Homi Bhabha Theory: The Challenges and Impacts of Hybridity on Peruvian Cultural Identity

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Abstract

Bhabha's concept of hybridity has been influential in various fields of studies, such as post-colonial, cultural studies, or literature theory, providing a framework for understanding the complexities of cultural identities in a globalized world and has also challenged the notion of cultural identity. However, it is important to note that Bhabha's concept of hybridity has been subject to critique and debates. This paper aims to shed light theoretically on the circumstances that define the difficulties and effects of hybridity on Peruvian cultural identity. This paper makes the case that, although some forms of hybridity have beneficial effects on its spread, there are drawbacks, such as its degradation, cultural erosion and/or lack of cultural authenticity. As a result, Bhabha's concept of hybridity challenges fixed notions of 'culture' and 'identity' highlighting the complex and transformative nature of cultural production; where mimicry, ambivalence, third space, and hybridity provide analytical tools for exploring ways in which cultures negotiate their differences and/or resist cultural erosion.
Keywords: Challenges, Cultural Identity, Cultural Impact, Hybridity, Peru

Introduction

In the contemporary societies of our modern world, the complex and diverse mix of traditions, beliefs, values, and practices that constitute society, cultural hybridity has emerged as a defining feature evolving in fascinating ways; it is a metaphor, like woven fabric, where different threads (individual, or group identities, customs, traditions, artistic expressions) are interwoven to create a rich and varied whole (Aziz & Kamak, 2024). This concept includes tangible aspects of the society, such as art, artefacts, architecture, cuisine, or music, and intangible elements such as customs, norms, values or social norms. By understanding history and its contemporary applicability, we can find the essence of the exchange of culture and identity and the strength and persistence of traditions, norms and cultural values (Abdullah, 2025).

This interexchange of concepts, beliefs, and customs between various cultures is becoming more common in today's interconnected society. Understanding how various cultures from the far East and West interact, converge, and change requires an understanding of the

concepts such as cultural hybridity, multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism, cultural identity, and cultural traditions, among others (Rishit, 2025; Piera, 2024). The dynamic character of societies, where cultural boundaries become permeable, is thus reflected in this phenomenon, resulting in the development of fresh and distinctive cultural forms. Cultural hybridity reconfigures how people identity themselves across the world (hybridity, *Oxford Reference.* 2025). It also includes both the negotiation of identities in these mixture spaces as well as the blending of different cultural elements, solidifying their identification. However, it also includes experiences of discrimination, prejudice, racism that may lead to silence denial, or minimization of certain identities (Srivastava, 2025).

This notion also acknowledges that people negotiate several cultural affinities and participate in continuous hybridisation processes; consequently, adding to the fluidity of cultural formations. Cities from the far East or West, characterised by diverse groups of people or population and different cultural cohabitation, are fertile ground for the expansion and growth of cultural hybridisation. Public spaces such as gardens, parks, and markets allure to the absence of time but transcend culture. Open spaces serve as a testament to humanity's profound connection with nature and between people of different cultures fostering connection and interaction (Harutyunyan, 2023).

Open spaces for any society nurture interaction among people from various cultural backgrounds fostering the environment where cultures can emerge and thrive. The fusion or hybridization can be viewed through culinary practices, festivals, dances, music, fashion trends and other artistic expressions. Moreover, cosmopolitan or metropolitan cities and centres facilitate the development or intermingling of subcultural or countercultural responses, where groups of people can creatively blend, fuse, mix different cultural practices to form new and unique hybrid identities or cultural expressions. This cultural dynamic (motion under the influence of force) within urban settings can exemplify the richness and uniqueness of hybrid cultural formation (Winthrop, 2002). Cultural hybridity is not always a symmetrical exchange of practices and beliefs; dominant cultures may often influence, impact, and shape hybrid forms, potentially overshadowing or appropriating elements (Cultural appropriation) from less powerful marginalised cultures. Under this power dynamic social theories may raise reasonable questions about the fairness and representation in hybrid cultural creations (Kunst, 2023; Wall & Duyvendak, 2022; Tuncer, 2023).

Hall presents two different ways of thinking about cultural identity; the first position defines "Cultural identity" in terms of one shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true-self', with a shared history and ancestry held in common, reflecting the common historical experiences, norms, values, the oneness; the second idea, is related to the first one, but additionally we cannot acknowledge one experience and one identity without also acknowledging precisely the other side. Cultural identity in this second sense is a matter of "becoming as well as of being" belonging to the future as much as to the historical past (Hall, 1992, p. 223).

Among the various post-colonial theory terms employed or disputed is the term "hybridity" which commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by the colonizer-colonized individuals. Although this term can be applied to different fields of studies in sociology or anthropology it is very much disputed. From the

linguistic standpoint, the study of 'creole language' could be a fairly good example (Mambrol, 2016).

Homi Bhabha (born in 1949), an Indian-born member of the Parsi community (an Indian minority that originated in Persia in the 18th century), was raised in Mumbai, completed his studies at the University of Mumbai and his Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford (UK) (Umar & Lawan, 2024; Huddart, 2006). Hybridity is a term associated with Bhabha's theoretical work, "The Location of Culture 1994," which brings together several published essays, with a surprisingly wide impact. Bhabha, is a cultural critic and a philosophical explorer of the complex dynamics of cultural identity, colonizer/colonized and the intersections of power, and race, the interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities (mimicry, ambivalence, third space). Bhabha (1994) contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a "space" that he calls the "third space of enunciation" (p. 37). Cultural identities emerge in this contradictory and ambivalent 'space,' for which he claims that the purity of cultures is untenable. Recognizing these diverse and ambivalent spaces may help us to empower hybridity:

…It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory . . . may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity… (Bhabha, 1994, p. 38)

The notion of hybridity underlies attempts at stressing mutuality between the colonial and the post-colonial process of expressions such as syncretism, cultural synergies and transculturation (Mambrol, 2016). The in-between space and cross-cultural exchange may imply negative connotations, neglecting the imbalance and inequality of the power relationship; also, cross-cultural interactions can be defined as mutual influences of people who are representative of different cultures (Rozkwitalska-Welenc, 2014). Notably, this discursive investigation of colonizer-colonized (hybridity) does not seek to replace or exclude any form of historical, geographical or political contribution from both players.

As a result, cultural hybridity is a testament to the ever-evolving nature of human society, highlighting the richness, uniqueness, and dynamism that emerge when diverse cultures interact and collaborate (Tuncer, 2023). Embracing this singularity allows cultures to appreciate beauty and variances, underscoring that our identities are not limited to a single or purist cultural heritage, but are an intricate mosaic of various influences from around the world (Marotta, 2021). The idea of hybridization also underlies other attempts to emphasise the interdependence of cultures during colonization and post-colonization manifested in expression such as synchronicity, synergy, and transnationalism-culture (Umar & Lawan, 2024).

Bhabha's Key Concepts
1) Hybridity refers to the blending and merging of different cultural, social and historical influences. Identities within cultures are not fixed, but constantly shaped through the process of hybridization and negotiation.

2) The third space is a transitional and in-between space, where cultural identities are formed, these spaces emerge, challenge binary opposition and destabilise fixed notions of identity. In this 'third space', negotiations and transformation occur, and marginalized groups can challenge dominant narratives and assert their own cultural expressions.

3) Mimicry refers to the tendency of colonized people to imitate or adopt their colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values. This notion is far from being a physical or superficial resemblance but also includes intellectual, cultural and psychological aspects. Mimicry is never a perfect copy of the colonizer; the key elements are retained but a 'blurry copy' of the colonizer is created.

4) Ambivalence as a notion that mimicry inherently resembles the colonizer subject, but not completely; a 'difference that is almost the same, but not quite.' It creates a complex identity for the colonized, who are neither entirely their own nor wholly transformed into the image of the colonizer; a "neither here, nor there" concept.

Literature Review

Hybridity within Peruvian Cultural Identity

'Cultures' if the term is to be retained to explain the following, are porous; they (cultures) are open to intermixtures with other different cultures and they (cultures) are subject to change precisely on the account of these influences (Stewart, 1999). Borrowing of cultural components and interpenetration is today perceived as part of the very nature of cultures; today's hybridization will inevitably be succeeded by tomorrow's hybridization, the form will be dictated by the historical-socio political events and their contingencies (Stewart, 1999). Words change meaning over time, and 'hybridity' embeds both negative and positive meanings related to 'mixture'. Additionally, a critical discourse that has been drawn out from hybridization is that the superior culture of white men takes up the mission to educate the native indigenous individuals for their own purposes, for example the exploitation of natural resources, land, and people. This kind of superior-inferior binary notion indicates the separateness of the culture of the East from the West; therefore, in order to understand this particular term "hybridization" it is important to note that culture is not a static entity. For Bhabha's notion of culture it must be fluid, dynamic, and perpetually in motion (Bhattacharya, 2022).

Cultural hybridity offers individuals the opportunity to derive from a rich tapestry of cultural elements shaping their identities; leading to a more fluid and dynamic sense of 'self' where individuals can identify and interact with multiple cultures simultaneously. Hybridity is beneficial to reformulate daily questions of mixed social realities, racial bias may be used instead of other forms of racism (Kraidy, 2002).

Fluidity can also create 'self' challenges and struggles with feeling of belonging caught in-between the different cultural worlds. The concept of in-between culture, or oscillation in-between describes for example being born to parents of different backgrounds or sometimes, the individual may also experience a sense of displacement, not fully belonging to any one of both cultures (Marotta, 2021, Tuncer, 2023). Identity formation in globalized societies is deeply intertwined with the process of cultural hybridity as individuals and communities negotiate their sense of self in the context of diverse cultural influences and intersections. Identity emerges as individuals navigate multiple cultural affiliations, drawing upon diverse

cultural repertories to construct flexible and multifaceted identities that transcend fixed categories (Kipng'etich, 2024).

Although there are some differences between the immigrant and the mixed-race or mixed-child hybrid, both are said to have some epistemic insights over non-hybrid subjects. It has been theorized that the in-between position encourages a critical and 'objective' stance towards the host and one's own culture (Marotta, 2021). The ability to see both 'other' and 'home' cultures critically destabilises fixed identifications. Their hybrid consciousness fosters the ability   to transcend conventional knowledge. The in-between (the third or outside the box position), permits hybrids to see more clearly and/or differently than those who occupy opposing or fixed cultural perspective (Rodriguez-Garcia et al., 2018).

Hybridity within Peruvian cultural identity is discussed as follows:
a) Religious syncretism is the fusion of diverse religious beliefs and practices. This blending can occur in various contexts, including religion, politics, and culture, leading often to the creation of something distinct from the original component ("Religious Syncretism," 2025). Peru has witnessed cultural clashes that produced syncretic manifestations across its history, especially evident in the local religion the Andean and the Spanish Conquistador Christian religion. The term was used by Plutarch (AD 40-120s), a Greek Middle Platonist philosopher, historian, biographer, essayist and priest at the Temple of Apollo in Delphi; to describe the Cretans' unity in the face of a common enemy (Nyuyki & Van Niekerk, 2016).

The modern definition of the term has little to do with Plutarch's employment of the term (McGuckin, 2022). Throughout the 17th century to the 20th century the term has acquired various connotations. The use of this term in relation to the study of colonized cultures, effectively attempted to delegitimize the reception of different religions subjugated by the Spanish Crown. The use in the 20th century, the term has clearly Eurocentric implications. The syncretic religion created by the colonised indigenous people was judged by the standard "Orthodoxy" of European Christianity and was marked as impure if it differed from the Roman "orthodoxy" (McGuckin, 2022). The reality of the Christian faith and life is that it needs or require symbols which create identity and provide boundaries (Roxborogh, 2014). One of the religious practices connected with curative properties was that of the African healers; due to the introduction and interaction of the Spanish with the native Andean people who had little immune defence against the Old World (Pringle, 2015), pathogens carried by the Spanish such as smallpox, influenza, and other viruses (Figure 1: below).

Figure 1: Native American Aztec People of Mexico dying of smallpox introduced by the Spaniards-Copied from the Codex Florentine (Pringle, 2015)

Despite the official condemnations against magical healing practices, healers were usually only denounced to the courts if the healers gained too much social power, otherwise they were tolerated by the Spanish authorities (McGuckin, 2022). This religious practice was embraced by almost all groups in the New World, non-European and Europeans alike, due to its positive impacts on survival; healing in the New World survived its persecution and prohibition because all people and castes of the New World needed it to survive (Bristol, 2006). Although the tradition of healing had its roots in native African traditions, healers incorporated Christian symbols and rituals to bolster the strength of the healing powers.

An important hallmark of Latin American, and in particular Peruvian, religiosity is, however, this syncretic variety; is not a closed system that does not communicate, but it deals with diversity often in an extremely routine way to the extent of not seeing any problem in double belonging. Although, we may claim that Central and South America is mostly Christian or Catholic, the notion of its practices is very much different from typical European Catholicity (Spica, 2018).

The work, 'History of the Church in Peru,' written by Ruben Vargas Ugarte (1886-1975) a Jesuit priest, suggested that the Catholic Church existed as a supranational institution with a defined profile and plan to be applied in the countries where it became established (Ramos, 2016). Conversion was portrayed as a result of the Spanish missionaries' 'divine' call, where the converted were above all the recipients of the Christian faith.

Catholicism, practised by Peruvian peasants involved and acknowledged a few crucial tenets, such as the cult of the saints and the key role of the sacraments making the right action, all as part of the belief in the sacredness of the earth and the spirits residing in specific mountains (Colonna, 2022). The idea of syncretism to conceptualize popular Christian-Andean belief is still widely accepted, although it is problematic (Ramos, 2016). The diverse belief of Andean practices, Catholicism and African and Asian practices adapting and modifying belief to the European ways of life are challenging worldwide views (Spica, 2018). For religion to be that catalyst, it was necessary for the religion of the slaves to have fundamental elements in common with the other religions in conflict, tribal, archaic and axial elements, something that some Catholic priests, as well as slaves, managed to identify, recreate and merge, creating the most sublime representations that remain in modern Andean culture (Colonna, 2022).

Africans and Catholics worshipped a single god, but it is the Catholic trilogy that resembles the Andean trilogy in format and African gods. In all three religions, these gods have no direct contact with humanity; they are distant deities to whom one turns in times of extreme urgency. In addition, Central and South America still cultivate innumerable other religious groups, which are not in a majority, but undoubtedly are important to the cultural constitution of these people. There is also the phenomenon of double belonging, where one believer actively participates in more than one religious cult. Syncretism may not be perceived or understood positively by different governments and traditional religious groups, and often understood negatively as the "wrong" way of practising religiosity (Spica, 2018). Mixing, blending, or hybridism is when similar rituals occur in different religions, this process of parallelism or juxtaposition can be exemplified in the relations between the Andean and Catholic practices reflected in religious festivals. Catholicism is a key element of Peruvian identity, at the national level, the Catholic religion is enshrined in Article 50 of the Peruvian Constitution; addressing the relationship between the state and religion; recognizing the Catholic Church as an important historical, cultural, and moral influence in Peru (Lee, 2021).

"The Third Space": The Case of the Imposition of the Spanish Language

The Spanish language originated in the Iberian Peninsula (today consisting of Spain and Portugal), and derived from Latin, the language of the Romans, around the year 1000, as a regional language in the Castile region, in central Spain (Stavans, 2018). A pivotal moment for the global spread of Spanish came with the Age of Exploration in the 15th & 16th centuries to the new colonies; as a result, Spanish became the dominant language in the regions that are now known as Central and South America, and part of the Caribbean. The imposition of the new language has lasting effects as it became official at the administrative, educational and religious level (Stavans, 2018). The blending of indigenous languages and Spanish also engendered various dialects and creoles. Spanish language influence is evident and undeniable, but also faces challenges and opportunities in the modern world. While diversity enriches communication (Languages), it may also create communication barriers.

The concept of "The Third Space" has attracted attention in a range of social sciences that inquire about the human encounters across time and space (Social realities), such as anthropology, sociology, education, communication, linguistic studies, and others (Zhou & Pilcher, 2019). In the context of postcolonial and contemporary India, Bhabha (1994) defines "The Third Space" as the semiotic space between two opposing cultures: colonizer and colonized; indigenous and foreign; local and global; traditional and modern; and the negotiation of cultural values that leads to the establishment of new sociolinguistic authority structures. New linguistic actions of resistance, subversion, and transgression that are entangled in "the third space" with code-switching to reflect a new symbolic state that prompted a significant political-economic shift. Spain's presence in the Americas dates back to 1492; the Spanish language originally brought to the New Continent (Americas) by the Spaniards is at present significantly different, principally due to its contact with the local Indigenous languages, so that today it is considered to be a truly unique blended language reflecting the Indigenous presence found throughout the Americas. Languages evolve into unique identities owning principally to the interaction between cultures (Riegelhaupt et al., 2003). The Catholic King and Queen, Ferdinand and Isabel, who united the kingdom of Castille and Aragon declared 'Castilian-Castellano,' the official language of Spain.

A half-century later, Spanish continued to be the primary language of indigenous people and modern Spanish-educated residents in Central and South America, including a portion of the Southwest region of the United States. When the Spaniards started colonizing the New World, today known as the Americas, they knew that they would generate profits and convert native people to Christianity, spreading their Christian worldview. Various linguistic approaches to proselytizing began taking form; however, Franciscan 'Friars' learned also indigenous languages such as Quechua, Aymara, Nahualt for the conquest and conversion (Riegelhaupt et al., 2003).

Spanish remained the lingua franca among indigenous people of the Americas, even though, it also united them in their mutual efforts to defend their rights as indigenous-native peoples. Using Spanish across national and cultural boundaries, people of the Americas could communicate. Ironically, today's Spanish speakers share some history of injustice, racism, and colonialism. Given this scenario intergenerational transition of the mother tongue (Spanish or local dialects) may convey negative connotation effects contributing to lower self-conception. The lack of one's own language often alienates children from their parents, grandparents, or from their sense of cultural rootedness. Although many indigenous people keep speaking their own mother tongue (Quechua, Aymara, Nahualt), the central challenge is not defined by the number of native speakers but by the cultural and social conditions that favour the native language's lack of prestige in society (Antileo, 2023). UNESCO estimates that there are 7,000 languages worldwide (although some reduction may occur due to different interpretations of the definition of the term 'language' or the reduction of indigenous languages to being defined as a 'dialect') in the Americas there are 550 surviving indigenous languages (Shakya, 2022).

Language is an integral component of human society, which plays a unique significant role in identity and sense of belonging; its preservation is essential because it encodes a complex system of thoughts, worldwide views and significations, language in a society reflects environment, communities, history, literature, ethics and geography. Language in ancient societies represented cosmogonies, creation itself, sacred stories, and identity (Kakembo & Annet, 2024). Economic globalization has reduced the need or challenge of preserving these indigenous languages, due to the emphasis placed on major culturally dominant languages such as English, as it is the world language of communication, business, technology, entertainment, and academic writing. As a result, global political powers have promoted geopolitical inequalities, communities have suffered linguistic racism and each generation has less practical ability to communicate, increasing the belief that indigenous languages are not useful or worth preserving (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs).

Foreign Influences: African and Asian Migration, Contemporary Hybridity in Peru
Contemporary human mobility, in its different typologies, is a complex and dynamic phenomenon with diverse socio-economic or socio-cultural contexts and multi-causal singularities, which is often conditioned by the diversity of interests involved. This hegemonic narrative is intensely influenced by various nationalisms or eurocentrism which tend to standardize concepts and narratives for their own self-interest (Lussi, 2025). African and Asian migration has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent decades, embracing the concept of cultural hybridity, exploring, celebrating and challenging the notion of heritage, identity and cultural expression. Both vibrant cultural diversities have showcased their

complexities, inviting and influencing viewers to understand their cultural narrative. A defining characteristic of both cultures is their ability to embrace and synthetize diverse influences drawing inspiration to be part of other global popular cultures. Migrant identity evolves and develops as they move across cultural and national boundaries, shaping their memories and negotiating between one's homeland and the new host culture (Michael, 2025).

Migration has been a central theme of scientific discourse over the African continent, expanding modern social science and humanities since the 19th century, in the course of early European encounters and colonial expansion (Bilger & Kraler, 2005). Peru as a nation by 1821, the year of its independence, had imported more than 100 thousand African people (slaves), primarily to fill in its agriculture needs in the coastal haciendas (farm-ranch). At the end of the colonial period, the country was left with a very diverse demography, the capital Lima inhabited mostly by 'Criollos' (A population of direct Spanish heritage born in the New Americas), mestizos and black Africans, with a robust indigenous population in the Andean areas (Cotito, 2020). The social structure of the time placed the Criollos and mestizos at the top of the pyramid and the black African descendants and indigenous at the bottom. This logic was levied against the black population who were explicitly excluded from the national racial equation (Ministerio de Cultura, 2015). The indigenous population perceived the Black African descendants in a similar fashion to the white conquistadors - as invaders. This strained social relationship between them was a factor in the lack of social cohesion. Black African descendants were not part of the nation building project. In fact, the Black population remained subject to marginalization and subordination (Cotito, 2020). In Peru, all individuals are considered equal before the law; thus, social inequalities should be attributed to other factors, as the racial classification of individuals into specific ethnic groups was socially determined through an informal process (Ministerio de Cultura, 2015).

By 1854, elected President Ramon Castilla (1797-1867), declared the manumission of all remaining black slaves, paying 300 pesos for each freed slave, thus the Peruvian government bought the freedom of the (roughly) 26,000 thousand enslaved people at the time. Furthermore, at the turn of the 20th century Peruvian lawmakers embarked on a new political mission creating a number of policies to protect the rights of the Black population (Cotito, 2020).

The Asian wave, particularly Chinese migration to Peru, dates back to the early 19th century and continues to this day (Liu, 2025). Chinese immigrants and their descendants have become an important and dynamic part of the history of Peru. They are an active component of the Peruvian Cuisine and retail sector, especially in Lima as businessmen, politicians, economist and lawyers. The small-scale migration of Chinese to Peru began precisely in 1849. South American countries declared their independence from Spain during the early years of the 19th century. After the 1874 Treaty of Peace, Peru and the Qing dynasty signed the Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation treaty, the 'coolies' trade ended and thus started a stage of free migration which became restricted in 1909 and ultimately prohibited in 1930 (Palma, 2022).

One after another, countries began to free themselves and develop their own economies, and these activities required a significant labour force. Meanwhile, the abolition of black slaves in various countries increased the effort to recruit immigrants from China. The first wave

occurred in the late 19th century. Peru introduced the "Chinese Law" to recruit immigrants between 10 and 40 years old, this large group of people was characterised by its masculinity, with the total absence of women (Lausent-Herrera, 2009). Then began the mass transportation of Chinese workers known as 'coolies, or kŭlì, (Workers hired to do heavy labour). The opening of the natural deposits of bird fertiliser, the 'Guano' collection, salt-peter mining, plantation and railway construction and the increase of sugar exports to Europe brought in the necessary capital for the modernization of the infrastructure of the young Peruvian republic. Between 1849 and 1874, more than 100,000 coolies were brought to Peru. The arrival of the Chinese coolies made necessary the inclusion of a new racial component into the new forming Peruvian society, the "yellow race" (Raza amarrilla) from China, represented by the Chinese from Qing dynasty imperial China (Lausent-Herrera, 2009). Hybrid children were born from the mixture of Chinese and Indian (indigenous women or black women). This denomination did not align with the 'mestizo' category which was reserved only for the children born of Indian (indigenous women) and Spanish fathers (or vice versa). Such classification only appeared in the early stage of the 20th century (Wang, 2017). The second wave of immigration occurred in the mid-20th century, when many Chinese who were forced to leave Indonesia due to anti-Chinese incidents chose to move to Peru. This wave of immigrants had a certain economic foundation or cultural background, and they further enriched the level of the Chinese community in Peru.

Festivals and Dance
Peru is a country where ancient roots, colonial heritage, religious festivals and processions of saints and virgins converge in a carnival of music, dance and performance. It is well known that the Peruvian people have diverse origins, as evidenced by the census data conducted in 2017 by the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics and the Peruvian Ministry of Culture. Peru has been and continues to be composed of several nationalities and even several races. Indigenous peoples, Afro-Peruvians, Spaniards, Chinese, and Japanese live in Peru (Gorelaya, 2018). This immeasurable cultural richness serves as authentic evidence of the fusion between local Andean narratives, colonial practices and foreign influences, which characterize each community. Increasing the infinite panorama of shapes and colours that perfectly represent the diversity of Peru. Every festival and dance reflects the history, traditions-practices (local, religious or non-religious), and the worldview of the local indigenous people. Through dancing, the land brings embodied memories into being, people come to know their ancestral practices. This connection goes beyond the normal understanding of memory as being in the mind, images of the past are remembered by the ritual of festival and dances (Callaghan, 2012).

These practices are a unique fusion of pre-Hispanic cultures with Spanish and African influences, which have been kept alive and sometimes secret through generations. Another point to highlight here is that festivals and dance represent various regions of Peru; the coastal, the sierra, and the amazon (the rainforest). These festivals and dances were a fundamental part of the social and daily life and were closely related to religious beliefs, agricultural practices and natural time-period cycles. At the first arrival of the Spaniards in the 16th century, these indigenous practices (Festival & Dances) were fused with European cultural elements, forming and developing new artistic expressions (Figure 2. below). In a similar way, the nation of the Philippines celebrates its historical practices with music and

dance involving the upland people with ritualistic singing, displaying the local gods, and also praising them and asking for their protection and blessing (Divinagracias, 2019).

Figure 2. Dance. Qhapac Qolla. Photo: Mario Testino (Illapa Culturas Andinas, 2024)

During the colonial era (16th-19th century), many dances were adapted incorporating Catholic religious themes, becoming important events within the Christian calendar of religious celebrations. These practices evolved and diversified, influenced by social, political and cultural factors. Despite some changes, some remain and retain elements of their pre-Hispanic roots such as the connection with nature, respect for the ancestors and the veneration of the Andes divinities (Figure 3. below). Festivals and dances in Peru are vibrant expressions, with a colourful and energetic rhythm full of cultural symbolism; clothing is adorned with elaborate embroidery and designs, which is an essential part of this artistic manifestation reflecting on Peruvian cultural identity and pride (Romero, 2013a).

For the Black Peruvians of African descent, at the early period of the colonization, slaves in a foreign land, music wasn't easy to find. Music fulfilled a functional and fundamental role in the life of an African slave in Peru. It was the light that guided them and controlled the daily hours from sunrise to sunset, throughout the day, music made time pass by faster, singing as they sowed rice fields (Bhattacharya, 2020).

Figure 3. A Fusion of Characters and traditional clothes. Photo Mario Testino (Illapa Culturas Andinas, 2024)

The music is played by native instruments such as Zampona, violin, clarinet, trumpets, charango, bombo, harp, or quenas creating melodies that evoke the mountainous landscape and spirituality of the Andean people. Handmade masks made by local artisans, represent mythical characters, animals or religious figures which are designed to convey emotion, belief, or fear (Romero, 2013b). Peruvian festivals and dances, along with their music, are quite international. The melody of "El Cóndor Pasa", a dramatic zarzuela composed by Peruvian composer Daniel Alomía Robles (1871–1942), is based on the Andean musical tradition. Another famous dance practised throughout the country is La Marinera. This is an Amerindian–African fusion of dance; one of the best examples can be admired in the coastal region of Peru—a true cultural fusion of styles (Gorelaya, 2018).

Music
The blending of various cultural aspects can lead to a new cultural expression; music, fashion, cinema or arts, are not an exception. For example, the origin of Peruvian Creole music (Musica Criolla), also known simply as 'creole song,' is a musical genre rooted in Peru's rich and diverse cultural history. Emerging in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Creole music is an amalgamation of African, Indigenous, and Spanish influences, rhythms and instruments reflecting on the complexity of cultural fusion in the country (Rohner & Contreras, 2020). This genre is not only music, but also embodies memories, events, identity and national pride. The soul of the Peruvian coast, especially that of Lima, the birthplace of great performers and composers, lives in its lyrics, rhythms, and melodies. It is characterized by its emotional and melodic lyrics, its intimate interpretation, and its rhythmic richness. Its main styles are the Creole waltz, the 'Lima Marinera,' the 'Festejo" (music of black African origin), the 'Landó' (a sub-style of music of black African origin), and the 'Peruvian Polka' (Peruvian Waltz). Although today it is associated with guitar, crate (Cajón, wooden box), and warm voices, its origins reflect a much broader cultural dialogue, where each ethnic group left its mark (Arguello, 2015).

The black African slaves, and their desire to play the drums was disapproved of and prohibited. Their quest for music led them to find rhythm in every object they held in their hands, such as pots, ladles, pans, pumpkins, bells seeds, animal bones, canes, animal skins, and much more. They also learned to adapt, slowly learning to call the 'crate' (Cajon, wooden box), as it was named in the language of the coloniser, a versatile percussion instrument cherished around the world today (Bhattacharya, 2020). Many other instruments were born and later lost in the years of post-Colonial (independence period) apathy (Figure 4. below).

Figure 4. Revival of the Peruvian "Cajon" - Wooden box (Bhattacharya, 2020)

Adapting to an inherently disadvantageous socio-political position (that of Black-Peruvian African descendants), the ingenious invention of the 'Cajon' was a creative culmination of the restrictions imposed to a culture full of creativity, passion and strength. The story of the 'Cajon' is the story of its maker, the black-Peruvian African descendant community and race, who trace their collective history, culture and identity back to this humble instrument (Bhattacharya, 2020).

Peruvian musical identity is the fusion of three main ethnic groups:
African influence; introduced by the Spanish during the colonial time they created some instruments, and provided the rhythm, cadence, and percussion;
European influence; Spanish colonisers brought waltzes, polkas, and seguidillas which, when filtered through the popular Lima filter, became the Creole waltz, with a more intimate and melancholic character; and,
Indigenous influence; Andean melodies, the adaptation of European instruments and the use of modal scales and lyrics full of nostalgia enriched Creole identity, providing a deep sense of belonging and memory (Lloréns Amico, 1983).
This fusion of various styles, characteristics, and melodies did not happen overnight. This was a process that took several generations, and it mostly occurred over family reunions, local communities' parties, literary discussions, and improvised clubs (Figure 5. below).

Figure 5. Creole Waltz Group of Musicians (Grupo of Musicos de Musica Criolla) (Hoyos, 2022)

Another example is hip-hop music, which originated in the South Bronx (USA) in the 1970s as a cultural movement that encompassed music, dance (Breakdancing), art (Graffiti), and social commentary (addressing issues such as racism, inequality, police brutality), evolving into a global phenomenon that reshaped popular culture; some consider it a sub-culture, a major part of popular American culture (Said, 2013). On one hand, this development has clearly threatened the creative and artistic values of hip-hop/rap music. On the other hand, this development has helped to give hip-hop/rap music a level of influence over the American musical psyche and, subsequently, American culture, that has not been seen since the advent of the blues and rock 'n' roll (Said, 2013). This music movement primarily emerged within the African American and Latino communities as a creative response to the socio-economic challenges faced by these marginalized groups, including poverty and urban decay. It is also used to describe clothing, language, attitude, and customs; in summary, hip-hop constitutes a culture (Riesch, 2005). By the 1980s, hip-hop/rap had made its way into mainstream music (MTV), and Hollywood, providing a platform for artists to reach wider audiences through music videos. This period is often referred to as the 'golden age' of hip-hop, which saw the emergence of diverse styles and influential artists who shaped the genre's sound and message. By the 1990s, the 'gangsta rap' style of music emerged as a subgenre that explored themes of street violence, systematic inequality, and police brutality (Arora, 2025). It is important to highlight that these impoverished youths of African and Latin ancestry that once comprised the entire cast and audience of this subculture are are now situated within a context of economic growth and expanding generational and ethnic diversity. These groups of people, who were the most overlooked and unappreciated segment of American society, have come in large part to dominate modern American popular culture (Riesch, 2005; Embassy of the United States of America, 2013). Through music, people from different social backgrounds and conditions, who would not normally ever speak to one another, have come together crossing barriers and borders to celebrate the power of hip-hop music (Figure 6. below).

Figure 6. Hip-Hop, early music event (PQ, 2019)

As a result, music is generally considered one of the most complex cultural forms because of the cultural range and ways it may be experienced, and the variety of styles attributed to it by musicians, the public in general, and cultural gatekeepers, and the potential it has to absorb influences to be revitalized. Besides in different countries as has been seen in Peru, musical genres are often associated or viewed as the expression of certain a social class, culture, or generation of individuals, which may connect themselves with similar situated groups of people from other nations or across the nation. Music as a global or cultural communicator continues to connect diverse people across the world, contesting new musical forms and cultural changes raising questions of identity, cultural appropriation, hybridization, globalization, or simply creating new cultural production.

Peru is a clear example of the above, its music is an extraordinary blend of sound, rhythms, and traditions that reflect the country's diverse cultural heritage, and has integrated influences from several sources for centuries. Its cultural legacy has been widely celebrated and adopted as a symbol of nationhood, this mestizaje reflects the live reality. Currently in the 21st century, Peruvian music continues to evolve in response to globalization. Migration also brought new sounds and rhythms which has gained context within Peruvian society. The Amazonian and Andean music with its infectious beats and electric guitar riffs, has become a voice for urban working-class people and communities.

Aim/Objective
The aim of this paper is to theoretically elucidate the circumstances that define the difficulties (Challenges) and effects (Impact) of hybridity on Peruvian cultural identity. It makes the case that, although some forms of hybridity have beneficial effects on its spread, there are drawbacks, such as its degradation of cultural uniqueness, cultural erosion or lack of cultural authenticity. The two modes (challenges and impacts) that are based on power imbalance may also apply to related concepts of society, which could have implications for maintaining a cohesive cultural identity in the future. The authors hope that this paper will initiate new discourse on hybridity in Peruvian cultural identity to further enhance general knowledge.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative empirical desktop research methodology, emphasising the interpretive analysis of secondary sources rather than data generated through direct fieldwork. Desktop research, in this context, involves the systematic collection and examination of existing texts, images, and documented materials drawn from previously published academic and professional sources (Bryman, 2016). The qualitative orientation of this approach lies in its focus on meaning, context, and interpretation, enabling the identification of patterns, themes, and conceptual relationships within the collected material (Creswell, 2014).

The research process involved a critical review of scholarly publications, academic journals, online libraries, and reputable digital databases relevant to the scope of the study. These sources provided accessible and verifiable qualitative data suitable for in-depth analysis (Denscombe, 2017). By engaging with existing research, theoretical discourse, and visual documentation, this method supported a reflective and cost-effective approach to data collection, with primary emphasis placed on analytical interpretation rather than field-based investigation. This qualitative desktop methodology ensured that the study remained grounded in established scholarship while facilitating a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the research subject (Silverman, 2020).

Discussion and Results

Acculturation, Transculturation and Mestizaje (Miscegenation)

The acceleration of globalization among countries has given rise to the complex and inevitable phenomenon of acculturation, a process that involves the integration of individuals into a new cultural context, that triggers fundamental psychological transformations (Guerra-Ayala et al., 2025); or the terms, acculturation and transculturation were formulated to describe the 'social transformation' that occurs when a society acquires foreign cultural materials, coined by Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969), Cuban anthropologist, ethnomusicologist and scholar of Afro-Cuban culture (Naranjo-Orovio, 2016). This 'social transformation' involves the displacement or loss of a society's own culture as a result of the acquisition of new foreign materials (ideas, trends, activities and related practices) and the fusion of the local (indigenous) and the foreign to produce an entirely new distinctive cultural entity. This phenomenon occurs when one culture is dominant to the other (Perez-Brignoli, 2017). Currently this term described various stages of transitive process associated to a new term known as neoculturation as the impact that cultures suffer from one to another (Chattopadhyay, 2023). In Latin America, the most typical form of acculturation or transculturation has been mestizaje; however, mestizaje is a very complex phenomenon and it has been the construction term that many Latin American nations have used to define their national identity. Another issue that has raised concerns is 'language', in this context, is not only a communication tool but also a vehicle for cultural negotiation and integration, however this integration (Language) often faces obstacles such as language barriers (Spanish, as the official language, versus Quechua or Aymara, local Indigenous languages). Unfamiliar academic systems, and social-cultural mismatches can hinder adaptation to a new cultural setting (Guerra-Ayala, 2025).

Moreover, going back to the initial idea that 'we are all mestizos' is something that is heard and resonates across all social classes within the context of Peru (Wade, 2003). For example,

this clear marker of racial identity was established between the 16th-18th century through the 'Indian Tribute' in Peru. Known as an effective source of revenue for the Spanish Crown, Indian tribute was collected in goods rather than labour, which had been a fundamental native tradition that protected peasant subsistence production from taxation during poor agriculture seasons (Stern, 1981). In Ecuador there were fewer Afro-descendants who ranked at the bottom of the emerging racial pyramid. Normally descendants of Spanish and Indigenous parents came to be termed "mestizo". By the 18th century the 'mestizos' were not fully accepted by Spanish society, even at the lowest social strata they were not entitled to the state-benefits reserved for the Indians. As a 'mestizo' lacking a clear ethnic group they were also free from any Colonial monetary contribution to the Spanish state. Opting becoming a 'mestizo' implied greater social possibility and fewer economic burdens than being an Indian; therefore, several people chose this route to avoid paying the Indigenous Tribute (Roitman, 2008).

To understand the dimension of the social strata and gap that existed between Spanish and mestizos, we can highlight that at its core there was a biological and cultural mestizaje, such as the product of the intense mixing of Europeans, Amerindians, Black Africans, and, to a lesser extent, Asians (Perez-Brignoli, 2017; Barria-Bignotti, 2022).

a) Biological miscegenation was, first and foremost, an extremely violent process, partly inherent to the conquest itself, but at the same time, inseparable from a sociocultural framework; an objective that must be clarified. The number of European and African immigrants and the resulting sex ratio in the total population (sex ratio) determined objective conditions of possibility, culturally filtered through the family patterns imposed by evangelization and the ideals of extended family and lineage predominant among the Spanish and Portuguese colonisers;

b) Cultural mestizaje operated in both multiple directions, and it is often chaotic and contradictory processes, and had no pre-defined limits, as is the case with biological hybridity. It can be briefly mentioned that the most obvious trajectories of cultural impact and contact in Latin America: the Indians were forced to, and adopted in their own way the Catholic religion which they integrated into their own festivals, social activities, and belief practices, Spanish institutions replaced the Inca administrative entities, the imposition authority and supremacy of the Castilian language over the Quechua and Aymara (local languages used at the time the Conquistadors arrived), writing, as well as the management of animals, crops and so on; the Spanish, for their part, incorporated new American products, certain indigenous customs, and new ways of seeing and feeling.

As a result, mestizaje has not only been a complex historical process of acculturation or transculturation in multiple directions and in multiple Latin America countries, it has also been a powerful ideology within broader projects of cultural domination and social transformation. This ambiguity has given rise to a much confusion and misunderstanding (Perez-Brignoli, 2017). Throughout the 20th century, all three terms formed a central part of a cultural modernization project that swept the continent and sought to define "Latin American culture." On one hand, the idea of a "mestizo" and its cultural manifestation which is at the centre of this discussion; and on the other hand, the concept of acculturation and transculturation a reciprocal process of negotiation which is a product of this "mestizo culture" (Arnedo-Gomez, 2022).

As a result, through the configuration of indigenous identity as changeable and different from 'mestizaje,' two processes can occur: a) mestizo is presented in a broad and abstract category, in which all the Latin American inhabitants can fall, whether biologically or culturally; and b) Mestizaje is the acculturation of indigenous people from the dominant culture to the lesser absorbing culture.

Finally, it has also been argued that 'mestizo (referring to the person) or mestizaje (referring to the cultural aspect of the person)' could be a democratic term and force in its broadest meaning, because it may embrace all parts of current Latin American society; and, if a nations identity is built on the idea that all parts of the society have a 'racial mestizaje' (an integration of population equally), then everyone can be morally and socially uplifted.

Challenges: Power Imbalance, Identity Anxiety, and Inequality
The notion of "Power," in its broadest meaning is one of the most contested concepts in social sciences, political theories and philosophical discourse. Definitions are manifold and highly diverse, ranging from "power" as an actor-specific resource used in the pursuit of self-interests, to "power" as the capacity of a social system to mobilize resources to realize collective goals (Avelino, 2021; Essabbar et al., 2016). Therefore, within this scenario, theories of knowledge have traditionally been associated with European traditions, with Latin American societies playing the roles of consumers rather than generators of new knowledge. In this context there is a belief of structural imbalance in the global economy of knowledge (Alcalde, 2020). Eurocentrism is the structure of knowledge that has ensured and sustained the colonial power model, corresponding to a specific way of perceiving and organizing the natural and social world, which is based on three foundational components:

A) Simplification: Descartes' reason, that to understand complex processes it is necessary to divide them into as many parts as possible in order to study each in isolation, compartmentalization and specialization of knowledge,
B) The concept of Eurocentric knowledge imposes a belief in the stability of social and natural systems, presenting an ordered reality that operates according to simple, knowable laws. It assumes that events can be predicted and that the natural and social worlds can be controlled, making events appear repeatable and thereby eliminating history as a creative process,
C) Objectivity, the belief that reality can be objectively known is framed within Eurocentrism, which asserts itself as the only legitimate form of knowledge and marginalizes the knowledge systems of colonized people. Local knowledge of marginalized people that has been a form of subsistence for over a millennium and has served as the basis of their specific form of social existence is repressed or relegated to the margins, where it is viewed as an inferior form of knowledge by its own bearers. In this periphery the major contributions of the Inca society's cultural values and knowledge in various areas of development is seen as unnecessary (Germana, 2024).

Within this 'power-model,' Europeans discovered and conquered the new colonies starting with their arrival in 1492-1594 to the new continent that would later be called the Americas; there emerged a *sui generis* approach that had coloniality and modernity as key characteristics defining the power-model of conquest, which were intertwined with the idea of race as the core social classification. The Conquistadors imagined themselves as superior

humans and self-identified as "white" while they saw the conquered Indians and blacks as inferior humans. The idea of race legitimizes the social dominance of exploitation of Indigenous people and African slaves, becoming an essential sustaining 'power-model' so that even after the colony's independence from Spain (Germana, 2024), it maintained its mental dominance. Human communities are thus organized by hierarchies in the associated forms of power imbalance and identities.

A straightforward example in modern times of this power imbalance is the United Nations (UN-1945) which was established as a multilateral platform with the goal of fostering international cooperation and maintaining peace across the globe (Alcover et al., 2024) In a broader spectrum, the concentration of power within the 5 permanent members known as the P5 (China, France, Russia, UK, USA), and 10 non-permanent members, who are elected for two-years terms, the P5 members hold significantly more power within the council over the non-permanent members. This hierarchy of power imbalance marginalises the influence of the non-permanent members resulting in biased decision-making against the countries which are not included in the P5 council.

Commodification & Folklore
A pertinent question to begin with is whether 'folklore' has, in contemporary times, become a commodified value. The common definition of "Commodification" is within a capitalist economic system, where commodification is the transformation of things such as goods, services, ideas, nature, personal life, information, people or animals into objects of trade or commodities. According to Arjun Appadurai, "everything intended for exchange," or any item of economic worth, is a commodity in its most basic sense. Commodification is often criticized on the grounds that some things ought not to be treated as commodities—for example, water, education, data, information, knowledge, human life, and animal life (Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Commodify. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved September 16, 2025). Another point of view is that 'commodification may refer to the process of transforming services and cultural expressions into 'commodities' that can be bought and sold. As a result, under this process cultural expressions are stripped of their original meaning and context, reducing them to mere visual products for consumption and aesthetic pleasure, lacking any cultural value. This concept that has been extensively studied in social sciences, particularly in relation to how cultural practices are commercialized in contemporary capitalist societies. In Latin American countries, Spanish culture experienced a phenomenon of cultural assimilation to the Andean Indigenous culture along with the African and Asian culture to produce what today is the manifestation of the Peruvian cultural identity. Overall, the exploration of Peruvian folklore reveals a complex interplay of historical influences and cultural expressions, that highlight the resilience of traditions that have adapted over time, ensuring that they remain vibrant and relevant in the modern world; understanding these elements can assist with appreciating and celebrating the rich experience of this cultural amalgamation and heritage that continues to be told and celebrated. There are some benefits that can be seen in folklore's experience as commodity. For example:

A) Preservation of folklore can be promoted by increasing its visibility and accessibility; for instance, the digitalization of events and performance, traditional festivals and some other art forms for broader dissemination, and can also help to keep these cultural practices alive across generations.

B) Folklore as a commodity can contribute to the development of a communication market for large audiences leveraging on cultural expressions; on the downside it can result in the loss of authenticity and the original context of folklore, as traditional practices are modified or updated with new technologies to fit consumers preferences. Diluting cultural expressions or practices to appeal to wide markets is another drawback. Although this can assist the communities who make these products or cultural commodities financially, it can also result in exploitation if the original creators do not get the profits. Another key aspect is environmental sustainability focusing on preserving natural areas and environments with the effort to minimize ecological damage caused by excessive or uncontrolled tourism (Wu & Kong, 2025).

Scholars have criticized 'commodification' for its potential of undermining the intrinsic cultural values of these practices; critics argue that when folklore becomes a commodity, it loses its significances as a form of cultural expression and transforms into solely an object of consumption. From this perspective, the tension between cultural preservation and commercial interest becomes tangible (Mohan, 2022). As a result, if folklore and cultural practices are on the verge of endangerment, they can be revived through technology by attaching commercial value to them; then converting these practices to digital form for easy access and long-term preservation, can prevent them from being lost in the general cultural homogenization.

Cultural Resilience & Innovation
The nation of Peru has provided lessons for the preservation and revitalization of cultural heritage, through practices including the perfection of legislation, the establishment and practice of sustainable tourism development, which provides a valuable reference example for the long-term protection of the nation's cultural identity (Wu & Kong, 2025). On the innovation side, technological development and change has long been considered a cornerstone of every societal advancement, driving productivity, economic growth as well as societal welfare (Bartels et al., 2012). Today's technological developments are increasingly conflated with ideals associated with innovation, as the process of developing products and services to both meet market demands and create new market opportunities (Jimenez et al., 2025). Innovation has become all-encompassing and inevitable when thinking about the future of science, society, education, national development, health, economics, finance, among other key sectors.

For example, Peru's socio-economic circumstances render it extremely susceptible to the effects of climate change and other natural calamities. Although Peru has achieved remarkable economic growth and poverty reduction over the last two decades prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, its structural services across government agencies, spatial disparities and access to critical public services due to the lack of innovation and development still persist (de Vries Robbe, 2022). However, in the new millennium, political stability, macro-economic caution and the aggressive pursuit of free trade has enabled Peru to emerge as one of the fastest-growing and most stable economies in Latin America (Scott & Chaston, 2012).

As Peru begins to innovate many of its government agencies and daily practices, cultural resilience of its communities encompasses the capacity of many inland communities to absorb disturbances and adapt to changing circumstances while still preserving their cultural

heritages and local belief practices. Religion and spirituality may be major components of resilience, summarizing the way in which religions promote positive adaptation, emotions, good mental health, quality of life, and optimism, enabling people to overcome negativeness, anxiety and depressive symptoms (Xie & Wong, 2020).

This notion presents the dynamic nature of the Peruvian cultural system, which not only emphasizes its resilience but manages to change and incorporate foreign practices into its own cultural practice. Community resilience is often referred to as the capacity to adapt in response to shocks or stresses set off by foreign presence (Terrana & Al-Delaimy, 2023). Globalization may lead to homogenization of distinct practices; while introducing new ideas, it may also dilute unique practices, language and may pose a threat to multi-cultural diversity. Resilience through cultural practices may lead to the strength in overcoming adversity, reflecting on the ability to adapt and thrive while preserving their unique heritage (Scott & Chaston, 2012). Assessing cultural resilience among different populations is not merely a matter of theoretical interest, but of the utmost practical concern to stakeholders who wish to positively impact inland communities.

Challenging Cultural Hegemony
History is full of many examples of cultural hegemony, for instance, Ancient Greece is one of the most famous civilizations of the European history, for almost 1000 years, it was a major cultural force in the Mediterranean region, and its legacy can be seen in the art, literature, philosophy, and politics of the modern world (Carter, 2023); this hegemony-power concept was used to signal the political-military dominance of a city-state over the other city-states (Maiza-Larrarte & Bustillo-Mesanza, 2025). Taking another example, the Roman Empire exercises its influence over many cultural aspects of modern European countries, the Latin language became the lingua Franca of many European nations and Roman Law still is the foundation of their legal system, long outliving the Roman Empire itself; the British empire, which expanded from the late 16th century until to the mid-20th century, controlled vast territories from Africa, India, Australia, the Caribbean, and parts of North America (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (2025, August 13). British Empire. Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Another country such as Spain, exercised great dominance during the 16th and early 17th centuries, emerging as a leading global power due to its vast empire and wealth. The Spanish empire's influence extended across Europe and into the New World, shaping global trade patterns, cultural development and international relations. So, cultural hegemony may refer to the dominance of one cultural group over others within a society. This dominance may be established by exercising the power of brute force, coercion, manipulation, negotiation, religion, or established through cultural institutions, shaping local perspective, norms, values, often leading to marginalization or new alternative perspectives and lifestyles (Fiveable, 2024). Another view point might be that cultural hegemony refers to the dominance of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class, whose worldviews become the accepted cultural norm without any notable coercion; Antonio F. Gramsci (1891-1937), introduces this concept in the context of Western dominance during the struggle for Indian independence (The colonial rule of India under the British Empire was not just an economic or political endeavour, but also a cultural one), similarly to many other power-civilizations (Majumdar, 2025; Spain's dominance – AP US History). Gramsci argues that it is not merely through force or coercion but through the shaping of cultures and ideas that the ruling class maintains its control.

Counter-hegemony is the resistance against the dominant ideology, which represent the voices, ideas, and culture that challenges the established power structure. Another critical factor is the interplay between cultural hegemony and communication such as media, (Tv, radio, film) which plays a pivotal influence in impacting and shaping general consciousness and perpetuating established ideological and power structures (Kotresha, 2020). Thus, counter-hegemony seeks to disrupt the status quo and challenge the hegemony narratives. This concentration of media ownership allows communication establishments such as corporations to shape public discourse and also promote specific ideological agendas. By selecting what stories to cover and how to frame their narrative, the media can influence public opinion and direct attention towards topics that align with the dominant ideology, gender, or stereotypes; or, divert public opinion over topics which are not their priority; these issues contribute to the reinforcement of cultural hegemony. As a result, challenging cultural hegemony, remains a central topic across all social science and communication studies, providing an angle or view through which the public in general can understand the interplay of power dynamics in society. Highlighting dominant ideologies, as well as the potential for cultural resistance, dissecting cultural hegemony is crucial to comprehend the diversity of cultural perspectives in an ever-connected world.

Conclusion

Bhabha's hybridity theory provides an invaluable framework for understanding Peruvian cultural identity; but his theory has also been criticised from various perspectives, arguing that this can be difficult to be translate into concrete political action. Others have questioned the term "hybridization" which has been romanticized ignoring the struggles for power imbalance, disrupted oppressive power structures and promoting a pluralistic understanding of cultural identity. "Third Space" is where Peruvians actively performed, negotiated, and reinvented themselves. The tension between Cultural hybridity and Peruvian identity is central to understand how Peruvians navigate globalization, and hybridity means the blending of indigenous, Europeans (Spaniards), African slaves, and Asian migration, into a single, unique, powerful, and constantly evolving expression. Globalization accelerated this fusion, raising critical questions: Does hybridity enrich Peruvian identity or dilute it? Can authenticity exist in a constant evolving culture? Is Peruvian hybridity passive assimilation, creative reworking, or a colonial, violent force that was crucial in creating a contemporary cultural vitality? These are a few questions that will still remain to be answered in a constant evolving society. Hybridisation is not an event that always evolves harmoniously, festivals and dances often offer traditional expressions of a community which may reveal tension in assimilation between different groups of people - indigenous, mestizo, or catholic. The power dynamic shapes hybrid elements which are emphasised or marginalised, perhaps de-emphasized by one dominant social group against others, for example: African roots are often minimized within some national and social narratives. Finally, Bhabha's theory offers critical insights into the complexity of Peruvian cultural identity and its transformative dynamic in an ever-connected society.

Acknowledgements

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