very often because the scripted questions quickly revealed themselves to be irrelevant to the conversational styles of the artisans. Consequently, in the course of the research, many of the questions were modified and rephrased with the help of Ms. Bellomy when it was evident that an artisan reacted strangely to a question or its wording.

Topics covered in the semi-structured interviews involved skill acquisition and transference and the artisans' perceptions of craft and sustainability. Attitudes towards nature and indigenous cosmologies were also investigated. The environmental and social effects of Evo Morales' *Movimento al Socialismo* were additional topics of discussion.

Follow up interviews were usually only available by chance, if a certain artisan happened to be in the workshop more than once. However, continued contact was established with certain artisans that had more prominent roles in the company. For example, I had more exposure and time to talk with Justina, the resident expert weaver of the company and was able to develop a closer relationship with her as a result.

Field journaling and data logging techniques took place daily. A field journal was used for observations in the workshop and the brick and mortar of *Artesanía Sorata*. Data

from the interviews were collected and logged in the same journal, as most artisans expressed confusion and discomfort with being electronically recorded.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by first organizing the field notes in a coherent manner. The field journal was kept chronologically. However, as the nature of ethnography dictates, some interviews and observations occurred unexpectedly. Therefore, the first step in analyzing the research experience was organizing the field notes. The next step was the transcription of the written interview notes to the computer for ease of use. Transcripts were compared to find commonalities between words, phrases, themes, and events. I did not employ a transcription software because the interviews were not recorded. The findings are worked into a narrative that both supports and contradicts the existing literature. The summary of the findings is provided in the discussion section.

Multiple validation strategies were employed in this study. These strategies include reflexivity, peer review, and triangulation. Reflexivity was essential in conducting this study, as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) requires special consideration to be taken when working with indigenous communities. As mentioned, I sought ways to integrate myself into the group of artisans by engaging haptically through craft. This allowed me to remain open to new knowledge and traditions and be shaped by my surroundings. Research from this study has been published in the peer-reviewed journal *Fashion Practice* and accepted by a peer-reviewed collection of essays that is to be published by McGill-Queen's University Press. In addition, parts of this research have been presented at two international conferences, the International Conference on Gender, Work, and Organization in Australia and the Global Fashion Conference in the United

Kingdom. In order to be accepted into these journals and conferences, the data and findings of this study underwent extensive processes of peer review. Lastly, triangulation is primarily defined in three categories—data, investigator, and theory (Reeves, Cooper, & Hodges, 2008). This involved comparing different sources of data, calling upon multiple researchers to compare data and theory creation on a similar topic, and approaching data with different concepts and theories. Data triangulation methods included comparing observations to personal accounts in the interviews and searching for redundancy, similarity, and conflictual knowledge. Investigator and theory triangulations in this study involved calling upon Bolivian and indigenous textile experts for formal interviews and utilizing literature review as a rich source for data and theory. Coding was performed for different audiences, as some knowledge emerged as relevant for the female artisans, while other forms of knowledge were more relevant for a Western academic audience. This acknowledgement aided in coding, allowing themes to emerge, and drawing proper conclusions.

Assumptions

A primary assumption of this research study is the designation of the research population as indigenous. An essentialist outlook that seeks to root a research subject's authenticity in ethnicity is inherently flawed, as this term can be manipulated to serve political, cultural, and economic interests (Canessa, 2014). In Bolivia, there are tensions inherent in past attempts at incorporating poor indigenous communities into the Nation State as a poor peasant class. Certain qualities of the indigenous culture were "folklorized" and embraced by the government (Nash & Buechler, 2016). However, some of these are irrelevant to the day-to-day realities of indigenous people. This suggests a

space between actual indigenous communities and their representation by a hegemonic power structure (Nash & Buechler, 2016). In reality, an indigenous perspective is one that cannot be essentialized, yet it retains a wide variety of distinct traditions that characterize the lifestyles.

It is also important to note that the code of ethics that I am operating under –the IRB– is focused on individual rights. However, typically indigenous codes do not comply with the idea that an individual would have rights separate from the group (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). During research, I became acutely aware of this fact.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Assessment of the social and political environments of female artisans in La Paz, Bolivia

I provide an assessment of textile artisanship in La Paz, Bolivia to create a thorough and contextual understanding of the intersections of artisanship, *Suma Qamaña*, and Bolivian society. As expected, the artisans were drastically different from one another but also shared many commonalities. The informal processes of data collection that took place in the workshop and brick and mortar of *Artesanía Sorata* often allowed the artisans to learn more about one another and the aspects of Bolivian society and culture that each artisan represented. The following assessment is a reflection of the information that the artisans shared. In addition, information gathered from supplementary interviews with Dr. Denise Arnold, Clara Flores, and the group *"El Sendero que te Llama"* is included. Information shared by the interviewees included discussion of life histories, textile skill acquisition, perception of craft skills and artisanship, materials used in craft production and items made for personal use, lifestyle changes associated with migration and urbanization, the challenges of remaining economically competitive on the global craft market, and an evaluation of textile artisanship in rural Bolivia.

Textile Skill Acquisition in Artesanía Sorata

The migration statuses of the artisans interviewed for this project ranged from women that were born in La Paz and whose parents were from La Paz to women whose

parents migrated from the Altiplano—the Andean plateau that surrounds the city of La Paz—or who themselves migrated at a young age to La Paz. It also included women that migrated in their adult lives and still maintain strong family and economic connections with their communities on the Altiplano, returning multiple times a year. In rural areas, introduction to textile skills at an early age is both a cultural practice and and a practical occurence. Many female interviewees started knitting as young girls out of household necessity; in rural villages there is still a shortage of currency and what cannot be purchased is made by hand.

The experiences of the interviewed women were similar, yet diverse. Some women learned crafts in a community setting, with their grandmothers and mother instructing them. Justina, *Artesanía Sorata's* highly-skilled weaver from the *Mollo* community on the Altiplano, attested that she has been weaving on a loom—as opposed to simpler, 6-string weaves, which she started around the age of four—since she was 13 years old. She learned to knit and spin fiber soon after. She taught herself how to spin after one week with the help of an instructional manual. This indicates that even in rural communities and traditional cultural contexts, the dissemination of textile skill knowledge is both traditional and open to outside influences. Many women who grew up in La Paz learned from mothers that worked as seamstresses or knitters in the city. Isabel, *Artesanía Sorata's* quality control expert, inherited a broad range of textile craft skills from her mother, who was a professional poncho knitter (see Figure 5) and her father, who wove blankets on a *telar español*, or pedal loom. In fact, some of the artisans interviewed—such as Juana from the mountain town of Sorata—grew up in *Artesanía Sorata's* workshop, as their mothers were former artisans for Ms. Bellomy, the owner of

the workshop, in the company's first years. Some artisans that live in El Alto, the sprawling suburb of La Paz, learned to spin and knit at local *materia* schools, which are community centers that teach skills such as sewing, knitting, baking, and professional hair and makeup to encourage entrepreneurship among urban women.

Figure 5: Isabel performing quality control in the *taller*

There were also women who proclaimed that they did not learn from anyone. Knitting is highly common in public spaces in La Paz. For example, an artisan named Maria Concepción stated that she simply watched a woman knit in public and learned from her. This is not surprising as most of the artisans are knitters. In fact, Justina is the only artisan at *Artesanía Sorata* who knows how to make intricate traditional weavings. It is because in the city, there is less time and space to practice time- and resource-dependent crafts such as weaving. Women are migrating in large numbers and hold a dominant position in the urban informal economy. Streets in La Paz are full of *cholitas*–urban indigenous women–selling fruit, household items, and much more from their individual kiosks. The size and portable aspect of a knitting project is much better suited to the increasingly public roles of such urban women. This allows for new forms of social

space to emerge, as women interact and share information about craft and skills in public and not just the home (Bryan-Wilson, 2017).

What unites all of these personal histories is the fact that none of these women learned traditional textile skills in the Bolivian education system. Although it is not mutually exclusive to go to school and become a professional and practice traditional textile skills, the Bolivian education system is still influenced by colonial pedagogy which reinforces a false dichotomy of traditionalism and modernity, pointed out Clara, one of the interviewees. This is why many artisans consider it necessary for their children to leave behind community textile traditions in order to gain more focus and be successful in finding professional work. Indeed, according to Justina, who regularly travels back to her community on the Altiplano, there are only a few small families in each community that are dedicated to maintaining the artisanship. However, the transference of skills, new and old, continues in the new urban settings. Artisan groups and cooperatives utilize the communal aspects of their organizations to support one another and bond over a shared culture of making. While migration to the city disrupts the traditional generational transference of skills from grandmother to mother, mother to daughter, women are continuing to learn and practice artisanship to diversify their activities, increase their supplemental incomes, and to maintain a connection to their families and communities.

Perceptions of craft skills and artisanship

The perceptions of craft varied greatly among the artisans interviewed. Many artisans were proud of the material objects they produced, equating their craft practices with keeping their community's cultural identity alive. However, many artisans expressed

different aspirations for their children. Most artisans that had children noted that their children do not want to learn how to knit, spin, or weave and are leaving behind traditional craft skills for other, more professional opportunities. Many women noted that "only Grandparents do this [knit/spin/weave]," and some did not believe in the continued relevance of Bolivian artisanship.

However, Justina—the sole weaver of Artesanía Sorata, taught all four of her children how to weave, and these four children are also engaged in post-secondary education and have professional career trajectories. Justina also teaches individual weaving classes for dedicated students and hosts group lessons for tourists in La Paz. Because she believes that skill transference is important she encourages her students to write down the information that they receive for posterity. According to anthropologist Dr. Denise Arnold, if the essential way of life in the *ayllu* is maintained, advanced weaving cultures can persist. However, she stated that while a community may continue to produce traditional weaving, typically only two or three women per community have maintained levels of technical expertise and artistry known to their predecessors.

Producing craft and working with their hands held different meanings for the artisans. Ana, an accountant from La Paz who learned how to knit in a *materia* school, continues to knit for *Artesanía Sorata* because she enjoys the craft and likes meeting other artisans once a week in the workshop. Victoria, also from La Paz and one of the "master knitters", is retired but continues to produce sweaters for *Artesanía Sorata*, because she finds knitting enjoyable. She also taught all her children how to knit and encourages the craft at home because of its relaxing and creative benefits. However, the majority of artisans stated that they do not knit or spin for fun, as they consider it work.

Materials used and items made for personal use

Pressures to meet global demand for "ethnic products" has led to the hybridization, standardization, and simplification of the techniques and designs of artisan communities (Wethey, 2005). It is important to note that pressures to continue producing "traditional textiles"—that is, textiles produced with natural fibers and dyes and using technologies and patterns from the ancient communities—are actually inflicted by the tourist market. Textile production in Bolivia, both industrial and artisanal, is largely characterized by the use of natural fibers—primarily alpaca wool, sheep wool, and cotton (Frazier, Bruss, and Johnson, 2004). However, the introduction of acrylic yarns and bright synthetic colors has made its mark even on artisanal textile production, as most artisans prefer to produce items for themselves and their families with synthetics, due to their novelty and practicality (Zorn, 1998). Synthetic dye and fiber is practical because it is less expensive than the price of manually-produced goods. Novel, bright colors also contribute to the greater popularity of synthetic yarns in the Andes. In addition, many artisans expressed that the ability to wear modern clothing from China, for example, is normalized both in urban and rural communities. Indeed, only two of the artisans interviewed stated that they use alpaca wool to make clothing for themselves and their families. The belief that alpaca and llama fibers are associated with "indianess" and the poor peasant class contributes to this phenomenon, suggested Dr. Arnold.

When artisans migrate to the city, their textile skill practices are altered as they adapt to urban and global demands. For example, many artisans noted that they are making yarns with natural fibers and dyes only because tourist customers want it (see Figure 6). The traditional practices of yarn production—tending animals for fiber,

shearing, spinning wool into yarn, and dyeing the yarn with natural plants and materials—have become detached from exercising traditional craft skills for the artisans. It was frequently brought up that locally-produced products are not important for Bolivians and only foreigners appreciate and value Bolivian artisanship. Foreign textile cultures and products have been incorporated in part for practicality, in part for aesthetic novelty, and in part because of economic necessity. In sum, artisans today utilize both natural and synthetic fibers and both hand- and factory-spun yarns to produce textiles, depending on the type and purpose of product.

Figure 6: Typical embroidered tapestry at *Artesanía Sorata*, depicting idyllic mountain scene with naturally-dyed fiber

Lifestyle changes associated with migration and urbanization

Many artisans related the devaluation of traditional textile skills with the devaluation of rural communities that have migrated to the city. The pace of urban lifestyles, the persistent need for employment, and transportation challenges make returning to rural communities challenging for migrants. Most artisans noted that

artisanal craft is still valued in Bolivian society, but mostly among older generations. Younger generations are not just migrating to urban centers in Bolivia in search of work and educational opportunities. Argentina, Chile, and Brazil are also desirable destinations for young Bolivian men in particular. The continuation of textile skills is often perceived as backwards and irrelevant for young Bolivians that would like to participate in contemporary culture and benefit from Bolivia's reemergence as a welfare state. This turn away from artisanal craft applies to migrants themselves. Many artisans are leaving behind piece-meal textile production for factory jobs, because those come with a fixed salary and retirement benefits.

Challenges of surviving as an artisanal craft company in La Paz

By working with *Artesanía Sorata*, I sought to understand what are the main challenges to remaining economically competitive while honoring and preserving Bolivian textile artisanship. Ms. Bellomy, the company's founder and owner, shared vital information of the company's history and operations. She has relayed that *Artesanía Sorata* has been in operation for over forty years and was one of the first companies in Bolivia to have Fair Trade certification. While *Artesanía Sorata* was once registered with the global Fair Trade network, Ms. Bellomy in recent years has not maintained the certification because she became disillusioned with the title of Fair Trade and the expectations for its maintenance. The saturation of artisanal craft goods on the global market has created too much competition, driving consumers to expect lower prices and uniform products. Therefore, Ms. Bellomy cannot charge enough for a product to cover all wages and benefits for the artisans. In the past, this was less of a problem, as she was one of the only links between ethically-produced Bolivian craft items and the global

market. In addition, wages were much lower in the past, allowing her to confidently support and compensate the artisans working for *Artesanía Sorata.* The Movimiento al Socialismo has championed workers' rights, and according to Ms. Bellomy there is a mandatory increase in salaries of eight to ten percent per year. While it is wonderful for the artisans, this means that Ms. Bellomy can no longer provide healthcare for them and struggles at times to obtain enough cash to compensate them for their work. For these reasons, Ms. Bellomy referred to *Artesanía Sorata* as "fairer trade". The rigid standards of Fair Trade certification cannot fully compensate for the larger, more powerful economic forces. The competitiveness of the artisanal craft market only allows some companies to charge enough per product and gain enough financial success to fulfill and uphold Fair Trade standards.

Additional complications were related to quality control, transportation difficulties, and the precarious economic statuses of the artisans themselves. These complications make it extremely difficult for Ms. Bellomy to complete orders on time and provide products to clients that are uniform in size, color, and design. For example, if an artisan's family member dies, she might have to make a long journey into the countryside and remain there for an indeterminate amount of time, to grieve and care for other family members. Artisans may also be too busy to complete orders for Ms. Bellomy on a deadline, as they often work for more than one artisanal craft company at the same time. Lastly, miscommunication can lead to orders being completed incorrectly or not up to standard.

During weekly *"El Sendero que te Llama"* meetings, I learned about the aspirations and struggles of local artisanal businesses in La Paz. *"El Sendero que te*

Llama" means "the path that calls you", referring to the group's belief that handmade, artisanal craft is the more ethical option for tourists to consume. This group consists of eleven business owners, artisans, and educators. Some members work with wood, some with textiles and fiber, and others with metals and plastic. Despite differences in focus, the group was formed out of a need to distinguish the businesses that are working directly with Bolivian artisans and produce designs that are culturally significant and meaningful. The group's shared values include exclusive design, combining artisanal and modern techniques, preference for local raw materials, and the need to communicate cultural identity. Based off of observations made on La Paz's *Mercado de las Brujas*–the prominent street which caters to tourists in search of authentic souvenirs—the group declared that up to 60 percent of tourist goods sold in La Paz are not produced in Bolivia. While this statistic is merely observational, it illustrates the lack of regulation and quality control endemic to the artisanal craft market in Bolivia. For example, the most successful company in the *Mercado de las Brujas* is called L.A.M. and produces fashionable apparel made from alpaca. Despite the company's marketing campaigns and reputation, the ensembles are factory made and do not involve artisanal processes. Because of the fashionable aesthetic, L.A.M. charges almost as much per sweater as an artisanal company such as *Artesanía Sorata* charges for a handmade sweater. Despite this, a tourist is much more likely to purchase something from L.A.M., as the designs are typically more contemporary and fashion forward. The *"El Sendero que te Llama"* was formed as a way for small businesses to support and advertise for one another, because they simply cannot remain competitive on the same street as companies such as L.A.M., who

advertise their use of natural alpaca wool and semi-traditional designs while they are also able to maintain all of the familiarities of factory-produced clothing (see Figure 7).

Figure 7*:* The marketing sign that all *"El Sendero que te Llama"* businesses use to advertise for one another

Textile artisanship in rural areas

Dr. Denise Arnold provided valuable information about the status of artisanal textile craft in Bolivia, albeit her research was predominantly focused in rural regions. Reflecting on her experiences of conducting ethnographic research in rural communities on the Altiplano for over three decades, Dr. Arnold noted that despite the enormous pride for local traditions and close cooperation between researchers and community members, research in rural areas today is extremely difficult and at times dangerous. This is due to the cocaine industry and the safety concerns and instability that have resulted from its growth and dominance in Bolivia. Considering the long history of U.S.-led "War on

Drugs" efforts in Bolivia, outside research is regarded with suspicion (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011). However, Dr. Arnold noted that the currency that the cocaine industry has introduced into rural communities has enabled artisans to abandon the keeping of sheep—which have coarser, less fine wool. Now, many rural artisans use the money to purchase alpaca wool, which increases the value of their weavings on the tourist and international art markets. Environmental instability, the dominance of the cocaine industry, and subsequent rural-to-urban migration have all destabilized the traditional transference of textile skill knowledge in on the rural Altiplano.

The artisans' familiarity with *Suma Qamaña*

A primary research question of this study is to determine whether the artisans of *Artesanía Sorata* are inspired by the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology. When asked about the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology, most artisans demonstrated familiarity. However, when I inquired if the *Suma Qamaña* affected their work and lives as artisans, the responses were overwhelmingly negative. This relates to an overall negative perception of the Movimiento al Socialismo that was palpable in La Paz. The sincerity of the government's adoption of the principles of *Suma Qamaña* was largely dismissed by the artisans, due primarily to the continuation of extractive natural resource policies and widespread government corruption. Indeed, when faced with decisions of natural resource extraction, the government has exercised continued control over the ancestral lands of indigenous groups (Alberti, 2015).

In general, I found that the closer artisans were to the traditional rural lifestyle, the greater affinity they had with traditional craft practices and natural fibers. For example, Paulina, an artisan who moved to La Paz as an adult and maintains strong familial ties

with her rural community, was very animated as she recounted her community's rituals of shearing vicuña and alpaca. She described her love for the animals, their fiber, and the rituals that celebrate the richness of the landscape and the animals that inhabit it. These material traditions affected her worldview, and she did subscribe to certain principles of *Suma Qamaña* such as the principle of *ayni*—or reciprocity between community members and the natural environment—and humans' integral—rather than dominative—role in the ecosystem. The interaction with nature was closely tied to her pride for her community, and although she did not consider *Suma Qamaña* to be a part of her political expression, she clearly cherished this traditional cosmological vision. While Paulina spoke many of the artisans listened in awe, as many of these traditions were completely unheard of for the La Paz natives. In addition, Justina related her understanding of the principles of *Suma Qamaña* and its emphasis on communal development to her personal feelings of pride and happiness when she is creating textiles. For Paulina and Justina, the traditional cosmology of *Suma Qamaña* is related to feelings of well-being. They did not think of its political associations.

In a supplementary interview with Clara Flores, a former *diputada* (congresswoman) in the Bolivian government, I learned that the traditional lifestyle of the rural *ayllu* is much more common in communities that have never been subjected to the colonial *hacienda* system. Clara is from a village South of La Paz that has four *ayllus* which continue to make collective decisions about planting, harvests, and division of labor. When I asked her if she related to a spiritual connection between nature and humans, she responded enthusiastically. She believes that the traditional spirituality described in *Suma Qamaña* is still very relevant because, despite contemporary

consumption practices, we are still dependent on the land to produce food. According to Clara, as humans we must find a way to provide something in return and express gratitude for the abundance that the Earth provides. She saw a connection between the lack of connection to nature–namely buying all food items in a store, rather than producing from the land–with social, cultural, and ecological destruction. Her assessment is aligned with one of the defining principles of *Suma Qamaña*—that development must occur communally, and that the natural environment is an integral part of the community itself.

During a group interview, many artisans expressed that it is no longer part of their cultural identities to maintain a spiritual connection with nature. Several of them declared that they would like to feel a spiritual connection to nature, but do not. Many artisans had parents who did perform the *masa,* which is a land ritual performed before planting and harvesting, to express gratitude to the earth while offering seeds and coca leaves in return. However, Juana Marie, an artisan who now predominantly works in transportation, stated that the tradition of the *masa* has weakened because of the influence of Evangelical Christianity. For many Protestant Bolivians, the *masa* is considered diabolical and brings bad luck for harvests, because if you entreat *Pachamama* (or Mother Earth) for a bountiful harvest, you must continue to do so in order to ensure future harvests. Other artisans responded by blaming the environmental frailty of rural regions on Protestantism's rejection of the *masa*. Rather, Juana Marie prefers to connect with nature by getting out of the city, looking at the mountains, and breathing fresh air. Her understanding of a spiritual connection to nature was much more emotional and individualistic than communal and based on a particular lifestyle. When asked if her

feelings toward nature influenced her political identity and ideals, she confidently responded "Not at all."

In general, the discussion of *Suma Qamaña* was focused on the government's interpretation and implementation of the cosmology. If artisans with family in the countryside do not return home, they begin to lose the value of their communities. Many artisans observed that artisanal craft has become devalued because rural communities have become devalued in rural-to-urban migration. As many urban artisans no longer maintain material practices in their former rural communities–namely subsistence agriculture and spinning and weaving with natural fibers–the spiritual and material aspects of the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology become irrelevant to their urban, contemporary lifestyles. Only for the artisans that maintain familial connections with the countryside, visiting their communities and farms at least a couple times a year, is the cosmology of *Suma Qamaña* meaningful. In this instance, it is still discussed as separate from the MAS's appropriation of the ideals.

From an urban, political perspective, *Suma Qamaña* was considered a tool for gaining popular support. Ana, an artisan from *Artesanía Sorata*, was particularly adamant in her assertions that *Suma Qamaña* is something that only the rich and well-educated care about. She referred to the movement as something that holds no relevance for the very people it claims to champion. However, it is important to note that Ana is a La Paz native, educated, works as an accountant, and holds no familial ties to the countryside. She learned how to knit in a *materia* school and claimed that she could not feel a connection between the natural fibers and dyes and the natural environment because the yarns were dyed and spun in a factory elsewhere. While well-meaning and educated

urban citizens are able to express their cultural and political concerns through the support of the MAS's interpretation of the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology, most artisans did not feel a part of the movement.

This sentiment reflects the fundamental contradiction of the Movimiento al Socialismo. The populist nature of the MAS's rise to power was made possible by the collective mobilization of rural indigenous political organizations (Alberti, 2015). The MAS utilized the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology to gain support by positioning indigenous peoples as the rightful protectors of the country's natural resources. This was a position that both rural indigenous organizations and the urban educated class supported. However, the MAS continues to aggressively pursue mono-crop agriculture of soy and coca and the extraction of natural resources such as natural gas. Mobilized political groups allied with the MAS, such as the powerful *cocaleros* of the Eastern Lowlands, continually use the ancestral rights of the land as a trope for indigenous political engagement. However, when faced with decisions about resource use and infrastructure development, the government often acts against the interests of grassroots indigenous organizations. For over a decade, indigenous political organizations have utilized tactics such as collectivized blocking of roads because they do not feel they can participate in formal institutions of power to voice their exclusion and concerns (Jackiewicz & Bosco, 2016). These tactics continue, even after the MAS's institutionalization of indigenous cultural rights. Ultimately, the ethics of *Suma Qamaña* are being corroded by the economic and political priorities of the state, leading to skepticism and disillusion (Canessa, 2014).

Suma Qamaña's effects on resource management in craft production

Another primary research question of this study was to determine if the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology affects resource management in craft production and if ethically-based ideals can provide a model for sustainable resource management in the fashion and craft industries. Most artisans agreed that in Bolivia resource conservation is an issue of practicality. During a group interview, when one artisan stated "... we use [only] what is necessary," all artisans agreed. All of the interviewees were very conscious of energy use. This is largely due to the high cost of gas, energy, and materials. The history of exploitation and privatization of Bolivia's rich natural resources has led to an ever-present tension for the average citizen's access to basic commodities such as water and gas. In 2003, the privatization of the national gas reserves resulted in a 600% increase in gas prices, leading to mass social upheaval, followed by brutal military suppression, and the election of Evo Morales in 2005 (Jackiewicz & Bosco, 2016).

In the workshop, the focus on conservation means constant mending of fabrics, yarns, and knitted and woven items and using textile waste as materials. Ms. Bellomy weighs all materials, fabrics, and yarns before giving new work assignments to artisans. When the artisans return their finished pieces, every ounce of material is accounted for. Scraps of yarn and fabric are saved for future projects, due to the time-intensive and expensive nature of naturally-dyed yarns and hand-woven fabrics. Alejandra, an artisan with *Artesanía Sorata*, stated that while the pride in reproducing a community's material culture exists and is congruent with the MAS's mission of uplifting indigenous culture, such sustainable practices are predominantly linked to survival. In rural villages, there is often not enough physical currency to purchase household goods. Therefore, it is

practical to make things that one cannot buy. Overpopulation and resource scarcity in La Paz contributes to a societal cognizance of the importance of conservation, something that does not evade even textile workshops. However, the artisans do not refer to these practices as "sustainable" and are skeptical of the government's championing of *Suma Qamaña* and the Rights of Mother Nature.

Urban artisans and traditional rural communities on the Altiplano are practicing a form of sustainability that differs from the government's interpretation of the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology. Although most of the artisans were not inspired by the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology and did not consider their lifestyles to be sustainable, certain practices, such as energy conservation and re-use of waste materials, are indeed sustainable and obligatory in an underdeveloped country such as Bolivia. In an urban setting, *Suma Qamaña* functions as an ideal for human-nature interaction, as traditional resource-dependent communal lifestyles are quickly rendered obsolete. The reality of resource scarcity and issues of waste management have engendered agency in the artisans' lives, as they cannot rely solely on local and national governments to make decisions in their favor. Rather than relying on institutional forms of power, such as the MAS, to enact change or resolve issues regarding access to natural resources and commodities, the artisans are practicing their own version of sustainability, one that is born out of having to make do and create with little. The necessity to make everyday life sustainable provides a community with greater autonomy on all levels of scale – local, national, and global. Their resulting solutions are emergent, participatory, and semi-autonomous (Kossoff, 2015).

Indeed, Juan Carlos, an artisan associated with the *"El Sendero que te Llama"* group, stated that the only people that actually participate in an integral human-nature relationship are "people like you and me." This comment refers to the belief that the economic and political elite of all nations are largely unconcerned with environmental preservation and that a movement to protect natural resources must be grassroots. Like many others, Juan Carlos made a connection with what we refer to in the United States as the "Local Food movement" and *Suma Qamaña*, stating that food produced ethically and locally contains a special energy that provides cultural and ethical benefits to human beings. He believes that if there were to be a movement that protected the integrity of the ecosystem, it would have to be inspired and governed by everyday people for everyday solutions.

The MAS's interaction with textile artisanship in Bolivia

The MAS has implemented a number of interventions related to craft production in El Alto, a city east of La Paz, where most of the artisans live. Such initiatives can be interpreted as government-led efforts in the cultural shift that takes place in rural-to-urban migration. The MAS's most prominent response in La Paz and El Alto are the community *materia* schools. These community centers offer open access to looms and spinning wheels, in addition to other educational materials for running small businesses and securing microloans. Participants bring their own materials such as fiber and produce for themselves and their communities. The communal aspect of the *materia* schools enables women to hold lessons on weaving, knitting, and spinning, instructing other migrants and the new generation of children born in the city. Most neighborhoods in El Alto have one or two *materia* schools, allowing rural migrants to rebuild a sense of

community and identity in an urban setting (Bastia, 2010). These centers are presented as "tools" to improve current livelihoods and reengage the migrant population with traditional craft skills, which are actions that are congruent with the MAS's use of the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology. The *materia* schools perhaps represent the greatest intersection of the wider political phenomenon of *Suma Qamaña* and the daily lives of the artisans. While the MAS may simply be implementing surface-level efforts to advocate for the urban migrant population, the artisans are quick to take advantage of these government-sponsored resources in order to increase their incomes, build community, and mitigate the various circumstances of rural-to-urban migration.

The use of the *materia* schools are indeed positive, as many female artisans utilize the state-provided vocational training opportunities as a way to supplement their incomes, share skill knowledge, and build community. This also allows them to incorporate aspects of the traditional, rural lifestyle, such as textile weaving, into their changing lives. *Materia* schools can operate as centers of skill transference and empowerment, depending on the levels of engagement with the community. In fact, both men and women weave on these community looms. However, men use mechanized pedal weaving looms, while women typically work on traditional horizontal makeshift ones. This is not surprising, considering the gendered dynamics of textile production worldwide (Radding, 2001; Tortora & Marcketti, 2015; Zorn, 1998). In general, across continents men have had first access to mechanized production implements, while women continue using manual weaving and spinning technologies. In Bolivia, for example, the Spanish pedal loom (*telar español*) was adopted almost exclusively by men while women, to this day, primarily utilize makeshift, handmade loom structures (Radding, 2001).

Figure 8: *Ruecas* (spindles) and alpaca wool from Justina's farm

The MAS-sponsored community centers were useful for several artisans and Justina in particular. She used the *materia* school and its equipment to host weaving classes for tourists, supplement her income, and teach textile skills to interested members of her community in El Alto (see Figure 8).

In addition, Paulina stated that the quality of fibers in the countryside is increasing, due to government-sponsored educational programs. Farmers are able to produce higher-quality fibers and are obligated to sell their yearly yield to the government. The precious vicuña fiber produced by them is sold at a fixed price to the government for two hundred *bolivianos* a person. It appears that the government is aware of the natural wealth that exists in the countryside and intends to capitalize on vicuña's coveted role on the international fiber market.

Government-sponsored policies are often viewed as paternalistic because they are perceived to be ploys to register workshops with the government, gain taxes, and profit off of informal production, in addition to being considered unsuccessful (Scrase, 2003).

Such skepticism was palpable in both Justina's and Paulina's cases. They stated that the local government is involving itself in the informal economy of El Alto mostly to regulate and register small workshops and extract tax revenue from them. Many of the female artisans felt that although they were practicing a nuanced form of traditional artisanship, especially forms of Aymara weaving, they were actually put at an economic disadvantage because of the MAS's economic policies, despite its supposed support of indigenous rights and lifestyles.

Despite the efforts by the MAS, an ambivalence was expressed in regards to the government's support of small, rural businesses, urban livelihoods, and cultural preservation. In general, the difficulties in acquiring credit to start businesses and the government's overwhelming support for the monocrop soy and coca agribusinesses in the Eastern lowlands were provided as evidence for the lack of investment in the rural economy. Once in power, the MAS's economic practices have resulted in the continuation of the uprooting of indigenous communities. In rural areas, the MAS has re-appropriated natural resources that by law were supposed to belong to indigenous communities.

The artisans felt that their economic self-determination has been undermined. The artisans at *Artesanía Sorata* and business owners of the "*"El Sendero que te Llama"* group explained that certain policies of the MAS have made tourism to La Paz decrease significantly. For example, the government's antagonistic stance toward Israel has led to the creation of strict visa requirements for Israeli tourists. This also applies to tourists from the United States. Juan Carlos and his business partner and sister Anjelica stated that what was once sold to the booming tourist market is now sold for a third of the price,

as a result. In addition, multiple business owners emphasized that export taxes have risen significantly, especially to the United States. Former trade agreements with the United States are now being replaced, due to the MAS's stance against American economic imperialism and China's growing role in the Latin American economy (Jackiewicz & Bosco, 2016). This has made locating business partners in the United States and Europe very difficult, as many of them may prefer to trade with companies in Peru. Peruvian companies not only feature similar indigenous motifs on their products, but sell them for a lower price as well. They are also more reliable suppliers. On this account, Dr. Arnold stated that the government has failed to facilitate finding outlets for trade and increasing the flow of Bolivian craft objects abroad. At the same time, Bolivian currency remains undervalued, while the price of commodities has risen. Overall, the economic circumstances of textile artisans in La Paz have worsened in the past decade and most artisans perceived the government as the biggest barrier to improving their livelihoods.

While most artisans agreed that President Evo Morales has indeed supported indigenous rights, they also asserted he has not improved the economic status of all artisans. Paulina stated that the government just did not understand how badly the artisans needed access to export markets. She was also frustrated that the export of artisanal goods to concept stores that carry Fair Trade products became harder because of American government sanctions and asserted that higher border tariffs have been choking their business. Artisans are producing, but they cannot find enough customers and, therefore, often have to resort to selling their products at a depressed price. Although the government champions indigenous causes, larger political and economic principles govern the realities of artisans that practice and safeguard traditional Bolivian textile

crafts. Indeed, the *marea rosada* (pink wave) of Latin America describes a collective response of many national governments—namely Venezuela and Bolivia– to the economic imperialism of the United States and international governing bodies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The *marea rosada* is largely regarded as the most powerful response to 21st Century capitalism, but, in reality, is just another iteration of neoliberal free market capitalism, with one difference that a larger amount of industrial profit is redirected to the State (Mollinedo, 2017). This is often inevitable because national governments are still dependent on the dynamics of the global economy to remain in power and satisfy the economic elites of their own countries. While many artisans expressed gratitude for the MAS's support and efforts to valorize indigenous cultures, every artisan made a distinction between the rhetorical support of indigenous values and lifestyles and the economic realities of contemporary artisans in La Paz.

Cultural preservation and economic development

There is little government support for documenting and ensuring the continuation of artisanal textile skills. According to Dr. Denise Arnold, there has been little to no economic investment or dialogue between the government and professional artisans, both rural and urban. In the past, many NGOs involved in craft production in La Paz were encouraged and supported by a network of middle-class urban women. These women sought to provide artisan migrants with opportunities to gain economic agency through traditional crafts production and encourage the transference of textile skills in urban environments. While there is indeed a growing revalorization of indigenous traditions and cultures, existing power dynamics often make the reality of inter-class and inter-race efforts complicated. The inter-class networks are no longer as common as they used to

be, due to racial tensions and the political culture of the Movimiento al Socialismo, argued Dr. Arnold. Most interviewees stated that although the MAS has stifled economic growth for artisans and small-business owners, the government's championing of indigenous rights has created a cultural revalorization of the languages and customs of the *pueblos originarios*. However, Dr. Arnold stated that this resulted in an extreme form of pride in contemporary Bolivian culture that masks a growing hatred for the *mestizo* society that was and in many ways still is valued as superior to indigenous culture. This resentment has created a stigma between indigenous and mestizo or Western professionals. Dr. Arnold believed that the MAS has contributed greatly to the lack of interclass and interracial cooperation.

Dr. Denise Arnold pointed out that while the MAS has touted regional and rural development, the rural economic development models that were suggested by local and foreign experts have been largely ignored. Regarding artisanal craft, these economic models would have involved creating regional technological institutes to help weavers produce quality fiber and dye stuffs, utilize resources such as water effectively, and obtain microloans and learn effective business and marketing strategies. Instead, she argued that over 70 percent of governmental investment goes toward industrial agribusiness. While industries of petroleum, coal, and lithium continue to be driven by the same exploitative resource management principles as before, proper land distribution and rural development is prevented because of the MAS's obligation to appease the ruling class of elites—the landowners of the fertile Eastern Lowlands. Many artisans and Clara, a former *diputada* or congresswoman, confirmed that while the MAS has supported small, rural producers with technological implements such as tractors and

machinery, there is little support for small business owners, who cannot access credit in order to scale up and become more profitable.

When asked if she has observed a history of political involvement amongst textile artisans, Dr. Arnold responded that there is no such history, as most artists' associations and NGOs are founded and run by North Americans and Europeans, who typically seek to remain apolitical in order to withstand changes in regime or political party. In addition, according to Dr. Arnold, the existence of these NGOs and cultural institutions is precarious, as the MAS has redirected international funding away from NGOs, reportedly threatened foreign scholars, and discouraged outside interest in Bolivian craft. Many artisans might also be wary to politicize their inherited worldview or cosmology, as in Bolivia and across Latin America environmental rights groups must be very careful. There are reports of torture, espionage, stolen computers, and death threats for individuals and organizations that challenge the continuance of a resource-extractive economy (Jackiewicz & Bosco, 2016; Mehta, Allouche, Nicol, & Walnycki, 2014).

In addition, while the government valorizes indigenous cultures, it usually prioritizes a monolithic Andean indigenous identity in order to gain political support from the urban *mestizo* class and indigenous migrants alike. One business owner associated with the *"El Sendero que te Llama"* group pointed out that there are artisan groups in the Eastern Lowlands producing artisanal craft and using natural fibers and dyes, but they do not often receive attention and assistance from the MAS or NGOs. His remark suggests that the national craft image ignores regional differences and prioritizes an Andean indigenous identity that disregards the multitude of ethnic and cultural groups in Bolivia.

The concept of plurinationalism arose from the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s in Bolivia as a rejection of the former *mestizaje* (mixed Spanish and indigenous ancestry) national identity, which was not relevant for the multitude of indigenous communities existing in Bolivia (Canessa, 2014). Constitutionally, Bolivia is a plurinational state, a decision inspired by indigenous political activism that sought, above all, to create a new form of citizenry that is relevant for indigenous communities. Despite these ideals, the incorporation of Bolivia's diverse ethnic groups into the cultural identity and political structure of the nation is often deprioritized in order to cater to more powerful national syndicates, such as the *cocaleros*. The *cocaleros*, a syndicate of coca growers in the Chapare region of Bolivia, were led by Evo Morales prior to his election as President in 2005 (Kennemore & Weeks, 2001). The *cocaleros* gained international support by positioning the cultivation and sale of the coca leaf as an indigenous spiritual practice, solidifying the use of indigenous culture in a nationalist dialogue. This was only made possible by inventing an essential Bolivian indigenous identity, one that disregards over three dozen other indigenous communities in Bolivia (Canessa, 2014). This phenomenon was confirmed by Clara, who in the 1990s pioneered the theory and implementation of plurinationalism in the Bolivian government. She was largely disappointed with the contemporary political culture of Bolivia today, stating that only a small percentage of the national government reflects the true ethnic diversity of Bolivia.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In assessing whether the artisans of *Artesanía Sorata* are inspired by the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology, it was concluded that most artisans were familiar with the politcial use of the cosmology. Most artisans dismissed the concept of *Suma Qamaña* as irrelevant, while some affirmed that it was indeed an important part of their worldviews and lifestyles. The level of engagement with the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology intersected with the interviewees' family background, migration status, lifestyle, and political beliefs. In determining whether the cosmology has an effect on resource management in craft production, it was found that while some artisans relate the reciprocal environmental principles of *Suma Qamaña* to their craft and material practices, most artisans do not ascribe to this connection. The Bolivian government attempts to mitigate the cultural and economic effects of migration with local *materia* craft schools, or community centers that teach skills such as weaving and knitting by providing looms for public use. However, most artisans consider this government interference negative. The loss of traditional lifestyles and the MAS's appropriation of the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology reduces the value and relevance of ethically-based ideals for urban textile artisans in La Paz, Bolivia.

While ethically-based ideals may provide a theoretical model for encouraging sustainable resource management in craft production, most sustainable behaviors declared and observed amongst the artisans were related to practicality and the need to conserve limited resources. However, if managed equitably, small, localized production

models are economically and socially resilient and allow more flexibility for artisan communities to strengthen their bonds with their material cultures and participate in the global market with agency (Mazzarella, Escobar-Tello, & Mitchell, 2016). Resiliency is formed out of necessity as artisans must adapt to drastic changes in their local natural environments and the unpredictable global economy for artisanal crafts. The grassroots, practical solutions are highly relevant to local communities and often differ from the institutionalized forms of sustainability that are championed by national governments. While most of the artisans rejected the MAS's appropriation of the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology, they all practiced sustainable resource management behaviors. The everyday practices of the artisans suggest a global need for decentralization in resource management decision making.

Textile artisans in La Paz, Bolivia have highly nuanced identities as they produce craft that is both ancient and modern. While the materials used at *Artesanía Sorata* are traditional natural fibers and dyes, most of the artisans consider these materials to be directed toward a global market. The artisans themselves prefer bright, synthetic colors and fibers, which are less expensive and more accessible than traditional natural fibers. Due to the prevalence of migration and the reduction in local resource-dependent communities, artisans are adapting their lifestyles, beliefs, material practices, and skill sets to meet global demands for craft production while practicing rural textile traditions in an urban environment.

The accounts of the artisans of *Artesanía Sorata* reveal that often what is published in academic literature differs greatly from the information that one finds on the ground, by directly engaging with the people. Merely seeking to validate information

found in academic literature may indeed silence the artisans, as it does not allow them to be active participants in the makings of their histories. Information intended for a Western academic audience may in fact reinforce harmful stereotypes, as the majority of academics that publish on Bolivia do not actually reside in Bolivia. Dr. Arnold referred to these academics as "*bolivianistas*", who are characterized as idealistic and optimistic because they can observe the richness of Bolivian culture without suffering the complications of being a Bolivian resident.

By haptically engaging with the artisans of *Artesanía Sorata,* I sought to understand how they navigate multiple layers of hegemony—between economic, political, and gender inequalities inherent in Bolivian society and the brutal inequalities of the global market. In many postcolonial contexts, women are assigned the responsibility of upholding and reproducing native traditions, which also serves as a process of gender construction and socialization (Silverblatt, 1988). This is particularly relevant in the Andes, as women are expected to physically reproduce their communities' traditions with complex woven structures in order to demonstrate their eligibility for marriage (Zorn, 1998). Prior to the introduction of traditional Andean weavings to the global art and tourist markets, these objects were woven to tell stories of creation, survival, and traditions (Kellogg, 2005). With their bodies and namely their hands, these women are actively preserving and adapting their cultural histories. However, we must question whether this is a responsibility that Bolivian women want to maintain. Bolivian cultural history is not fixed. Artisans respond to local and global changes, both out of necessity and also choice. The beautiful handmade objects are material representations of the agency that the artisans of *Artesanía Sorata* exercise in their efforts to improve their

livelihoods and reconstruct their individual and communal identities in a rapidly changing society.

Grassroots efforts in the face of institutionalized sustainability

It was very apparent that for most of the artisans, the cosmology of *Suma Qamaña* was not relevant. It did not affect their craft practices, their views on sustainability, or their political ideals. The few artisans that did identify with the principles of *Suma Qamaña* were artisans that migrated to La Paz as adults and regularly returned to their communities on the Altiplano. This indicates that there is a connection between the traditional resource-dependent and communal lifestyle and the relevance of *Suma Qamaña* principles. While the ideals of *Suma Qamaña* may be attractive to educated and wealthy urban residents, many artisans cannot reconcile the cosmology's relevance in their daily lives with its appropriation by the current government, the Movimiento al Socialismo. Among the artisans that were inspired by the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology, it was difficult to ascertain whether the principles of reciprocity and environmental stewardship had material effects on their craft practices. This is because sustainable practices such as resource conservation are necessary in an underdeveloped country such as Bolivia. Despite their skepticism for the government's championing of *Suma Qamaña*, practically all of the artisans were practicing some forms of sustainability in their lifestyles, out of necessity. This reveals a tension between *Suma Qamaña*, the actual material practices of urban textile artisans in La Paz, and the government's appropriation of the indigenous cosmology. While the government appropriates the principles of *Suma Qamaña* to garner political support from the educated urban class, many of the artisans of

Artesanía Sorata practice sustainability without the recognition of identification with this political and social movement.

Sustainable solutions that come from the bottom-up and are grassroots are solutions that accommodate and build upon local knowledge. The artisans of *Artesanía Sorata* practice sustainability in their craft production by dyeing products with local and traditional dye plants, working with natural alpaca and sheep's wool from the Altiplano, supporting their local artisan networks and families by sharing and transferring skills to one another, and saving every piece of fiber available for later use. Rather than relying on and exalting institutionalized sustainability, they maintain their commitment to practicality and everyday solutions.

Market-based or state-sponsored approaches to sustainability undermine ethical and spiritual incentives that encourage beneficial behaviors and actually contribute to the biodiversity of lived landscapes (Chapin & Knapp, 2015). The human-nature dichotomy maintains that humans are inherently destructive to the natural environment. However, this ignores the thousands of years of beneficial growth and interaction between certain human communities and their surrounding ecosystems, in addition to the traditional knowledge systems that were born from and sustained this interaction. Contrary to the Western nature-culture dichotomy, research in ethnoecology indicates that maintaining biodiversity is vital for preserving cultural diversity (Nazarea, 1999). Ethical approaches to resource use and conservation reinforce and empower local identities and sustain indigenous material culture – such as natural fibers, dyes and textile crafts – in the face of a hegemonic capitalist culture.

In many countries, centralized institutions have replaced local communities as the primary decision-makers for resource use and management, community needs, and economic participation (Ostrom et al., 2012). In regards to natural resource use and management, an existing level of agency and trust has largely been replaced with regulatory auditing and conformist systems of measurement, often instituted by the national government (Busch, 2014). This has led to a backlash, in which the importance of everyday life and the solutions that arise from the routine things that average people do is increasingly being recognized as an important domain for engendering sustainable solutions (Zhan et al., 2017). Creative communities, such as the *Artesanía Sorata*, have the potential to generate solutions for everyday life, society, and well-being in general. Locally-situated practices do not wait for outside intervention, but resolve impending social, economic and environmental issues that are all present in artisanal craft production and the global fashion industry.

This phenomenon represents an overall trend toward cultural, economic, and political decentralization. In regards to sustainable resource management and even transference of textile skills, community and landscape-specific decisions can be made that represent the needs and desires of particular groups of people. Essentialist dialogues, such as the government's appropriation and creation of a singular indigenous Andean identity, serve to homogenize material, cultural, and environmental diversity. Inherited systems of ecological knowledge might not survive the rural-to-urban migration patterns that are typical of female artisans in La Paz. Yet, they are important because they underline the differences between small, autonomous groups of people making decisions

about communal resources versus institutionalized powers, such as the Bolivian government.

Prioritizing government-led, regulatory approaches over local knowledge systems disregards the multitude of highly productive societies that have maintained reciprocity with their surrounding environments and contributed to biodiversity with their practices and lifestyles that are ethically-driven. For example, the safekeeping and cultivation of native dye plants enables Bolivian textile artisans to maintain traditional aspects of their material and aesthetic culture while ensuring the survival of endangered plant and seed varieties in the Altiplano. This runs counter to a dominant discourse in Western society that positions human civilization as inherently environmentally destructive and neglects to question our current lifestyles and consumption habits. The failure to incorporate the knowledge and practices of sustainable indigenous communities reveals the inherent inequities of political and economic systems. The MAS defeated the Bolivian establishment through a revolutionary wave of indigenous political engagement and by incorporating an essentialist interpretation of Andean ethical frameworks. However, it has not succeeded in toppling the political and economic dynamics of the old regimes and resisting the effects of globalization and capitalism. Therefore, many Bolivians continue to regard the government as another powerful and rigid institution.

The Movimiento al Socialismo is a unique example of a political party that champions native cultures and traditions while advancing industrial economic policies. This study provides a unique example of a government that has utilized a grassroots form of ethical and political discourse to gain popular support from a historically marginalized indigenous population. At the same time, it left unchanged the former systems of

centralized, institutionalized power, particularly in regards to environmental sustainability. Top-down developmental approaches have typically regarded traditional ecological knowledge systems as backwards, which breeds continuous resentment amongst indigenous peoples who do not have the opportunity to modernize on their own terms (Scrase, 2003). This is reflective of the current political situation in Bolivia, in which indigenous organizations continue to struggle against the paradox of an indigenous populist agenda and government-led resource extraction and land ownership.

Globalization, resiliency, and nuance

Migration disrupts traditional lifestyles and makes migrants construct a new identity. Under these circumstances making textiles becomes the vehicle to share history and create a sense of unity out of solidarity with other migrants (Bastia, 2011). The role of textile crafts in identity creation remains relevant in urban La Paz, but it is organized around the maintenance of skill sets rather than the object's materiality. Female artisans practice, maintain, and disseminate textile skill knowledge in order respond to necessary economic and cultural changes on their own terms (Kossoff, 2015). Andean material culture is both protective of its traditions and open to foreign influences and technology. For hundreds of years, artisans in the Andes have adapted their skill sets to outside economic, political, and environmental pressures.

The survival of their material culture is a testament to the resiliency and creativity of the Andean people. This resiliency that I observed is a hopeful indication that Bolivian material culture will continue to exist, albeit in nontraditional forms. Perhaps as Bolivia becomes more urbanized and more rural traditions are abandoned, a societal tension will grow—much like it was the case with the Arts and Crafts movement at the end of the 18th

Century. Artisanal craft is often positioned as the antithesis to industrialization and modernization. The perpetuation of artisanal craft is largely dependent on the perception that it is being threatened by contemporary lifestyles (Crook, 2009). Dr. Arnold stated that Bolivia is just "going through that phase", referring to processes of modernization that—particularly in postcolonial societies—often render local traditions inferior to foreign goods and influences. However, I believe that artisans' highly nuanced craft practices that I have observed indicate the continued survival of Bolivian material culture, albeit in new and adaptable forms.

The artisans of Artesanía Sorata represent a worldview that is rooted in local traditions while being flexible and open to outside global influences. Bolivian material culture continues to adapt to technological and commercial developments both in rural and urban communities. Indigenous craft communities have already adopted textile technologies imposed by colonial Europe in the past, including the spinning wheel, the Spanish vertical loom, and more recently, synthetic yarns (Zorn, 1998). Bolivian textile culture is highly adaptable because artisans make active decisions about the textiles they produce for the local and global market. The artisans capitalize on their inherited skill sets in order to respond to local and global economic demands. The artisans also demonstrate agency in choosing the clothing that they produce for themselves, utilizing ancient and contemporary materials and design motifs to express their shifting identities.

Contemporary artisans practice ever-changing variances in their skills, the materials they use, and the designs they create (Wethey, 2005). Their resilience and adaptive skills are responses to the loss of textile skill knowledge and the appropriation of tribal motifs by the global craft market. Traditionally, the designs and structures that

communities produce for themselves tend to be more time-intensive and complex – indexing a higher quality. However, rapid urban lifestyles and the standardization of woven products have led to an overall simplification in the types of textile skills found in La Paz. This was found at *Artesanía Sorata*, as there was only one artisan that could still make the complex woven structures that are found in rural communities on the Altiplano. Woven items are time-intensive and are not congruent with the fast-paced, public lifestyles that most of the women adopt in urban areas such as La Paz. Instead, the women of La Paz spin, knit, and crochet in their kiosks while they wait for customers, echoing the communality of textile production in rural areas. The portable aspect of knitted and crocheted craft projects allows for new forms of social space to emerge in the urban setting (Bryan-Wilson, 2017). Out of practicality, knitting has become much more popular than weaving for producing clothing for families and community use. Artisans mostly prefer to use synthetic colors and fibers for contemporary aesthetics and ease of care. While many artisans in La Paz leave behind the most time-intensive and traditional aspects of their material cultures upon migration, many maintain textile skills and traditions which enable them to form community and reinforce identity in the new urban setting.

While fewer local and traditional textiles are being produced, new forms of dress combining factory-produced traditional clothing, synthetic fibers and dyes, traditional textile skill practices, and Western style clothing are emerging (Zorn, 1998). Young migrants, returning from work in the lowlands, introduce these into the rural communities. In addition, many communities create knitted and woven textiles with contemporary motifs and bright synthetic colors in order to reject the commercialization

of their community's traditions and reinforce their cultural patrimony (Wethey, 2005; Zorn, 1998). Contemporary artisans are using global products to reassert the importance of their local cultural identities and demonstrate their flexibility as artisans. Traditionally, the fundamental mechanisms of producing cloth involve interaction with the natural world by cultivating plants and animals for fiber and dye (Radding, 2001). While these traditions remain, they do not transcend the demands of the market and artisans themselves have an enthusiasm for new products and technologies.

Limitations

A primary limitation is the nature of academic research itself. Many indigenous scholars have argued that the term and idea of "research" is inherently a metaphor for colonial knowledge production, as it positions the object studied as the "Other" to be manipulated and controlled (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). This assertion points to the origins of anthropology as a field of study. Often, Western researchers were sent to become virtual experts on exotic locals in order to hasten the economic and cultural submission of these cultures to Western scientific and economic interests (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). Indigenous people might resist Western forms of research and knowledge because this knowledge is often used to validate harmful perceptions of indigenous peoples.

In addition, an inherent limitation is that I conducted the interviews and communicated in Spanish, which is, by many, still considered the colonizer's language. Many artisans speak Spanish as their native language, and many speak it as their second language, after Aymara. These linguistic complexities, in addition to Spanish being a second language for me, created some limitations in communication. There were many

linguistic nuances that I was not able to express in the interview process, but with the help of Ms. Bellomy I was able to restate many questions in a way that was more understandable and culturally relevant. In addition, my ability to understand every word or phrase that was spoken by the artisans, many of whom spoke in soft, bashful tones, was impacted by my having studied Spanish as a second language.

Time was another major limitation. Many of the interpersonal connections that I established in La Paz were just starting to bear fruit as I left the city after one month. More time in Bolivia would have expanded my opportunities to work with more artisanal workshops and meet more artisans. In addition, more time would have enabled me to conduct more follow-up interviews and establish more trusting and meaningful relationships with the many people I met. Most of the artisans lived in El Alto, which is not safe for a young, American student to travel to and from. Therefore, it was very difficult to leave the city of La Paz and I was not able to visit the homes of many of the artisans, despite the fact that I was invited and might have had the opportunity to learn more about the beliefs and practices of these artisans.

As I learned in the research process, many of the principles of *Suma Qamaña* were more relevant for artisans that maintained connections to the countryside. A limitation of this research is that I was only able to survey the thoughts and lifestyles and practices of artisans that reside in La Paz and El Alto and not physically experience them. I believe that had I been able to conduct research in more rural communities, I could have encountered more traditional lifestyles that relate more closely to the *Suma Qamaña* cosmology and the reciprocal resource and labor management principles of the *ayni* along the Altiplano. An assessment of textile artisanship in La Paz surely does not represent

textile production in rural areas along the Altiplano, as the lifestyles and material practices of the artisans change considerably upon migration. Lastly, a major limitation involves the operational structure of *Artesanía Sorata*. At the time of my research, *Artesanía Sorata* was undergoing many changes and facing many precarious challenges. These details made planning and coordination with Ms. Bellomy extremely difficult, because she was largely occupied with legal battles and worried about the future of her company.

Future Research Opportunities

Primarily, the most apparent future research opportunity would be to continue this study, albeit with at least a year to allow full integration in language in the culture of Bolivia. Exciting and vital connections were just being made as I left La Paz. More time is necessary in order to conduct a thorough ethnography. Another research opportunity would be to collaborate with more than one textile workshop in La Paz. This would provide more exposure to the textile artisans of La Paz and also provide a greater diversity in experience.

An important new direction would be to expand this research to rural communities on the Altiplano. This would provide exposure to more traditional lifestyles, in which the principles of reciprocity, sustainable resource management, and labor division are actual practices and less political slogans. In these rural areas, many artisans are still utilizing natural fibers and dyes that they cultivate themselves and trade amongst each other. Therefore, certain ideas such as sustainability and reciprocity might hold more meaning for rural artisans, as opposed to urban artisans who do not produce the raw materials for their textile crafts. The *Suma Qamaña* cosmology might be more relevant to

rural artisans as these communities are still largely resource-dependent. In addition, another potential future research project would be to conduct a comparative study. This could be with other Latin American countries and cultures that have experienced similar social and political movements, such as Ecuador, or other countries in the Global South that are adapting their traditional material cultures in the global market, such as India.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH STUDY IRB APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Tucker Hall, Room 212
310 E. Campus Rd.
Athens, Georgia 30602
TEL 706-542-3199 | FAX 706-542-5638
IRB@uga.edu
http://research.uga.edu/hso/irb/

Office of Research
Institutional Review Board

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

October 9, 2017

Dear Katalin Medvedev:

On 10/9/2017, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	A Comparative Analysis of Artisanship and Sustainability in Bolivia and Italy
Investigator:	Katalin Medvedev
Co-Investigator:	Berea Antaki
IRB ID:	STUDY00004496
Funding:	Name: Latin American & Caribbean Studies Institute
Grant ID:	
Review Category:	Exempt Flex 7

The IRB approved the protocol from 10/9/2017 to 10/8/2022.

Please close this study when it is complete.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

Kate Pavich, IRB Analyst
Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INTRODUCTION RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Yo Quisiera Visitar su Empresa!

Berea Susan Antaki

Wed 7/19/2017 12:39 PM

To: cnsorata@yahoo.com <cnsorata@yahoo.com>;

Cc: info@artesaniasorata.com <info@artesaniasorata.com>;

Hola,

Mi nombre es Berea Antaki y soy estudiante en Los Estados Unidos. Estoy un estudiante de los textiles y me interesan las empresas que tienen compromisos con la sostenibilidad ambiental y social. Estaré en La Paz en 2-16 Agosto y me gustaría visitar su empresa para aprender más sobre los artesanas, los textiles tradicionales de Bolivia, y la estructura de su negocio. Entonces, por favor avísame si podré visitar durante mi viaje.

Gracias y saludos,

Berea Antaki

APPENDIX C: FOLLOW-UP RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Preguntas sobre la artesanía

Berea Susan Antaki

Sat 1/20/2018 4:28 PM

To: info@artesaniasorata.com <info@artesaniasorata.com>;

Hola,

Mi nombre es Berea Antaki y soy un estudiante de la Universidad de Georgia en los Estados Unidos. Estudio los textiles y soy una tejedora tambien. Estoy en la Paz hasta el sábado 27 y realmente me gustaría aprender más sobre organizaciones y empresas que apoyan la artesanía. Por supuesto, visitaré su tienda para obtener información, pero me pregunto si es posible reunirse con las artesanas. Tal vez tejer o trabajar con ellas y preguntarlas sobre sus hablidades, su cultura y su conexión con su medioambiente. Si es así, por favor hágamelo saber. Sería una oportunidad increíble.

Gracias,

Berea Antaki

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM IN ENGLISH

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
CONSENT FORM
POLITICAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICES OF FEMALE TEXTILE ARTISANS IN LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

Researcher's Statement
I am asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This statement is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to listen to the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent".

Principal Investigator: Berea Antaki
Textiles, Merchandising, & Interiors
Berea.antaki25@uga.edu
(870) 818-9677

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this research is to gain a greater understanding of the relationship between artisanship and sustainability. The researcher hopes to better understand how artisans interact with their local environments and how this influences their resource use and craft production. In addition, the purpose of this study is to understand how craft companies address social and environmental sustainability in both local and global markets.
You are being asked to participate either because you are an artisan or because you work for/own a sustainable craft company.

Study Procedures
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to …
- Answer questions and discuss their work with the researcher.
- Interviews are expected to be conducted within an hour.
- There are interview questions in order to guide conversation. An example of questions that may be asked include "How did you learn to weave/knit" or "What does sustainability mean to your cooperative?"
- Audio recordings will be taken of the interviews. Photographs during participant observation will be taken, if consent is granted.

Risks and discomforts
- I do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.

Benefits

- Expected benefits to society include revaluing traditional craft, empowering artisans to practice sustainability, and advocating for balanced economic development.

Incentives for participation

There will be no monetary incentive for employees/artisans to participate in the study. Participants are asked to voluntarily participate on their own time and free will.

Audio/Video Recording

Audio recordings are necessary in order to allow the researcher to focus on the interview rather than attempting to record all of the information by hand. Upon completion of the research, the recordings will be kept for up to five years on the researcher's private hard drive.

Images might be used for future presentations or publications if consent is granted. If participants do not wish for their likeness to be recorded, state "I do not grant consent for my physical likeness to be recorded by photograph or video recording."

Privacy/Confidentiality

In general, the only direct identifiers that will be maintained in the study are the name of the employee/artisan and their place of work. The participant's privacy will be protected and stored on a private hard drive. Only the primary and secondary researcher will have access to this information, and the data will be stored up to five years. Basic information (name and place of work) will be retained in order to re-contact the participant if necessary.

Taking part is voluntary

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision about whether or not to participate will not impact your employment.

If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a VERBAL request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

If you have questions

The main researcher conducting this study is Berea Antaki, a Graduate student at the University of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Berea at berea.antaki25@uga.edu or at (870) 818-9677. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:
To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must state, "I voluntarily agree to take part in this study." Your verbal statement indicates that you have heard and understood this entire consent statement, and have had all of your questions answered.

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM IN SPANISH

UNIVERSIDAD DE GEORGIA
FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO
PRÁCTICAS POLÍTICAS Y ÉTICAS DE MUJERES ARTESANAS TEXTILES EN LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

Declaración del investigador
Les pido que participen en un estudio de investigación. Antes de decidirse a participar en este estudio, es importante que entienda por qué se está realizando la investigación y qué implicará. Esta declaración está diseñada para darle la información sobre el estudio para que pueda decidir si participar o no en el estudio. Por favor tome el tiempo para escuchar la siguiente información cuidadosamente. Pregúntele al investigador si hay algo que no está claro o si necesita más información. Cuando todas sus preguntas hayan sido contestadas, usted puede decidir si desea estar en el estudio o no. Este proceso se llama "consentimiento informado".

Investigador principal: Berea Antaki
Textiles, Merchandising, & Interiores
Berea.antaki25@uga.edu
(870) 818-9677

Propósito del estudio
El propósito de esta investigación es obtener una mayor comprensión de la relación entre la artesanía y la sostenibilidad. El investigador espera comprender mejor cómo los artesanos interactúan con sus medios ambientes locales y cómo esto influye en el uso de sus recursos y la producción artesanal. Además, el propósito de este estudio es entender cómo las empresas artesanales abordan la sostenibilidad social y ambiental en los mercados locales y globales.
Se le pide que participe ya sea porque es un artesano o porque trabaja para una empresa artesanal sostenible.

Procedimientos del estudio
Si acepta participar, se le pedirá que ...
• Responder a las preguntas y discutir su trabajo con el investigador.
• Se espera que las entrevistas se lleven a cabo dentro de una hora.
• Hay preguntas de la entrevista para guiar la conversación. Un ejemplo de las preguntas que se pueden hacer son "¿Cómo aprendiste a tejer" o "¿Qué significa la sostenibilidad para tu cooperativa?"
• Se tomarán grabaciones de audio de las entrevistas. Se tomarán fotografías durante la observación participante, si se otorga el consentimiento.

Riesgos e incomodidades
• No espero ningún riesgo de participar en esta investigación.

Beneficios
• Los beneficios esperados para la sociedad incluyen la revalorización del arte tradicional, el empoderamiento de los artesanos para practicar la sostenibilidad y la promoción del desarrollo económico equilibrado.

Incentivos para la participación
No habrá ningún incentivo monetario para que los empleados / artesanos participen en el estudio. Se pide a los participantes que participen voluntariamente en su propio tiempo y libre albedrío.

Grabación de Audio / Video
Las grabaciones de audio son necesarias para permitir que el investigador se centre en la entrevista en lugar de tratar de grabar toda la información a mano. Una vez finalizada la investigación, las grabaciones se mantendrán durante un máximo de cinco años en el disco duro privado del investigador.

Las imágenes pueden ser utilizadas para futuras presentaciones o publicaciones si se otorga el consentimiento. Si los participantes no desean que su semejanza sea registrada, indique "No concedo consentimiento para que mi imagen física sea grabada por medio de una fotografía o grabación de video".

Privacidad / Confidencialidad
En general, los únicos identificadores directos que se mantendrán en el estudio son el nombre del empleado / artesano y su lugar de trabajo. La privacidad del participante será protegida y almacenada en un disco duro privado. Sólo el investigador primario y secundario tendrá acceso a esta información, y los datos se almacenarán hasta cinco años.

Participar es voluntario
Su participación en el estudio es voluntaria, y usted puede optar por no participar o dejar de hacerlo en cualquier momento sin penalización ni pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho. Su decisión de participar o no participará no afectará su empleo.

Si decide retirarse del estudio, la información que puede ser identificada como la suya se mantendrá como parte del estudio y puede continuar siendo analizada, a menos que haga una solicitud VERBAL para eliminar, devolver o destruir la información.

Si tienes preguntas
El investigador principal que conduce este estudio es Berea Antaki, una estudiante licenciada en la universidad de Georgia. Por favor, haga cualquier pregunta que tenga ahora. Si tiene preguntas más tarde, puede comunicarse con Berea en berea.antaki25@uga.edu o al (870) 818-9677. Si tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud con
respecto a sus derechos como participante de investigación en este estudio, puede
comunicarse con el Presidente de la Junta de Revisión Institucional (IRB) al 706.542.3199 o irb@uga.edu.

El consentimiento del sujeto investigador para participar en la investigación:
Para aceptar voluntariamente participar en este estudio, debe declarar: "Yo voluntariamente acepto tomar parte en este estudio". Su declaración verbal indica que ha escuchado y entendido esta declaración de consentimiento completa y que ha respondido a todas sus preguntas.

APPENDIX F: RESEARCH STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

Warm up Questions

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- How long have you been knitting/weaving/dyeing/spinning, etc.?
- How did you learn this skill?
- How long have you worked for ___?
- What is your favorite part of your job?
- Has working for ___ changed your relationship or perspective with textiles? How about with your culture?
- What does a handmade item mean to you?

Bolivian Culture and Economy

- What does sustainability mean to you?
- Do you prefer to source locally with products and labor?
- Is Bolivian craft a national or regional pride? What characteristics bring pride?
- Do you feel that there is local demand for artisanal products? Why and who is buying?
- Do you feel that there is local competition? Global?
- What opportunities does a company in Bolivia have to be sustainable?

Skill Preservation

- What makes Bolivian artisanship worth preserving? What is unique about it?
- Do you feel that traditional artisanship endangered? Does it still exist?
- Is the transfer of skills through family? How did artisans learn?
- Do you feel that these skills are respected in your local, regional, and national community? How so?
- And with the younger generation? How has the artisanal community tried to engage younger generations?
- What do you feel has been lost and why?
- How does this compare in the different regions of Bolivia?

Defining Artisanship

- Are trends important? What are the goals and how do you adapt stylistically?
- How does your company bring Bolivian artisanship into the 21st century? How does it survive?
- Does traditional artisanship still hold meaning in local and/or regional identities?

APPENDIX F: RESEARCH STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH (CONTINUED)

- What do you feel is the role of artisanship in Bolivian society?
- Do you feel that artisanship has preserved identities?
- How has artisanship evolved in Bolivia? How?
- What is required to consider handwork authentic in Bolivia?
- What is worth preserving, and why? And why do you choose to? Is it fulfilling?
- Do you receive local, or regional, or national incentives for maintaining traditional skills?

Sustainability

- Is sustainability important to you in your daily life and decisions?
- How do you measure sustainability?
- How do you relate to your natural environment?
- Do you feel connected to your natural environment? What does it mean to you?
- Do you feel that sustainability in Bolivia practical? Is it ethical? Do you have any examples that describe the practicality of resource conversation?
- What is prioritized in sustainability–the consumer, the person making the craft, the integrity of the production?
- How do you get your raw materials?
- Do you feel that the quality of the materials important to you? Why?
- How important is it that raw materials come locally or from Bolivia?
- What are challenges associated with sourcing materials?

APPENDIX G: RESEARCH STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE IN SPANISH

Primeras Preguntas

- ¿Cuál es tu nombre?
- ¿Cuántos años tienes?
- ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva tejiendo / tejiendo / teñiendo / hilando, etc.?
- ¿Cómo aprendiste esta habilidad?
- ¿Cuánto tiempo has trabajado para ___?
- ¿Cuál es tu parte favorita de tu trabajo?
- ¿Trabajar para ___ cambió su relación o perspectiva con los textiles? ¿Qué tal con tu cultura?
- ¿Qué significa para ti un objeto hecho a mano?

Cultura y economía bolivianas

- ¿Qué significa la sostenibilidad para ti?
- ¿Prefiere obtener localmente productos y mano de obra?
- ¿Es la artesanía boliviana un orgullo nacional o regional? ¿Qué características traen orgullo?
- ¿Siente que hay demanda local de productos artesanales? ¿Por qué y quién está comprando?
- ¿Quién es el cliente ideal?
- ¿Sientes que hay competencia local? ¿Global?
- ¿Qué oportunidades tiene una empresa en Bolivia para ser sostenible?

Preservación de habilidades

- ¿Qué vale la pena preservar la artesanía boliviana? ¿Qué tiene de especial?
- ¿Sientes que la artesanía tradicional está en peligro? ¿Todavía existe?
- ¿La transferencia de habilidades a través de la familia? ¿Cómo aprendieron los artesanos?
- ¿Siente que estas habilidades son respetadas en su comunidad local, regional y nacional? ¿Cómo es eso?
- ¿Y con la generación más joven? ¿Cómo ha intentado la comunidad artesanal involucrar a las generaciones más jóvenes?
- ¿Qué sientes que se ha perdido y por qué?
- ¿Cómo se compara esto en las diferentes regiones de Bolivia?

APPENDIX G: RESEARCH STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE IN SPANISH (CONTINUED)

Definiendo el Artisanismo

- ¿Las tendencias son importantes? ¿Cuáles son los objetivos y cómo te adaptas estilísticamente?
- ¿Cómo lleva su empresa la artesanía boliviana al siglo XXI? ¿Cómo sobrevive?
- ¿El artesanado tradicional todavía tiene significado en las identidades locales y / o regionales?
- ¿Cuál cree que es el papel del artesano en la sociedad boliviana?
- ¿Sientes que la artesanía ha preservado las identidades?
- ¿Cómo ha evolucionado la artesanía en Bolivia? ¿Cómo?
- ¿Qué se requiere para considerar el trabajo hecho a mano auténtico en Bolivia?
- ¿Qué vale la pena preservar, y por qué? ¿Y por qué lo eliges? ¿Es satisfactorio?
- ¿Recibe incentivos locales, regionales o nacionales para mantener las habilidades tradicionales?

Sostenibilidad

- ¿La sostenibilidad es importante para ti en tu vida diaria y tus decisiones?
- ¿Cómo mides la sostenibilidad?
- ¿Cómo te relacionas con tu entorno natural?
- ¿Te sientes conectado con tu entorno natural? ¿Qué significa para ti?
- ¿Sientes que la sostenibilidad en Bolivia es práctica? ¿Es ético? ¿Tiene algún ejemplo que describa la practicidad de la conversación de recursos?
- ¿Qué se prioriza en la sostenibilidad: el consumidor, la persona que realiza el trabajo, la integridad de la producción?
- ¿Cómo obtienes tus materias primas?
- ¿Siente que la calidad de los materiales es importante para usted? ¿Por qué?
- ¿Qué tan importante es que las materias primas lleguen localmente o desde Bolivia?
- ¿Cuáles son los desafíos asociados con el suministro de materiales?