In the summer of 2010, I embarked on a journey to the Southern Andes of Peru. The first part of my trip led me to Cusco, Peru where I enrolled in an intensive Quechua language course for a month. I engaged in a learning experience inside and outside the classroom. I also lived in what is referred to as the peasant house. Because I lived with peasants who migrated from their communities, I practiced my Quechua on a daily basis and learned more about the experiences of the rural communities in the Andes.

The community where I lived this summer was mostly dependent on agriculture for their survival. The community where I lived this summer was to look at the reality of Andean life. I decided to investigate more about economic survival and less through the single focus lens of culture survival. It was this summer that I discovered how the lives of Peru’s Andean communities is changing due to climatic factors. These communities that seem so untouched by the outside world, almost immutable, are not excluded from the impact of climate change. Beyond seeing the decisions of individuals as a reflection of their culture, I decided to focus my studies in the force that economic survival has in the decisions of households and the community. These decisions are relevant to issues such as land use, education, forms of income, health, and more. This is a force that is becoming more pressing because climate change is putting their livelihoods at risk. These changes directly affect the people of the community because their lives are directly influenced by changes in the ecosystem. They also heavily depend on animals and land for economic opportunities that open sources of income for them.

So what happens when they can no longer develop or sustain their natural resources? The consequence is that they suffer from a lack of natural resources. What happens when there are also no resources or training to adapt to this new reality created by climate change? The next option for many is to migrate elsewhere. Forced migration is the most urgent problem facing many rural communities. But what happens when there are resources to adapt to this new reality? Why are people still living in poverty? And why are some people still migrating? Those questions are the questions that I discovered how the lives of Peru’s Andean communities is changing due to climatic factors. These communities that seem so untouched by the outside world, almost immutable, are not excluded from the impact of climate change. Beyond seeing the decisions of individuals as a reflection of their culture, I decided to focus my studies in the force that economic survival has in the decisions of households and the community. These decisions are relevant to issues such as land use, education, forms of income, health, and more. This is a force that is becoming more pressing because climate change is putting their livelihoods at risk. These changes directly affect the people of the community because their lives are directly influenced by changes in the ecosystem. They also heavily depend on animals and land for economic opportunities that open sources of income for them.

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