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# Negotiating belonging and place: an exploration of *mestiza* women's everyday resistance in Cajamarca, Peru.

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## Abstract

Since 1993, the Cajamarca region of Peru has been home to the Yanacocha gold mine, associated with environmental degradation, negative health impacts, and socio-economic consequences. In 2012, large-scale protests broke out across the region over the newly proposed Conga mine. Increasingly, scholarship is devoted to recognizing socio-environmental struggles outside of mass-mobilization and public protests; at the local, household and everyday level, often performed over much longer timescales. In this context, I critically explore the everyday resistance of *mestiza*-identifying women in Cajamarca city. Through a discussion of how their on-going resistance critically constructs who/what belongs in place, and who/what is 'other'/'stranger', I analyse how they mobilise gendered local values and knowledge to continue opposing large-scale mining in the aftermath of the Conga conflict.

## 1. Introduction

Since 1993, the Cajamarca region in the northern Peruvian Andes has been home to the Yanacocha gold-mine. In 2012, the region gained international attention when *Minera Yanacocha*'s plans to open the Conga mine led to large-scale protests. The case became emblematic for the various socio-environmental struggles in Peru, where the scale and intensity of resource extraction has rapidly increased under successive neoliberal governments since the 1990s (Veltmeyer and Petras, 2014). This article contributes to academic exploration of everyday resistance in the aftermath of such socio-environmental struggle, focusing on *mestiza*-identifying women's mobilisations of belonging in place. These women constitute a relatively under-explored group in existing academic literature on socio-environmental movements and everyday resistance. The analysis in this article is based on qualitative data collected through interviews and participant observation in the region of Cajamarca in 2016-2017. The article is structured as follows: in section 2, I briefly outline the setting of the article and the methods used; in section 3, I highlight the theoretical context to which it contributes. Section 4 to 6 contain my empirical discussion, outlining, in turn, how during mining resistance, *mestiza*-identifying women reconfigured who 'belongs'; how they continue to practise place and belonging in gendered ways in the aftermath of this resistance; and how, even in the aftermath of conflict, they consider their belonging threatened by 'strangers' with different customs and demands, further imbuing their everyday, private lives with gendered constructions of everyday resistance. Taken together, in section 7, I conclude that these *mestiza* women emphasize their everyday lives as meaningfully altered by a

variety of 'masculine'-coded others. By mobilising gendered notions of 'belonging' in place, then, they draw upon methods of everyday resistance both evident and meaningful to them.

## 2. Contextualizing Resistance

The Yanacocha mine is operated by *Minera Yanacocha S.R.L.* (MYSRL), currently comprised of the US-based Newmont mining corporation (51%), the Peruvian Buenaventura (44%) and the Japanese company Sumitomo (5%). The mine is located 35 kilometres northwest of Cajamarca city (Bury, 2005). Initially, there was little opposition to the company's presence, but a sense of discontent steadily grew under the local population as only few local people found employment in the mine, and promised economic growth remained limited. Simultaneously, people began noticing negative impacts of the mine: pollution, displacement, dying fish stocks, as well as the continuous growth of Cajamarca city, and along with it, an increase in social ills (Bury, 2005; Li, 2013). In 2004, discontent with a proposed expansion of the Yanacocha mine into the Cerro Quilish area led to widespread rural and urban opposition (Li, 2013). In 2011, after the company announced its plans to open a new mine, Conga, mass mobilizations occurred in both urban and rural areas. These reached their peak in 2012, when five people lost their lives during involvement in anti-mining movements, and many more suffered violence and threats at the hands of military and police (Loayza, 2012; Paredes Peñafiel and Li, 2017). The interest from international NGOs and journalists increased the external

validity of the protests; ultimately, the opening of the Conga mine was indefinitely halted in 2016 (Newmont Mining Corporation, 2016).

In the remainder of this article, I draw on qualitative data collected during seven months of fieldwork in 2016-2017. My fieldwork involved extensive participant observation with several grassroots environmental and women's organisations in Cajamarca city and the towns of Celendín and Bambamarca, all located in the impact zones of the Yanacocha and/or Conga mines. Contact with women in these organisations was facilitated through the NGOs CATAPA, where I had previously worked, and LAMMP<sup>1</sup>. Being referred through these organisations facilitated the acceptance of my presence, and my ability to make further contacts in the field. In Cajamarca city, I worked with two different women's organisations, both with a long history of social mobilisations during the time of heavy protest in 2011-2012, when they mobilised in the streets, conducted fund-raising, attended public events and marches, and cooked for other activists. One of these groups continued meeting regularly in the present day, the other met sporadically.

I conducted twenty oral history interviews, with both *campesina* (10) and *mestiza* (10) identifying women, aged 27 to 66. *Campesina/o* literally means 'peasant', however, it is in effect a descriptor of an ethnic group, associated with rural areas and lower classes in urban areas. *Mestiza/o* is a racial classifier originally referring to those of both indigenous and European descent; in practice, it is associated with urban middle and upper classes (De la Cadena, 2005; Westwood and Radcliffe, 1993). The interviews lasted

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<sup>1</sup> *Comité Académico Técnico de Asesoramiento a Problemas Ambientales*, and *Latin American Mining Monitoring Programme*, respectively.

between forty minutes and two hours. Nineteen interviewees opposed the Conga mine; one supported it. Eighteen had at some point been involved in anti-mining social movements; sixteen, to various extents, were still active in social movements. While my work did not focus exclusively on activists, in this article I use anonymised quotes from *mestiza*-identifying women who took part in public forms of resistance against the Conga mine. My aim is to acknowledge women's voices and experiences in the aftermath of the intense conflict. Therefore, similar to Jenkins (2014b), I do not employ comparison to men, but value these women's stories in their own right.

### 3. Conceptualizing Resistance

What is often highlighted in particular in relation to women's resistance is the notion that the personal is political, and that in our everyday lives we create and recreate culture with all its implied meaning, power relations and struggles (Conger Lind, 1992; Escobar, 1992). Various scholars have explored how Andean women 'legitimize' participation in public activism with narratives of their tasks and responsibilities in the everyday private sphere; notably including motherhood, protecting life, and gendered connections to nature (Westwood and Radcliffe, 1993; Laurie, 2011; Jenkins, 2014a). The everyday thus has obvious linkages to women's gendered forms of activism. Furthermore, Zanotti (2013) argues that 'place' is an important stage of the contestation of globalisation through acts of everyday resistance. Understanding how local notions of belonging in place are mobilised in women's actions and narratives,

then, can provide a useful avenue for further exploring their everyday resistance.

Places are about more than their physical attributes: through the meanings assigned to them, they are a reminder of the past, including of people, places, and values; not just through nostalgia, but in on-going processes of meaning-making with historical continuity (Rishbeth and Powell, 2013). Such emotional connection to places, formed through repeatedly experiencing them, often translate to the feeling of 'belonging' in place (Thwaites and Simkins, 2007; Scannell and Gifford, 2010; Gustafson, 2001). When a group of people is identified as 'belonging' in place, automatically, a group of people is demarcated as 'not belonging' (Ahmed, 2000; Mee and Wright, 2009). Ahmed (2000) discusses how imagined communities at the national level are reliant on producing a 'boundary' to define who does and does not belong. This boundary could be constructed at regional or local levels as well; what is important here is how such boundaries serve to contrast what is inside with what is outside – the 'other', the stranger. However, Ahmed (2000) argues, the stranger is not restricted to the outside sphere, and is in fact considered especially threatening when existing within the constructed community boundary, demanding a seat at the table. Thereby, the stranger either takes the place of someone who was there before, or demands the number of seats to be expanded.

The *campesina/o* has long been constructed as an 'other' to '*mestiza/o*' urban dwellers in Andean contexts, where the countryside is often imagined in two ways: on the one hand, associated with the traditional and the authentic; on the other, with connotations of backwardness (De la Cadena,



2005; Rowe and Schelling, 1991; Westwood and Radcliffe, 1993). However, academic work on Cajamarca, including much work quoted in this article (e.g. Li (2009); Paredes Peñafiel and Li (2017); Bebbington *et al.* (2008); Bury (2005); Franco (2016); Li (2013)), tends to focus on *campesino* resistance and rural areas, with less emphasis on exploring how local politics of belonging in the urban sphere, or between the urban and the rural, are interpreted in activism and post-activism contexts. This is not surprising, as in contrast to much of the rest of the country, Cajamarca is a predominantly rural region<sup>2</sup>, where agriculture has long been the dominant income-generating activity (Franco, 2016).

Years before large-scale struggles over mining expansion erupted in Cajamarca, Starn (1991) already discussed the region's *campesino* movements, arguing they developed struggle through slow, continuous actions and activities chipping away at notions of authority. He linked this in with the notion of everyday resistance, which has become widely recognised in academic literature exploring how social, political and environmental struggles do not simply take place through public protests movements, but occur at the local, household and everyday level. Such everyday resistance may go hand in hand with, pre-date, and/or post-date more open, intense conflict of the sort we traditionally consider 'resistance' (Bebbington *et al.*, 2008; Jenkins, 2017; Scott, 1986; van der Ploeg, 2009; Zanotti, 2013; Vinthagen and Johansson, 2013).

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<sup>2</sup> At the national level, as of 2019, Peru's population is 21% rural, 79% urban; Cajamarca's population is 64% rural, 36% urban (CPI, 2019)

Academic work on Cajamarca, and on everyday resistance, both, then, have a long history of being linked to the peasantry. However, Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) argue that the notion of everyday resistance should not be restricted to peasants, but exists in various subaltern groups of people. This article contributes to these literatures by considering the various ways in which Cajamarcan *mestiza*-identifying women who have opposed the expansion of large-scale mining in the region employ a narrative of belonging in their on-going strategies of everyday resistance.

#### 4. Belonging in place

After the Conga project was put on hold, heavy activism in Cajamarca largely died down. However, similar to Castillo and Brereton (2018)'s finding that, in terms of migration, even non-existing mining projects can permanently alter meaning-making regarding place, I argue here that local relationships between the urban and the rural may also be permanently altered through a shift in local meaning-making; in this case, as it occurred in the context of the non-realized Conga project.

Some *mestiza* women explained that before the anti-Conga protests broke out, people from Cajamarca city sometimes looked down on the people from the countryside. Marisol (45, civil servant) said:

*“The people from the city used to say ‘oh, those indios<sup>3</sup> from there [the countryside]”*

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<sup>3</sup> Literally: Indians, racial term for *campesinos*

Dunn (2001) discusses how the 'us' and 'them' groups are created through narratives and storytelling, in which the delineation of the community members is captured, and thereby, who is an 'other', and why, becomes defined. As mentioned, the rural is often constructed as 'other' to the urban in the Andean context (De la Cadena, 2005; Rowe and Schelling, 1991). However, rural areas were also key in communicating some of the direct impacts of the mine, such as water pollution and displacement (e.g. Bebbington *et al.* (2008)). In the context of anti-mining movements, then, *mestiza* women have started mobilising Cajamarca region's rural inhabitants not as 'other', but as part of 'us'. For example, Alejandra (41, legal professional) explained:

*"We have the most rural inhabitants of the country, this makes us different, and makes that other people don't understand us."*

The high number of people living in rural areas becomes a key aspect in defining the boundaries of Cajamarca region for Alejandra, even though she herself identifies as *mestiza* and does not generate an income from agriculture. Furthermore, when Clara (58, vendor) told me how much she loved Cajamarca city, I asked her:

Inge: *"What is it you like most about Cajamarca?"*

Clara: *"Well, in Cajamarca there are many [good] things, for example, its climate, its... its people. Its friendly people, we're very dependable,*

*right? And also, for example, its agriculture, its cattle raising, which we have a lot of.”*

While urban agriculture exists (but is not practised by the women quoted in this article), cattle raising in particular is associated solely with rural areas. While we had been speaking about Cajamarca city when I asked Clara this question, her answer linked back to the region’s rural identity. Urban dwellers, then, construct large-scale mining as a disruption of the integrity of the ‘authentic rural’, and thereby, of historical place-based practice and locally appropriate way of life. Evidently, these urban, *mestiza* activists, too, feel affected by the mine’s impact on rural areas, which have come to represent regional identity. Thereby, even though the Conga mine never opened, it has had a lasting effect on their interpretations of social relationships in Cajamarca region, resulting in increased solidarity and resistance-linkages between urban activists and the countryside. As evidenced by Clara and Alejandra’s quotes, their boundary of inclusion/‘us’ (Ahmed, 2000) is pushed beyond including only the city, to including the region as a whole. However, the differences between urban and rural Cajamarca are not negated or overcome; instead, they have been re-imagined by the *mestiza* activists quoted here, as their description of those in the countryside has transformed from derogatory talk of ‘*indios*’ to recognition and respect of *campesinos* and their way of life, their struggles, and their bravery in the times of heavy conflict. As the *campesino*-movements become constructed as protectors of the environment and old customs and values, they become aligned with the positive connotations of the rural (Rowe and Schelling, 1991), instead of the negatives, as they were before.

Naturally, constituting an ‘us’ requires a ‘them’ (Ahmed, 2000; Mee and Wright, 2009). This reconfiguration of local belonging is therefore directly linked to the constitution of new ‘others’ – the mine and the people associated with it, as I explore in section 6.

## 5. Practicing place

In addition to these reconfigurations of the practical understanding of who/what ‘belongs’ in place, *mestiza* women may also turn to actively practicing their construction of place to reinforce their on-going, organised forms of gendered resistance. In this regard, it is notable how Valeria (42, teacher) and Mariana (50, vendor) argue small forms of resistance are at least as important as large-scale mobilisations:

*“History has shown that changes, the consciousness of the people, do not come in a massive wave. It comes from committed groups like this, who conserve a little flame, and if in some moment it is necessary, it becomes a big fire.”* (Valeria)

*“[for now] we have looked for other forms of protest. [...] we weren’t going to live solely of the protests. This was for a bit, and nothing more.”*  
(Mariana)

Valeria and Mariana, then, do not consider heavy, open activism to be the most important form of resistance against mining, but rather one possible aspect of

it. While Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) note some academic work is struggling to highlight the validity and intention of everyday resistance, these women implicitly communicate their forms of resistance outside of open protest as valid, necessary and intentional. They serve the purpose of keeping the door open to re-igniting larger scale protest, but, as I will explore now, serve other purposes as well, including practicing and re-enforcing belonging in place.

For example, the group of women in Cajamarca city that continued to meet regularly was involved in learning techniques to process local produce such as traditional plants and wool, to make soaps and create handicrafts to sell. These activities are notably gendered, as traditional plants, knitting and weaving have long historical links to women's everyday responsibilities (Forstner, 2013). Many of the women in this group articulated that apart from the opportunity to learn or improve their skills and generate more income, they considered this initiative a form of resistance to mining: by developing small-scale economic alternatives, they were proving that women can find ways to live well without needing mining in the area. Thereby, *mestiza* women imbue gendered tasks and activities with political meaning, further recognizing that resistance can be practiced and expressed in everyday life (Jenkins, 2017). As mentioned, women's participation in activism is often linked to such narratives of gendered everyday responsibilities. Another example is found in the case of water. This women's group was also involved in learning to monitor water quality in rural rivers and streams, to back up their claims that mining led to water pollution. Water, however, also has a long history in the Andes of being linked to women and 'the feminine' (Westwood and Radcliffe, 1993; Laurie, 2011; Li, 2009). Both gendered and place-based knowledge, then, become of

central importance in this women's group's continued resistance; broadly aligning with Zanotti (2013)'s notion of communal everyday resistance, especially concerning resistance through less visible actions that are nevertheless interpreted as political.

However, working with water in rural areas, on top of the particular practices of working with traditional and medicinal plants and wool, also notably link these practices of resistance to the rural and *campesina*, rather than to the urban and *mestiza*. This raises questions of how the rural and traditional may be not simply re-valued, but actively appropriated in the urban context. Social movements may see the benefits of focusing on traditional and rural work as a tool to widen the cleavage between the traditional/local on the one hand, and the practices of the mine on the other. However, before making assumptions about such urban-rural appropriation, it is important to note two things.

First, the fact that urban *mestiza* women are in some ways similarly affected by mining as rural women, which is an underexplored area of research. For example, Valeria (42, teacher) explained:

*“Water scarcity is related directly with the presence of the mine [...] What [do people in the] the city do? Men go to work. Who has to worry about making meals, washing clothes, basic needs? Women. She has to bear it, she suffers for the water. And because women oversee the family economy, for example, she suffers because she has to buy water, she has to carry the water. [...] Always the women, it seems. It impacts women more than men. In details like that. But quality of life is made in*

*details like that. It is not the big things, look, the market, the stock exchange, this doesn't matter to us, they're not our everyday life."*

Valeria notably highlights that in the urban context, too, it is 'always the women' that seem to have to bear more than their share of the burden, considering their everyday struggles and responsibilities are increased by the impacts of the mine on water availability. Valeria links this to a decreasing quality of life for women, emphasizing that quality of life is constructed in the everyday.

Second, similar to the notion of 'the rural' I explored in section 4, women's gendered identities are also more likely to be linked to the 'traditional' in Andean societies (De la Cadena, 1991; Forstner, 2013). On the other hand, 'the stock exchange', as well as international mining companies, their heavy machinery and large-scale methods, are imbued with connotations of the global and masculine (Marchand, 2003). Aguinaga *et al.* (2013) suggest women recognise the patriarchal tendencies inherent in large-scale mining projects, which will ultimately harm themselves, their families and nature. For the *mestizas* of Cajamarca, then, practices associated with the rural may not simply be the tools that are most readily available for them when communicating place-based resistance. Considering how women's gendered identities are constructed, these forms of everyday resistance give them the ability to use local, gendered identities to demarcate the mine as 'other'/'not belonging' in their place, while placing themselves as crucially belonging through a way of life that is increasingly under threat. I will further explore this now.



## 6. Belonging under threat

As the countryside is re-imagined by *mestiza*-activists to become part of the familiar, so is the city itself reconfigured as becoming increasingly strange, notably in terms of everyday life. All the women I quoted in this article, to some degree, associated life in the city before the mine came with a simpler time, described in relation to values such as reciprocity, community, and hospitality; sharing with neighbours, strangers and friends. While such values are often associated with life in the countryside (van der Ploeg, 2009; Gudynas, 2013), many urban women I spoke to described them as important and increasingly lost. Again, this highlights that values and practices, described elsewhere as meaningfully altered and affected in the countryside, play a role in urban place-based resistance as well. For example, Isabel (62, civil servant) said:

*“We lived in harmony, right? [Our parents] gave us this example [...] if [strangers] come to my house while I am having lunch, I make them come in and I give them a plate of food, right? And that is my... our custom, right? They can’t take that from us. And, well... while we can, we have to do it.”*

Isabel and other urban women consider local way of life, part of place-based continuity (Rishbeth and Powell, 2013), threatened by both existing and planned mining projects. Upholding customs, then, can become an act of resistance; especially when taking into consideration Vinthagen and Johansson (2013)’s note that everyday resistance may be “*typically habitual or semi-conscious*” (p.37). Isabel continued:

*“I would like it if... my grandchildren, my children, continue conserving like that, right? Growing on their land, conserving their culture, this... communicate with the people, serve the people, right? And that they don’t just be served by the community, but that the community is served by them as people, as individuals, as professionals.”*

While Isabel considers upholding her customs increasingly difficult, she – like other women – also voices a clear resilience; in continuing to uphold certain values, raising their children in a certain way, they are able to preserve locally rooted customs, thereby turning everyday resistance generational. In this link to motherhood and future generations (Westwood and Radcliffe, 1993; Laurie, 2011; Jenkins, 2014a), combined with the mobilisation of customs and values that belong in place, then, further gendered forms of everyday resistance strongly come forward. In this space, resistance can be voiced in the realm of Scott (1986)’s characterization of everyday resistance as based on everyday, individual actions challenging authority. Continuing, in the face of rapidly changing values, to live her life and teach her children as she sees fit, becomes a way for Isabel to communicate her opposition to the way of thinking imported from the outside since the opening of the Yanacocha mine. Notions of femininity are, again, mobilised; here, in relation to (urban) local customs that belong in place, as opposed to those existing outside these constructed boundaries (Ahmed, 2000). As Mariana (50, vendor) explains:

*“the problem is with... with the coming of Yanacocha, prostitution has come, robberies, they have come from other cities [...] in Cajamarca there aren’t a lot of pickpockets; where they have pickpockets is... eh... elsewhere, Chiclayo, Trujillo,... they come from there.”*

Mariana contrasts Cajamarca city with Chiclayo and Trujillo, cities she associated with higher crime levels and social ills. Mariana worries Cajamarca will follow the same trend as it becomes home to projects and ways of life that are not historically ‘Cajamarcan’; nor driven by a demand from the Cajamarcan people, but that are rather imposed by strangers that move to the city. Recall how Ahmed (2000) argues that strangers do not just pose a danger when they are ‘outside’, but notably, when they are present and take up space, threatening to force ‘the local’ out. This was a particular worry for many women I interviewed, who associate the city’s population growth with increased alcoholism, drug abuse, gambling, prostitution and crimes, resulting from the lifestyles and demands of the newcomers. In this way, they consider their own belonging within their meaningful day-to-day environment threatened. There are, after all, notably gendered aspects to these women’s concerns of urban change. The ‘stranger’ that drives the changes in local values, demands and social ills, the miner, is heavily coded as masculine (Mercier and Gier, 2007; Lahiri-Dutt, 2012). Furthermore, in the context of Cajamarca, the definition of ‘miner’ may include politicians, police, migrants looking for work, and others that support the coming of the mine (Li, 2013), increasing the presence and ambiguity of this stranger. Some women argued that increased prostitution had changed the way women were perceived, leading to an increase in gendered

slurs and sexual attitudes towards women overall. Furthermore, several women reported a heightened sense of fear over increasing reports of sexual violence in the city. Holding on to more traditional local values, then, also recalls a time that women associate with higher levels and feelings of everyday safety, for women and girls in particular.

Notably, during my fieldwork, various women were still receiving threatening phone-calls, often threatening sexual violence or violence to their children. Many activists over the years have become targets of criminalization and intimidation tactics (Paredes Peñafiel and Li, 2017). Understandably, the combination of the difficulties the mine is seen to bring – its disruptive force on nature and local ways of life – combined with the on-going difficulties of being visible in the public, political sphere was described by some women as mentally exhausting. They reported feeling burned out at times due to the on-going threats they receive, and told me about their occasional desire to pack up leave. Clara (58, vendor) and Marisol (45, civil servant) explained:

*“Cajamarca is beautiful, it’s lovely, and that’s why we’ve decided to stay here. In spite of so many difficulties and problems, that we always face, right? But... we decided to stay here, close to my mother, and we’re in a little house, where I’ve lived since I was born.”* (Clara)

*“He asked: ‘Why don’t you leave?’ I said, ‘because, well, my life is there, my work – everything. It’s a whole life.’”* (Marisol)

For both women, personal and wider histories keep them bound to place in times of adversity. Their sense of belonging in place, expressed in their affinity for the life they have built there, features highly in their reasons for remaining in Cajamarca. To appreciate these *mestiza* women's agency in the aftermath of socio-environmental conflict, then, we must recognise that everyday resistance strategies are consciously undertaken, and consciously negotiated in the sphere of the gendered and the local. Continuing to live in Cajamarca can become communicated as an ultimate political act in itself. While habitual, staying put is no longer a semi-conscious habit. It here that critical place-based politics of belonging are negotiated and centrally communicated in everyday resistance.

## 7. Conclusion

While the history of academic consideration of everyday resistance in the *campesino* population of Cajamarca predates the Yanacocha mine (e.g. Starn (1991)), the beliefs and actions of the *mestiza/o*-identifying population of the urban middle class have not received the same level of academic attention. In this article, I have identified how place and belonging are negotiated and renegotiated in the narratives of *mestiza* women of Cajamarca city who have opposed expansion of large-scale mining in the region, enhancing academic understanding of women's continued everyday resistance in the aftermath of intense socio-environmental conflict. As the Yanacocha mine's long-term impacts on place remain a significant negative reality for these women, they

employ narratives of place-based continuity and belonging to communicate how mining has meaningfully altered their everyday lives.

While place is central in their accounts on-going modes of resistance, I have shown it is also fluid, redefined in the anti-mining conflicts, where relationships between the rural and the urban were reformulated and given new meaning. The work of the Yanacocha mine, and the resistance movements against the Conga mine in particular, have highlighted that while '*mestiza*', urban Cajamarcan women are nevertheless geographically and politically marginalised at the national level; leading them to rethink their definition of their local boundaries and who they consider part of 'us'. In this way, for the urban women quoted in this article, everyday resistance comes to be imbued with *mestiza-campesina* solidarity rather than an association with '*mestiza*' cities and centres in other parts of Peru.

Furthermore, I have shown how *mestiza*-identifying women often employ the local/traditional in their actions and accounts of everyday resistance; both communally and individually. Through memories, links with historical customs, values and continuity, belonging becomes an essential part of everyday resistance. Urban groups of women may draw upon women's traditional tasks to inform their on-going activities in the aftermath of intense conflict; including tasks that are generally associated with rural areas. Rather than considering this an appropriation of rural practice and *campesino* lifestyles, however, I have argued that as both 'the rural' and 'the feminine' are associated with traditional customs and values, the *mestizas* mentioned here are building on those paths traditionally available to women to continue their resistance. In the process, they communicate how they consider their everyday

lives as disrupted by a variety of 'masculine others' – the mine and 'miners'. In this context, these women mobilise their own 'belonging' as locally appropriate and in historical continuity with place-based and gendered values; but threatened. I have shown how their personal acts of everyday resistance, then, are informed by gendered memories, knowledge, fear and expectations, where belonging again is a notion of central importance, and relatively simple acts, such as continuing to live life a certain way and remaining in place, can become imbued with a gendered language of resistance.

The on-going everyday resistance of the *mestiza* women explored here, then, is sometimes habitual and individual (for example, remaining in place), and sometimes communal and planned (for example, enhancing women's skills, linking them to women's local histories, knowledge and practices); but always thought-out, creative, and intentional, based on what is available, evident, and possible. The everyday and the local thereby remain an active part of the political, both strategically and implicitly, in the aftermath of socio-environmental protest.

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