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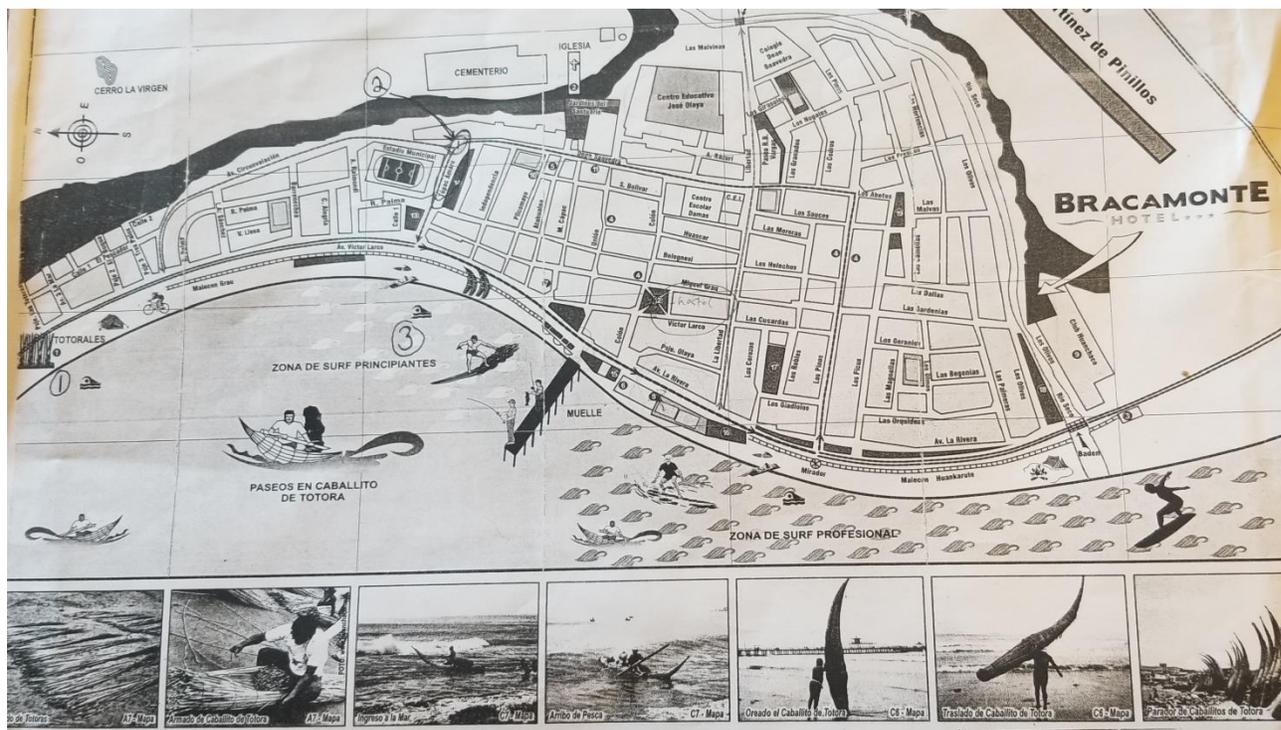
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Indigenous Peru's Cultural Protection and Practice

“Protection of Native cultural resources is critical to the vitality of traditional Native religions, customs, languages, and status as sovereign nations” This declaration from the National Congress of American Indians is not limited to the Native Tribes and First Nations of the United States and Canada but extends to all indigenous people of the world. In Peru, this is no different whether the native people are from the coastal towns, mountain villages or Amazon tribes their ability to practice and pass on their livelihoods resides in their ability to protect their resources and customs. The survival and future existence of traditional professionals and ways of life depend on the active preservation and practice of native customs. However, due to external pressures and a lack of internal protections, entire indigenous practices and histories have vanished or been changed by outside influences and without protections. Due to this world wide phenomena, my research investigated the methods of preserving, practicing, and passing on the traditional cultural livelihoods and how they compare between the Peruvian indigenous coastal fishermen of Huanchaco and the agro-pastoralists of the mountain communities in Julcan. Through studying and comparing the traditional livelihoods of fishing, agriculture and architecture in Julcan and Huanchaco I provide information on how separate communities work to preserve and pass on their traditional lifestyles. This will grant insights into how other similar

communities can preserve and eventually work to revitalize their traditional livelihoods and cultural customs.

Site Background and Description



(Map 1: Huanchaco Map; Site 1- *Totorales* beds, Site 2- *Tupac Amaru*, Site 3- *Huanchaco Beach*)

Huanchaco is a beach town and a popular vacation spot outside of Trujillo in the La Libertad Region of Peru. The town possesses a total population of 38, 134⁴ The true number of current and former traditional indigenous coastal people (known as the Chimú) is not recorded but there are roughly 30-40 fishermen known to be continuing the Chimú's traditional fishing customs within the Huanchaco city limits along with their families. The Chimú culture has been recorded since 800-900 CE, inhabiting the northern coastlines of Peru. While eventually growing into an empire centered on the city of Chan Chan in between modern day Trujillo and Huanchaco, the Chimú were conquered by both the Inca and Spanish empires. Currently, the Chimú people have dwindled as the culture was subsumed by both the Inca and Spanish.

In modern day Huanchaco, my research focused on three specific sites within its boundaries as seen in Map 1: Sites 1, 2, and 3, all which hold significance to the Chimu people and their traditional practices and professions. Site 1, also known as the *Swamps of Huanchaco Ecological Reserve*⁴ is a site at least a mile long that is located directly outside of Huanchaco. The reserve has a road running down the center with both the beach and cliff sides of the road holding a significant number of water filled wells that are used to grow the local *Tortora* reeds that were once used by the Chimu as building material for both their traditional boats and construction practices. Each bed is at least 10 to 20 ft long with a 5 foot slope to the water filled well where the reeds are grown. The water in the shallowest pools can come up several feet to a man's knees while the deepest by the cliffs will reach an individual's chin.



(Picture 1: *Tortora* reed bed)

Site 2 or *Tupac Amaru* is the location where many of the fishermen live and use the reeds to create their boats outside of the soccer stadium. *Tupac Amaru* consists of a small park including a bridge and a children slide and a small circular plaza strip sandwiched between two roads. Site 3 is the Huanchaco beachfront known as the *Zona de Surf Principiantes*. The section used by Chimu fishermen runs for under a mile of sand and rock beach pressed up against the main road. A number of bamboo shelters are scattered across the beach along with nearly 40 of the Chimu reed boats and the nets that are their primary fishing tool along with their water craft.

Julcan



(Picture 2: Julcan Plaza via AVALOS¹)

Julcan is the capital of the La Libertad regional province that bears its name. Even with its population of roughly 35,000 people⁵, Julcan is considered to be the “Capital of the Potato” by Peruvians due to being the center of potato and other agricultural production within Peru. Unlike in Huanchaco there were not specific sites utilized by all indigenous agro-pastoralists of Julcan. The majority of Julcan’s populations are agro-pastoralists, typically living in the outlying areas of the Julcan province and working in their fields. While the native people of Huanchaco are of Chimú descent, those of Julcan claim their lineage to be that of the Inca, ignoring claims by other nearby communities and cultures that had held older claims to the region.

The amount of farmland that people from Julcan have varies from individual to individual and family to family but most follow a similar pattern of being on an inclined hill fenced by low walls of stacked river stones. These farm sites range in size depending on the wealth of the families as well as the location with much of the Julcan farmland being at enough shallow inclines that and flat spaces that the land can be spread out. In the farther and steepest extents of the province, terraced farmland was utilized to maximize space. The locations for construction of adobe (the mud brick style typical in Julcan building) are within the city limits

near the houses of those who work with it. The sites of adobe building have flat spaces for the bricks to be dried as well as an open-roofed, walled site where the bricks are made and additionally fired.



(Picture 4: Julcan adobe house design)

Research Methods

For this research project I originally utilized on unobtrusive observation, semi-structured interviews, mapping and free lists to gather information and data. In the course of the field school these methods changed from situation to situation. These unexpected changes resulted in participant observations and unstructured interviews becoming included in to the methods of data collection while my free listing question (What comes to mind when you think of your

profession?) quickly became non-existent as soon as the interviews began as those I interviewed often answered the free listing question without prompting. Mapping was restricted primarily to photos and maps collected from online and literary sites as well as my own photos taken during the duration of the field school.

Observations: Of my unobtrusive observations, only three were planned events. In Huanchaco I took a 45 min period at 1:30 pm on Wednesday the 27th of June at the Huanchaco beach. In Julcan the other two planned periods were on June 19th at the adobe construction site by the Julcan cemetery for 30 minutes while the second was for another 30 minutes on June the 24th right outside the *Cielo Azul* hostel between the children's park and the sport field. Besides these planned events, I spent nearly every day since beginning my research observing the areas of Huanchaco; taking notes and photos about what I saw. The unexpected participant observations occurred in Huanchaco on the 28th of June with the Chimu fisherman Junior when I and others assisted him in moving and carrying totora reeds.

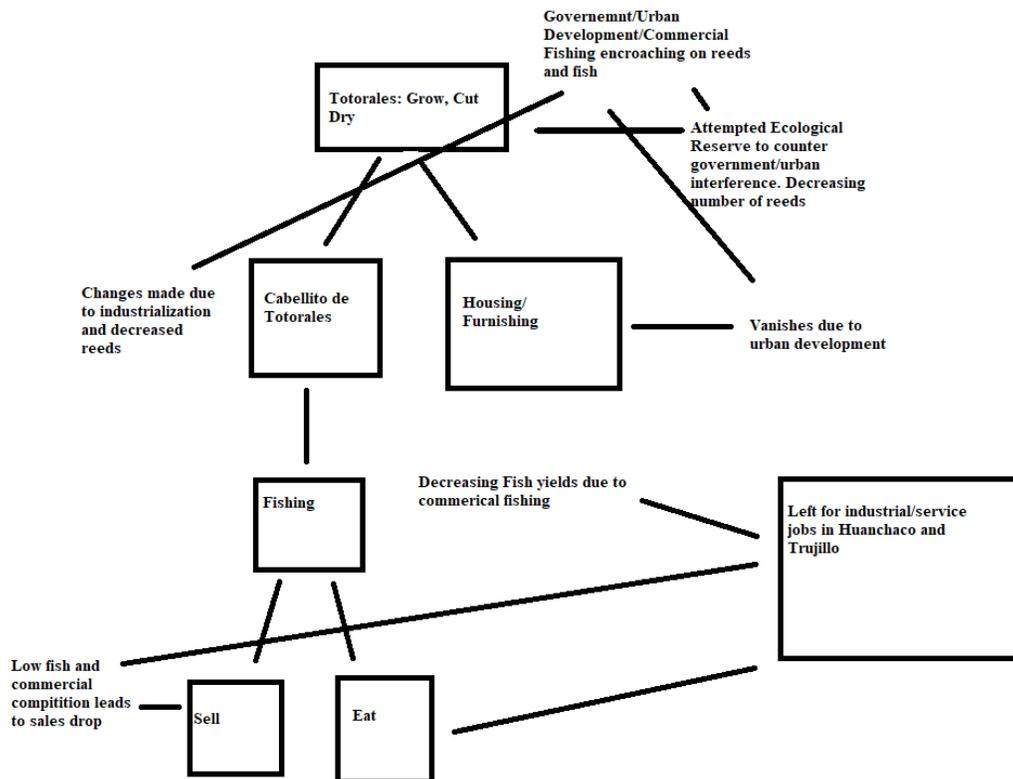
Interviews: My interviews began as semi-structured interviews focused around the following questions:

- How long have you done this profession
- How common is it? How many locals are practitioners?
- How has your practice changed or been forced to change?
 - How have you individually changed your profession?
- Are there any obstacles (local/national/global) to your profession?
- How do you teach your profession to the next generation?
 - How long does it take?
 - How difficult is it to find or keep students?

- What has been done to protect your cultural traditions?
- What must still be done to preserve your customs and professions?

These questions were chosen due to their broad applications across all of the traditional professions and regions. The semi-structured interviews led to other questions being asked as the interviews continued and new topics were introduced and questioned. I conducted four planned, semi-structured interviews along with translators: one on June 14th with the Peruvian anthropologist Rafael about the indigenous professions of Huanchaco and Julcan at Hostal Huanchaco, another with the fisherman Victor on Chimu fishermen on June 12th at the *Tupac Amaru*, another with Junior and his father Jose on June 15th, also at the *Tupac Amaru*, as they made reed boats, and then the final one in Julcan with *Cielo Azul* hostel owner Clever about Julcan adobe. Besides these planned interviews, I recorded unstructured, unplanned interviews with several different farmers in Julcan, one on June 19th with a farming woman and her family on their way to their home in the country, another with an older farmer also on June 19th, one on June 21st with another farmer and his workers, and one with a women's farming cooperative on June 22nd. Further, following the field school I held an interview with Jamie Valadez, a member of the Elwha Klallam Tribe in Washington State, on July 5th about preserving and revitalizing native people's traditional languages, customs and professions from her own experiences and work in restoring the Klallam language and other Klallam revitalization and preservation projects.

Data and Data Analysis



(Figure 1: flowchart demonstrating the interconnected nature of Huanchaco traditional professions; Gavin Crain 2018)

Themes and Trends

One of the first trends that I found researching the traditional professions in both Huanchaco and Julcan was the migration away from indigenous professions; sometimes the migration became a physical relocation away from the native location, often to Trujillo and its outlying districts and villages. This was found due to be a result of economic and ecological reasons which are so often intertwined. In Huanchaco, the daily yields of fish have dropped considerably, with both Victor and Jose (two of the oldest fishermen in Huanchaco) reporting that in their youth, yields of 30-60 kilos would be average but now the catch ranges between 3-10 kilos of fish. With fish selling at about 10 soles for 4 fish, many fishermen have been forced

to retire or simply not pass on their teachings to the next generation as it no longer becomes viable for families to live off of.

In Julcan, the farmers face a similar situation with prices for grain and root exports, their primary source of income, being sold for less than 3 soles for over 11 ounces. This is often sold to traders who will inflate the price when selling in Trujillo. Changes in traditional farming practices has resulted in chemical fertilizer, electricity and industrial vehicles becoming both more of a necessity and status symbols within the Julcan farming communities. These changes are lauded for their efficiency and productivity but have increased the burden on the families. The status symbol and perceived wealth increase seen in western and industrial influences, in Trujillo especially, means that many farmers see abandoning their traditional lifestyle for an attempt to increase their wealth by living and working in Trujillo.

In Huanchaco the traditional form of construction used by the Chimu people: are *Casas de Totora* (or reed houses), have been discontinued as a form of housing by the native people as urban development pushed by the government and increased foreign traffic caused flooding in native homes and began to disrupt the reed beds that provided the needed materials for not only the houses but the boats and their furniture. While totora reeds continue to be used as fencing, window panes and within the reed boats they have been replaced by houses of brick and imported materials.

For Julcan, the traditional form of adobe housing, in place for several thousand years, has remained fairly stable in contrast to the attitude towards farming. The adobe housing was noted by hostel owner Clever to be resistant to earthquakes, annual rains and other weather and environmental impacts due to it's tried and tested design. However, governmental and

government funded buildings are made out of imported brick as are the houses of those with wealth or who wish to appear as if they possess more wealth than their neighbors.

Along with these trends of migration is an increased use of industrialized tools and infrastructure. Amongst the fishing community of Huanchaco the nets that are used to trawl in the Pacific waters were once made of cotton grown locally but have been transplanted by nylon nets. Styrofoam was found to be used in the reed boats while the hand-scythes wielded to harvest them are now made out of steel. For the Chimu fishermen, these trends of industrialization are seen as an improvement, especially the Styrofoam as Junior and Jose described it as being lighter and a better flotation device than the additional totora previously used.

In Julcan, there is still division between usage of industrial and traditional tools. While tractors and chemical fertilizer are common sights in the farming communities, *the Women for More Development* cooperative continues to use traditional housing and cooking for their cheese production but have supplemented it with government provided metal tools, propane and water pumps. A woman who made bread to sell in Julcan continued to bake her bread entirely with a mud brick and wood oven even though she was reported as having the highest demanded bread around Julcan.

Preservation and Revitalization

Preservation of traditional professions in Huanchaco is centered on the totorales fields outside the town. As they provide the necessary materials for all other practices for the Chimu people, their existence is of utmost importance. The original totorales were collected from nearby Chan Chan over seventy years ago in order to make it easier for fishermen to access and grow. Since then, the greatest stride towards preserving the totorales was the declaration of the fields as an ecological reserve that stops urban development on the land and allows only the

fishermen to own the land. During my interview with a local anthropologist Rafael Vaquez, Rafael described a planned expansion to the ecological reserve started about 15 years ago by which that reserve would be increased to allow additional reed beds, and that native Chimu would build reed houses and perform traditional activities and festivals there to draw attention to the Chimu culture and local history. Similar projects have gone through with the local San Pedro festival (a celebration of the local fishermen saint that culminates in the saint's effigy carried around the Huanchaco bay in a boat) having the center piece (a large boat) created out of totorales by the fishermen. Along with this a local Chimu surfer is undergoing a tour of the European coast in traditional clothing and boats to draw more attention to the coastal people of Peru. Furthermore, in Trujillo, a program was started to teach fishermen English and to better provide other avenues of business while retained usage of their boats. After four years, seven fishermen have passed through the program and Chimu fishermen will take paying customers on boat rides or allow them to rent one of the reed boats.

The Chimu people have faced significant obstacles towards actively preserving their culture as the government and urban developers have been encroaching upon the ecological reserve to build roads and additional housing for Huanchaco. Out in the waters, the government has established a five mile limit for commercial fishing to protect local fishermen yet the great trawlers still gather much of the fish required and expected by the local Chimu.

In Julcan, the greatest efforts towards preserving the traditional farming practices have been the farming cooperatives such as the *Women for More Development*. Along with receiving government support to supply materials, the cooperative gained greater bargaining power in the markets and in tough times, that would have which would normally result in families moving to Trujillo, the cooperative families have remained in Julcan, supporting each other. While many

farmers have turned to chemical fertilizer and industrial vehicles, many cooperatives at the Julcan markets advertize using traditional organic manure and fertilizer for their produce.

Instructing the Next Generation

Of all things between the native communities of Huanchaco and Julcan, the greatest similarities are found in the way that they raise the next generations into adulthood. Both communities begin instructing their youth young, typically having them watch their elders practice their craft, or for those in Julcan, watch the cows. This typically begins at least by age ten, with additional duties placed on both communities youths grow older until they eventually becoming full members by their late teens. For both communities, instruction never truly ends and in one case, Junior continued to ask and receive instruction from his father Jose while he put together one of the totora boats.

Just as their instructions are similar, so too are the obstacles they face, as mentioned previously. The viability of fishing and farming are or are seen as low in comparison to industrial or commercial jobs located in cities such as Trujillo. As such few fishermen and farmers wish for their children to take on the family professions as a life time job and instead seek jobs elsewhere. Out of the 78 children by the members of the *Women for More Development* cooperative, nearly all were sent to Trujillo to study at college or find work other than farming. The cooperative used some of their greater funding to hire a Trujillo professor to come and instruct their children so as to better give them opportunities away from Julcan.

The preservation and revitalization of native cultures; professions, languages and religions is a life time dedication for many. Not just for those who belong to an individual community but for those who come after them as well as those elsewhere in the world that can draw inspiration from their work or who may have their own experiences to draw on and supply.

To compare with the situation in Julcan and Peru, I interviewed a member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe who has dedicated her life to actively preserving and revitalizing her native culture. For the Elwha Klallam tribe, Jamie Valadez provided some of that much need dedication and support during her work introducing a complete Klallam language dictionary and language program for Washington schools and tribes. The process by which she and others worked to preserve them fell on grasping onto what they had and protecting and preserving it to provide a base to build off of, something she saw as the building block for revitalization. She then said that a community must reach out to other native communities to gather more information and provide better political power and leverage. In Julcan and Huanchaco the beginnings of this could be seen with the ecological reserve, cooperatives and in Huanchaco: the first meeting between two different Chimu communities in generations. This research is vital as it adds to that network of communal support. The communities of Huanchaco and Julcan may seem very different: opposing professions, different obstacles, yet they face similar issues of a vanishing culture and way of life. To preserve and revitalize their cultures there needs to be a reach out between communities and use their similarities in instruction, a similar fate and the desire for improving their lives and retaining their practices.

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