



MARTÍN CHAMBI'S INDIGENOUS VISUAL DISCOURSE: Legacy and Engagement in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the indigenist visual discourse in Martín Chambi's legacy and its manifestation within the digital space, using a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. Descriptive in nature and based on a non-experimental, cross-sectional design, the research draws on metric and visual content analysis. The findings reveal that Chambi's visual discourse remains relevant in the digital era, adapting to the interactional dynamics of platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. Attention metrics, including reactions, comments and shares, demonstrate a sustained level of engagement with his work. The study concludes that Chambi's legacy is not only preserved but also transformed and amplified through digital interactions, reaffirming his position as a visual reference of the Andean world.

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1. Introduction

Discourse, far from being a mere transmission of information, constitutes a social and cultural practice that structures meaning within a given context. From Roland Barthes's theoretical and methodological perspective, the study of discursive phenomena belongs to the field of communication, transcending the traditional boundaries of linguistics (Pérez, 2015), as it encompasses not only language but also the systems of meaning that shape perception. Within this framework, visual discourse is established as a distinct form of communication. Photography, therefore, emerges as one of the most powerful expressions of visual discourse, enriched through the narratives that lend it continuity and coherence (Molina, 2024).

Since its invention in the first half of the nineteenth century, photography has served to document diverse aspects of human societies (Pereira, 2024). As time passes, photographic images acquire historical value, becoming witnesses to the materiality of objects and to social transformations, which in turn enables new interpretations and an expanded understanding of their meanings (Argerich, 2015). Before photography, the earliest known visual representations were cave paintings, whose purpose was to reproduce reality as a means of depicting everyday life (Soto Calderón, 2015). Today, photography infinitely reproduces that which has occurred only once, mechanically repeating what, in existential terms, can never be repeated again (Barthes, 1989).

Throughout its history, photography has served a variety of functions and has been employed in multiple ways (Cunha, 2022), not only as a portrait of realities, but also as a record of evidence, a driver of change (Alvarado & Jiménez-Marín, 2022) and a means of preserving memory (Begazo Caballero, 2021). It has further been used to denounce injustices, construct identities and generate symbolic discourses that shape the perception of reality. Its versatility has enabled its application across fields as diverse as art, science, journalism, politics and everyday life.

Within the diverse functions and uses of photography, Martín Chambi's work stands out as an emblematic example of how the image can transcend mere documentation to become a visual discourse of profound historical, cultural and social significance. Through his lens, Chambi not only recorded twentieth-century Andean life but also constructed a visual narrative that dignified indigenous identity. He is recognised as the first photographer of indigenous origin in Peru, Latin America, and the world (Calderón, 2024; Crow, 2019; Garay, 2021; Martín Chambi Association [AMC], 2019), described as 'the first to look at his people with uncolonised eyes' (Staude, 2024, p. 127), in a context shaped by colonialism and exclusion. His photographs, in addition to documenting landscapes, portraits and customs, serve as testimony to an era and as a means of reinterpreting the indigenous presence in Peruvian history. His gaze, deeply rooted in the Andean worldview, reflects coherence with his peasant origins.

Chambi was born in the district of Coasa, province of Carabaya, department of Puno, Peru. From an early age, he worked in the gold mines of Carabaya. At fourteen, his encounter with an engineer responsible for graphically documenting the deposits introduced him to the camera and the fundamentals of photographic processes. In 1908, he moved to Arequipa, where he began training as an apprentice in the studio of Max T. Vargas, one of the most influential photographers of the period, before continuing his work in the Vargas Hermanos studio (Staude, 2024).

By 1920, following his arrival in Cusco, Chambi had already mastered the 'art of photography', combining technical skill with expressive vision. He quickly produced a vast catalogue of postcards and city views, establishing himself as a portraitist, documentary photographer and entrepreneur in the field of photography (Garay, 2021). His legacy thus reflects the perspective of a photographer who incorporated his own understanding of Andean reality while simultaneously navigating the commercial and aesthetic dynamics of his time to consolidate his work and extend its reach beyond the local sphere. His intimate and genuine 'indigenous gaze' (Staude, 2024) challenged the hegemonic narratives of his era, granting dignity and visibility to Andean subjects through photography. Over time, his work has acquired new interpretations, consolidating itself not only as an ethnographic archive, but also as an artistic and political expression that continues to influence constructions of Andean identity. Chambi's photographic archive comprises approximately 40,000 negatives, preserved and managed by the Martín Chambi Association (AMC, 2019).

In line with Cartier-Bresson's (2009) reflections on the relationship between camera and subject, Chambi also mastered the art of composition, carefully positioning his lens to crop and preserve key moments of Andean life, emphasising the notion of the 'decisive eye'. This concept is central to understanding photography as an active and conscious process of visual selection. It is not merely a matter of capturing a moment, but of recognising and choosing, in a given instant, which elements of the world merit attention and how they should be arranged within the frame. It reflects the photographer's ability to perceive and articulate the relationships between shapes, light, shadow and composition.

Photographic images are integrated into albums, magazines, books, posters, packaging and postcards (Flusser, 1990) and have historically formed part of everyday life. Today, this omnipresence has extended to social media, where photographs circulate constantly, giving rise to the phenomenon of mass image dissemination online (Martínez-Luna, 2022). It is difficult to imagine a day without encountering a photograph on the Internet or social media. Together with other media, such as magazines, blogs and online forums, social media has facilitated the dissemination of photographs on an unprecedented scale (Mykytka, 2022). It is therefore recognised as a mass communication tool (Claro Montes et al., 2023), playing an essential role in circulating narratives linked to cultural traditions (Aguirre Aguilar, 2023), with visual content becoming increasingly central (Brigas et al., 2023). From this perspective, Martín Chambi's work acquires renewed relevance, as images originally conceived in the twentieth century as visual testimony to Andean identity have found new spaces for reinterpretation and global dissemination on digital platforms. His photographic legacy, now accessible through social media and online archives, continues to play a crucial role in representing and raising awareness of the cultural traditions of the Andean world.

The visual discourse of Martín Jerónimo Chambi Jiménez constitutes a cultural phenomenon that extends beyond his own gaze and that of his immediate viewers, becoming embedded in the collective imagination over time. His images not only document, but also construct and reinforce a sense of belonging, historical memory and Andean identity. The significance of his legacy has been formally recognised, as his photographic work was declared National Cultural Heritage, highlighting its value as a visual testimony to Peruvian culture (Vice-Ministerial Resolution No. 188-2019-VMPCIC-MC, 2019). In a context in which visual narratives circulate extensively through social networks, analysing his legacy provides insight into the fundamental role of photography. Accordingly, this research aims to examine the indigenous visual discourse of Martín Chambi's legacy and its metrics within the digital space.

2. Methodology

To analyse the indigenist visual discourse in Martín Chambi's legacy and its presence in the digital space, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. The research, descriptive in nature and adopting a non-experimental, cross-sectional design, facilitated the examination of both the visual discursive construction of his photographs and their dissemination and reception on social media.

2.1. Study Corpus and Data Cleaning

For this research, a non-probabilistic convenience sampling method was employed, selecting the units of analysis according to defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The study focused on social media accounts (Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest) that disseminated visual content related to the work of Martín Chambi during the period from 20 November to 22 December 2024. Relevant posts addressing Chambi and his legacy through visual and audiovisual resources were included, considering a minimum of 80 accounts per platform and evaluating their level of interaction (number of likes, comments, shares and views). Pinterest was excluded due to the number of accounts falling below the established minimum.

A data cleaning and imputation process was undertaken to ensure quality and consistency. Type conversion enabled date standardisation and normalisation of numerical values. Records with null dates were removed, and missing values were imputed using the median to avoid bias. Extreme values were adjusted to the 99th percentile to mitigate the impact of outliers. Inconsistencies in variable names were also corrected. Following this process, the medians obtained were: reactions (252), comments (4) and

shares (13), ensuring a representative distribution for subsequent analysis. The sample units are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Social networks in the study

Social Network	Number of accounts
Facebook	261
Instagram	207
TikTok	138
YouTube	89
Total	695

Source: Authors elaboration, 2025.

2.2. Techniques and Instruments

Two techniques were employed for data collection and analysis: metric analysis and visual content analysis. Metric analysis provided numerical information on social media engagement, considering indicators such as reactions, shares and comments. Visual content analysis was guided by Erwin Panofsky's approach, which proposes a three-level method: primary or natural, secondary or conventional and tertiary or intrinsic, corresponding respectively to the pre-iconographic, iconographic and iconological stages (Purbasari & Carrollina, 2023; Silva, 2019; Vidaurre & Romero, 2024).

The instruments used comprised metric analysis and visual content analysis sheets. The metric analysis sheet enabled quantitative data to be recorded in a dataset, documenting the reach and interaction of publications (reactions, shares, comments and other indicators for each account analysed). The visual content analysis sheet addressed qualitative aspects and was structured across three levels: the first involved basic perception of the image, identifying people, clothing, objects and settings without requiring prior knowledge; the second required iconographic knowledge to recognise Andean cultural elements, such as traditional clothing and its symbolism; and the third provided historical, social and cultural interpretation, contextualising the photograph within the identity and heritage dynamics of its time.

3. Objectives

3.1. General objective

The aim of this study is to analyse the indigenous visual discourse of Martín Chambi's legacy and its metrics within the digital space.

3.2. Specific Objectives

To evaluate Martín Chambi's legacy in the digital space by analysing engagement metrics on Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and YouTube platforms.

To examine and assess Martín Chambi's visual discourse disseminated on social media by analysing his images in the pre-iconographic, iconographic and iconological stages.

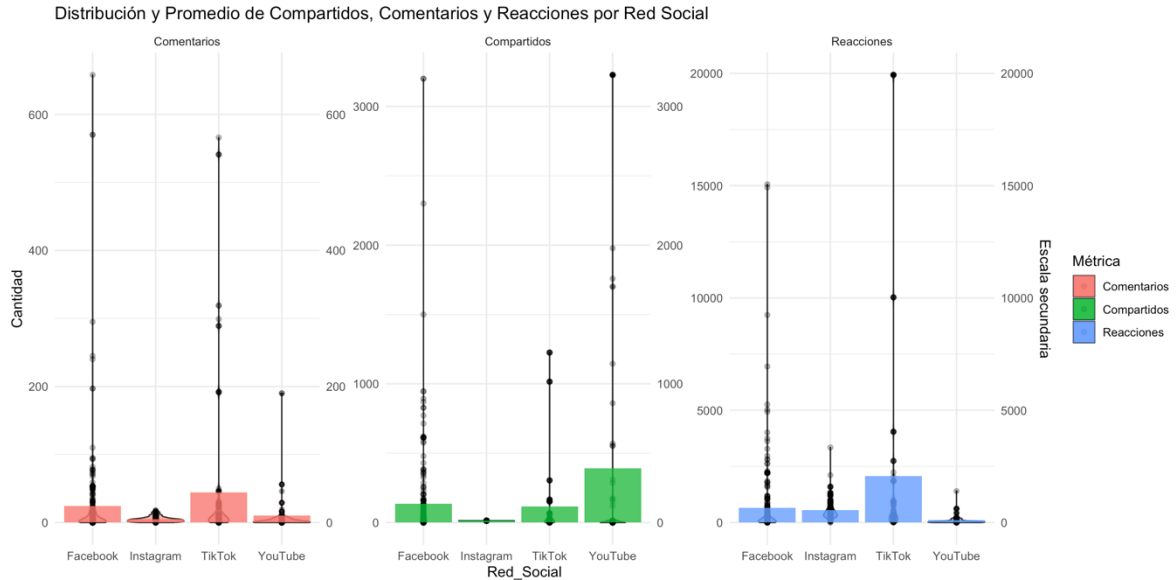
4. Data analysis

The research results are presented in two main sections: engagement metrics on social media and an analysis of the visual content of the indigenist discourse in Martín Chambi's work. The following section details the findings of the study.

4.1. Social Media Engagement Metrics for the Legacy of Martín Chambi

The graph illustrates the distribution and averages of three engagement metrics: comments, shares and reactions for Martín Chambi's posts across various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. The dispersion observed across all platforms indicates peaks of high interaction on particular posts. This suggests that, although more traditional networks such as Facebook and Instagram may not generate consistently high interaction, they can feature isolated posts that achieve significant engagement.

Figure 1. Distribution and averages of shares, comments and reactions by social network.



Source: Authors elaboration, 2025

Table 2. Average interactions on social media.

	Social_Network	Average Reactions	Average comments	Average Shares
1	Facebook	652,8812	24,5977	136,7395
2	Instagram	558.5756	4.912195	13
3	TikTok	2072.13	44.37681	116.8986
4	YouTube	106.6404	10.39326	391.7537

Source: Authors elaboration, 2025.

The analysis conducted on Martín Chambi's dataset, following the cleaning and transformation of variables, reveals several notable findings regarding social media interactions. In particular, a significant difference in engagement was observed between resource types, with a mean value of 655 for photos and 1647 for videos. This finding was supported by a t-test, which indicated that the difference between the media is statistically significant ($p = 0.000679$). Furthermore, boxplot graphs and descriptive statistics reveal greater variability in videos, suggesting that video posts elicit more intense and dispersed interactions than photo posts. This underscores the capacity of videos to generate higher engagement, albeit with greater variability in audience responses.

Figure 2. Distribution of engagement by type of post.



$$\text{Engagement} = \text{Reacciones} + \text{Comentarios} + \text{Compartidos}$$

Source: Authors elaboration, 2025.

4.2. Visual Analysis of the Indigenist Discourse in Martín Chambi's Work on Social Media

Across the four social networks analysed, the accounts exhibiting the highest levels of engagement, including reactions (likes, cares, loves, etc.), comments, shares and saves, were identified. Seven accounts, coded C1 to C7, were selected for further examination of their visual content.

Table 3. Social media accounts with the highest level of interaction.

Social Network	Code	Title	Reactions	Comments	Shares	Save
Facebook 18,923	C1	In the window	15,065	658		
	C2	Martín Chambi, the first indigenous photographer			3,200	
TikTok 25,303	C3	Let me tell you about Martín Chambi	21,300	541		2,236
	C4	The photograph of the giant of Paruro or Llusco, by Martin Chambi			1,226	
Instagram 3,360	C5	Valentín de Madariaga Foundation	3,342	18		
YouTube 29,590	C6	It Happened in Peru – Martin Chambi 1/4			28,000	
	C7	Martín Chambi	1,400	190		

Source: Authors elaboration, 2025.

4.2.1. Analysis of Visual Content on Facebook

On the social network Facebook, accounts C1 and C2 stand out, with C1 obtaining the highest levels of reactions (15,065) and comments (658), and C2 ranking highest in terms of shares (3,200). The visual content of these accounts was subsequently analysed.

4.2.1.1. Primary or Pre-Iconographic Level

The image on C1 contains information highlighting Martín Chambi in one of the windows of an archaeological centre. He looks directly at the camera lens, is dressed in a *poncho*, and holds a *montera* (saddle).

C2 published a video entitled *Martín Chambi, El primer fotógrafo indígena* (Martín Chambi, The First Indigenous Photographer). The video lasts two minutes and thirty-two seconds and presents 41 photographs of Chambi's work alongside eight AI-generated images incorporated to provide realism when depicting his childhood and adolescence. It begins with an image of Juan de la Cruz Sihuana, known as *el Gigante de Llusco* ('the giant of Llusco'). From 0:15 to 0:31, several landscapes, Machu Picchu, and indigenous people in traditional dress are shown. From 0:59 to 1:11, photographs of rural communities and the city of Cusco are presented. From 1:18 to 1:39, images of the cities of Arequipa, Puno and Bolivia appear, along with scenes of people from different social strata performing everyday activities such as farming and social gatherings. From 1:41 to 1:48, photographs of Chambi's children, who also became photographers, are displayed. Between 1:49 and 1:53, two photographs of rural people are shown. At 1:57, photographs of buildings from that period are identified. The video concludes with current photographs of members of the Martín Chambi Association, who are responsible for preserving and digitising his work, followed by a photograph of Martín Chambi accompanied by his wife.

4.2.1.2. Secondary or Iconographic Level

At this level, the conventional meanings of the visual content identified at the first level are analysed. Both accounts present images in which the main figures wear a *poncho*, a distinctive garment of the Andean people, made from sheep's wool and characterised by its design and colour. The first account features a self-portrait of Martín Chambi at an archaeological site, underscoring his identification with

the descendants of the Incas and his contribution to promoting major archaeological locations, some of which are now recognised as wonders of the world.

The second account shows a video featuring *El Gigante de Llusco* ('the giant of Llusco') a character from the district of Llusco, province of Chumbivilcas, department of Cusco. In the image, this *campesino* (peasant) wears a *poncho*, a *chullo* (Andean woollen hat), and *bayeta* clothing (handmade textile produced from sheep's wool). His noticeably worn and patched clothing reveals the harsh conditions of his daily life and his endurance in the face of severe weather. In addition, his imposing height of 2.10 metres makes him a striking figure in the video.

The use of these garments persists today and is considered an essential part of the cultural identity of the high Andean communities of Peru. The following scenes in the video highlight everyday life, festivities, traditions and rituals of rural communities, providing a visual testimony of their culture and customs.

4.2.1.3. Tertiary or Iconological Level

Through his photographic work, Martín Chambi identifies himself as a man of the Andes and proudly affirms his indigenous ancestry. His images reclaim the dignity of rural dwellers and their resistance to the indifference and discrimination of the time. His photography not only documents but also dignifies indigenous communities, offering a vision that challenges the stereotypes imposed by Western cultural hegemony.

The image of Juan de la Cruz Sihwana, known as *El Gigante de Llusco* ('the giant of Llusco'), portrays a man of humble origins whose upright posture and fixed gaze evoke both nostalgia and hope. His expression conveys a profound capacity for resilience in the face of adversity, while his imposing stature symbolises the greatness of the Andean spirit. This image can be interpreted as representing the bond between the man of the Andes and nature. The photograph captures a visually striking moment that embodies both cultural and social dimensions.

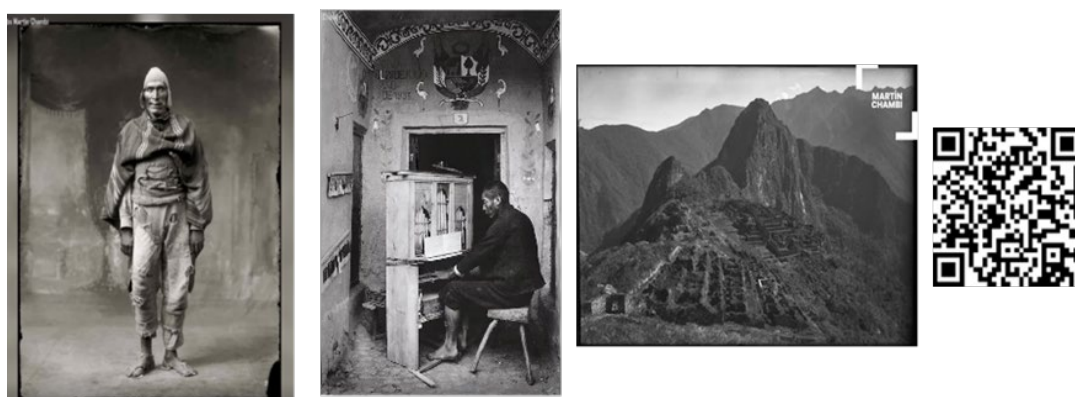
Chambi's photographs offer an introspective view of indigenous communities at a time when *indios* ('Indians') were not regarded as part of society and were rarely depicted with the same dignity as *criollos* (Creoles) and whites. Thus, Chambi's camera became an instrument of cultural resistance, challenging exclusion and granting visibility to those who had been marginalised. A significant example of this process is the image of the *indígena tocando el órgano* ('indigenous man playing the organ'). The presence of this musical instrument, strongly influenced by European culture, can be interpreted in two ways: as a manifestation of colonial cultural imposition or as a form of resistance and adaptation in which the indigenous musician, by reading sheet music and mastering the instrument, renegotiates his place in society. In this way, Chambi's work transcends the 'exotic' gaze with which peasants were often portrayed and becomes a tool for cultural and historical reinterpretation.

Figure 3. *En la ventana* (At the Window), the image with the highest number of reactions and comments on Facebook.



Source: "Viaje en el tiempo" account / <https://acortar.link/AueE5q> 2024.

Figure 4. "Martín Chambi, the first indigenous photographer," video with the highest number of shares on Facebook.



Source: "José Villanueva" account / <https://acortar.link/LkyY4E> 2024

4.2.2. Analysis of Visual Content on TikTok

On the social network TikTok, two accounts recorded the highest levels of interaction, as shown in Table 3. Account C3, titled ` stands out for having the highest number of reactions (21,300), comments (541), saves (2,236), and an overall high level of audience engagement. Meanwhile, account C4, titled *La fotografía del gigante de Paruro o Llusco, de Martín Chambi* (The Photograph of the Giant of Paruro or Llusco, by Martín Chambi), is notable for the number of shares, reaching a total of 1,226.

4.2.2.1. Primary or Pre-Iconographic Level

The C3 account, ines.te.cuenta, published a 2-minute 29-second video to mark Martín Chambi's name day, offering information about his work, biography, and career as a photographer. The content highlights that Chambi is recognised as the first photographer of indigenous descent to portray his people with dignity. The video presents a selection of forty photographs, generating the highest level of interaction within this social network.

In terms of the video's content, the photograph *En la ventana* (At the Window) appears at 0:06, followed from 0:10 to 1:25 by images depicting scenes of everyday life, including children, religious figures, military personnel, athletes, and social and festive celebrations. At 1:42, a photograph of his daughter Julia Chambi, who was also a photographer in Cusco, appears, while between 1:51 and 2:07, photographs related to the indigenous population are shown. The video concludes with a series of landscapes, an image of a child playing the quena (Andean flute), and a self-portrait of Martín Chambi.

Meanwhile, the C4 account, davidgarciaamayafoto, presents a 58-second video titled *Gigante de Paruro o Llusco*, by Martín Chambi, which focuses exclusively on this photograph. Throughout the video, the image of Juan de la Cruz Sihuana appears eight times, while the narration recounts how Chambi encountered him and decided to photograph him in his studio.

4.2.2.2. Secondary or Iconographic Level

Both accounts present significant similarities, particularly in their opening image of the giant of Llusco, which allows for the identification of social and cultural content centred on Andean indigenous communities. These images depict elements representative of their identity, including traditional clothing, customs and scenes of everyday life. Such visual content contributes to a deeper appreciation of Andean culture and promotes the visibility of historically marginalised populations, echoing Martín Chambi's own photographic work.

Chambi's legacy transcends the documentary and is regarded as a masterpiece not only for its narrative power but also for its mastery of light, composition and empathy with the Andean world. His work represents the first major photographic production from an indigenous perspective and with a genuinely indigenous gaze, distinguishing it within the history of photography in Latin America.

It is worth noting that the audiovisual material analysed from account C4 was produced in vertical format (9:16), which resulted in the cropping of several photographs, thereby hindering their full appreciation and altering, to some extent, the original composition of Chambi's work.

4.2.2.3. Tertiary or Iconological Level

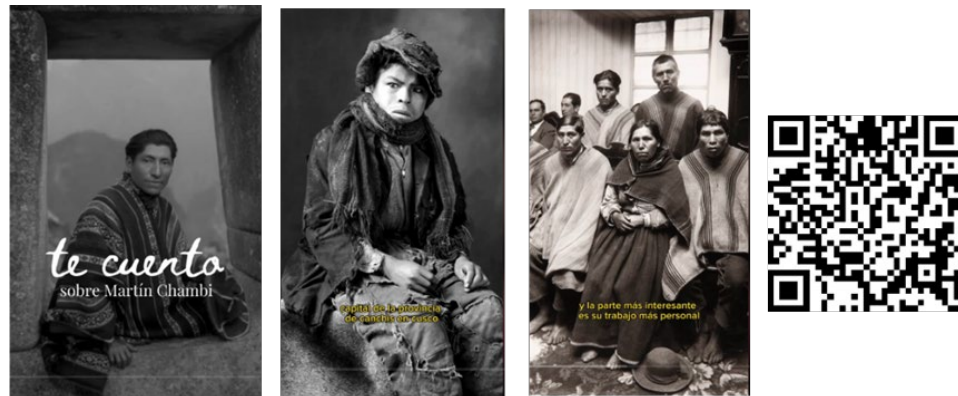
The images shared on both accounts transcend their documentary value and serve as a powerful reminder of the enduring relevance of cultural identity in the contemporary world. In an increasingly globalised society, these visual representations invite reflection on the challenges faced by indigenous communities, such as urban expansion, climate change and, above all, the loss of ancestral traditions.

The visual content of each photograph not only documents ways of life but also provides a lens through which to analyse the dynamics of power, access to justice, education and other fundamental aspects of indigenous experience. Moreover, the aesthetic and emotional impact of these images elicits responses that go beyond passive observation, generating empathy and a profound sense of connection with Andean culture.

Through his work, Martín Chambi not only visually preserved Andean cultural heritage but also reaffirmed its importance within the collective imagination. His photography stands not merely as testimony but as an affirmation of identity that contributes to the revaluation of Peru's ethnic and cultural diversity.

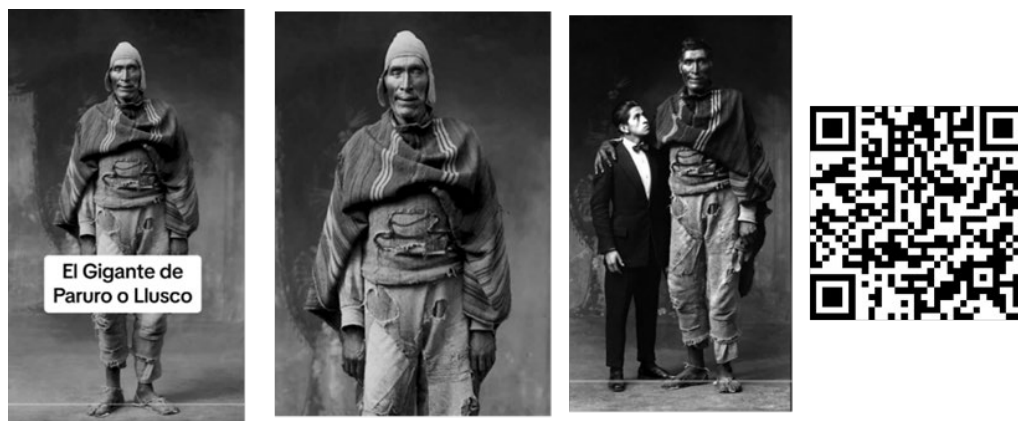
Chambi exercised his freedom to portray, yet, like all images, his work was conditioned by what the light could reveal and by what the moment could frame, capturing only what could be photographed (1990).

Figure 5. *Te cuento sobre Martín Chambi* (I'll tell you about Martín Chambi), the video with the highest number of reactions, comments and saves on TikTok.



Source: Account "ines.te.cuenta" / <https://acortar.link/O4r0HL> 2024

Figure 6. *El Gigante de Paruro o Llusco* ('the giant of Paruro or Llusco'), the video with the highest number of shares on TikTok.



Source: Account "davidgarciaamayafoto" / <https://acortar.link/81WxTA> 2024

4.2.3. Analysis of Visual Content on Instagram

On the social network Instagram, account C5, titled Fundación Valentín de Madariaga, has the highest number of reactions, with 3,342 likes and 18 comments. This platform stands out for two types of interaction, and coincidentally, it is the same account that is analysed in this study.

4.2.3.1. Primary or Pre-Iconographic Level

The C5 account published a post inviting people to the collective photography exhibition *Martín Chambi and His Contemporaries*, held in Seville, Spain. The post is accompanied by a sequence of images in the feed, beginning with the photograph *El Gigante de Llusco*, followed by a view of the archaeological site of Machu Picchu, an image of a motorcyclist and culminating with the iconic photograph *Wedding of Don Julio Gadea*.

4.2.3.2. Secondary or Iconographic Level

Within this photographic series, the recurring presence of the image of *El Gigante de Llusco* stands out, also shared on other social networks. The photograph of the motorcyclist represents the introduction of the first motorcycles in Cusco, a milestone in the modernisation of transport within a traditional society. In this image, Chambi achieves a masterful combination of photographic technique and social awareness. The framing highlights the motorcyclist within his environment, while the arrangement of the figures in the background adds dynamism and directs the viewer's attention towards the centre of the composition. The use of focus enhances the textures and details of the clothing, creating a visual connection that evokes sensations of freedom and progress.

The photograph *Wedding of Don Julio Gadea*, depicting the then prefect of Cusco, is one of the most representative of the social sphere. Exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, it has been acclaimed by critics as one of Chambi's finest works. In this image, the photographer demonstrates his mastery of light, strategically illuminating the face of the protagonist. Julio Gadea's gaze, full of pride and authority, contrasts with the serene and warm expression of his wife, Olimpia Arteta, whose veil creates diagonal lines that energise the composition. Chambi also applies the vignetting technique, darkening the edges of the image to emphasise the chiaroscuro and highlight the illumination of the newlyweds. This treatment of light demonstrates his technical mastery both during the photographic process and in the development phase. Thus, Chambi exercised his freedom to portray; yet, as Flusser (1990) suggests, he was also conditioned by what light could reveal and by the precise moment of framing. His gaze and skill transformed each photograph into a timeless work.

4.2.3.3. Tertiary or Iconological Level

The four photographs published in this account reflect the diversity of subjects and contexts that Martín Chambi documented throughout his career. His work captures both indigenous populations and urban sectors belonging to different socioeconomic strata. Similarly, his record of the arrival of the first motorcycles in southern Peru reaffirms his position as both a documentary photographer and an artist committed to portraying the processes of modernisation and the transformations in the social structure of his time. The value of his images lies in their ability to transcend the moment captured, offering an authentic and meaningful visual testimony (Yucra-Mamani et al., 2024).

Figure 7. *Fundación Valentín de Madariaga*, image with the highest level of reactions and comments on Instagram.



Source: Instagram account / <https://acortar.link/Tfpl4W> 2024.

4.2.4. Analysis of Visual Content on YouTube

On the social network YouTube, the two accounts with the highest levels of interaction are C6 and C7, as detailed in Table 3. Account C6, titled *It Happened in Peru: Martín Chambi, Part 1 of 4*, stands out for its higher number of shares, totalling 28,000. Meanwhile, account C7, titled *Martín Chambi*, recorded 1,400 reactions and 190 comments.

4.2.4.1. Primary or Pre-Iconographic Level

The video encoded as C6, titled *Sucedió en el Perú* (It Happened in Peru), is the first in a series of four programmes hosted by Norma Martínez and broadcast on the state channel TV Perú. It has a duration of 12 minutes and 7 seconds and is dedicated to the life and work of the photographer Martín Chambi. The video has been shared 28,000 times. It features 55 photographs and includes testimonies from family members, who recount Chambi's life and the enduring impact of his legacy. Historians and photographers who have studied his work also contribute. The programme follows a chronological narrative, tracing Chambi's life from his birth in the district of Coasa, Puno, through his childhood and photographic training in Arequipa, to his establishment in Cusco and his development as a documentary photographer. In doing so, it provides a comprehensive perspective on his role as an emissary of indigenism through photography.

The C7 account, OSCARENFOTOS, presents a 45-minute and 7-second video hosted by Oscar Colorado, which offers a detailed analysis of an album of Chambi's photographs. This video has generated 1,400 reactions and 190 comments. From a technical perspective, it examines the photographs closely, highlighting their capacity to capture the vitality of community life and emphasising Chambi's combination of technical rigour with profound empathy for his subjects.

4.2.4.2. Secondary or Iconographic Level

On the C6 account, the programme *It Happened in Peru* offers a detailed interpretation of Martín Chambi's images, emphasising the most significant aspects of his life and his contribution to the visual representation of Andean culture. The documentary situates his work within the history of Peru at the beginning of the twentieth century, explaining how his training in Max T. Vargas' workshop shaped both his artistic and humanistic vision. The images presented allow the identification of the photographic documentation of indigenous life, including rituals and traditions. Chambi's ability to convey the dignity of the Andean people through his photographic technique, as well as his commitment to the revaluation of indigenous communities, is particularly highlighted.

On the C7 account, Oscar Colorado presents a photo album by Chambi, displaying fifty-seven photographs and providing an explanation of each, elucidating their meaning and relevance. Colorado recognises Chambi as the foremost exponent of Indianist photography, which he characterises as 'an Indian taking photographs of another Indian'. This analysis emphasises a duality between the traditional and the modern, the ancestral and the innovative, establishing comparisons between indigenous ways of life and the symbols of power of the elites.

Both YouTube accounts examine Chambi's photographic technique, highlighting his capacity to produce images of exceptional quality despite the limitations of his equipment. Many of the photographs featured in these videos are portraits of indigenous populations, evoking a sense of admiration and prompting reflection on the living conditions of these communities at the time.

4.2.4.3. Tertiary or Iconological Level

The images presented on both accounts transcend the merely visual or perceptual, offering an aesthetic, cultural, sociological, and humanistic reflection on Andean life. Chambi captures the essence of the community through portraits and landscapes that not only document but also convey profound emotions and meanings (Pérez and Prada, 2022). His work leaves an enduring mark on the visual representation of Andean culture, enabling the interpretation of the spirituality and social structures of the context he recorded. Through his lens, Chambi establishes a dialogue between contrasting realities, capturing both the beauty and complexity of Peru's social fabric.

Figure 8. *It Happened in Peru: Martín Chambi, Part 1 of 4*, the most shared video on YouTube.



Source: TV Perú account / <https://acortar.link/za7R1v> 2024.

Figure 9. *Martín Chambi*, video with the highest number of reactions and comments on YouTube



Source: "OSCARENFOTOS" account / <https://acortar.link/H0mdg2> 2024.

5. Conclusions

Martín Chambi's indigenous visual discourse remains highly relevant in the digital age, reaffirming its significance in a context where images constitute a primary vehicle for communication. Digitisation not only preserves his work but also transforms it, adapting it to the dynamics of interaction and dissemination characteristic of contemporary digital platforms. In this process, his legacy acquires a measurable impact through reactions, comments and shares on social media, which serve as key indicators of its reach and influence. These interactions establish Chambi as a fundamental reference in the visual representation of the Andean world and in the vindication of indigenous peoples through photography.

Chambi's legacy continues to maintain a strong presence in the digital space, as evidenced by high levels of engagement on platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. Metrics of attention reveal sustained interest in his work, with video formats proving particularly impactful. By combining narration and visual analysis, these formats generate more intense and diverse interactions, resulting in greater engagement while eliciting a broad spectrum of audience responses.

The dissemination of Chambi's visual discourse on social media reveals recurring patterns at multiple analytical levels. At the pre-iconographic level, certain images are repeatedly selected, including the giant of Llusco, Machu Picchu, and portraits of Andean communities, reflecting a preference for representations of Andean identity in dialogue with modernity. At the iconographic level, a visual discourse emerges that balances tradition and modernity, with the deliberate use of light, framing and composition functioning as narrative tools that dignify indigenous identity. Social media has amplified these qualities, generating new interpretations of his work. At the iconological level, Chambi's photography can be understood as a form of cultural resistance and identity affirmation, in which his portraits and landscapes transcend mere documentation to become symbols of the struggle for the visibility of indigenous peoples.

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