Component 1
This component of the larger project focused on the physical alterations in the urban fabric of the UNESCO-listed historic core of Cuzco that were undertaken by a former mayor, Daniel Estrada, during his three terms of office between 1984 and 1995. Cuzco was the capital of the Inca Empire and, when conquered by the Spanish, it became a grand colonial city. The stunning architecture of both periods underwrites the World Heritage designation. Estrada sought to generate progressive civic policies and ethnic pride among the local population by introducing a series of major monuments into the city landscape that referred to the Incas. His actions were enthusiastically received by the “popular class” but rejected by the Cuzco elite. The project took place in 2003-2004 immediately following premature death of Mayor Estrada. My goal was understand Estrada’s political ideology, its embodiment through his urban renovations, multi-sector understandings and misunderstandings of the interventions, and the interactions between the municipality, the official culture sector, and UNESCO.

Component 2
As the years have passed following Estrada’s death I have been interested to see how the interpretation of his monuments has changed and their physical fate.

Component 3
There have been several mayors since Estrada, but only the current one, Luis Florez García, has validated Estrada’s activities. Florez has undertaken one particular intervention on the urban landscape that achieves a frustrated goal of Estrada: the prominent reinsertion of the Incas into the colonial architectural ensemble that dominates the main public space of Cuzco: the Plaza de Armas. Florez commissioned a large bronze statue of a heroic Inca king which he placed atop the cherished Belle Époque fountain in the middle of the plaza in June 2011. That fountain originally had been crowned with an “Indian” till the statue was pulled down in a political protest in 1969. Florez sought to reinstall the missing element of the fountain, albeit in a different configuration. When revealed to the city a bitter dispute erupted between those who opposed the mayor’s actions (the official culture sector, the elite, his political enemies, UNESCO) and the municipality and public at large, which is enamored of the statue, as are tourists. This very specific case is a fascinating window into the meaning of World Heritage listing, its obligations, constraints, and its local manipulations.

Component 4
I have studied the scripts and tourist reception of archaeological museums of Cuzco as well as businesses that market themselves as museums, such as ChocoMuseo and Museo del Pisco.

Component 5
I have begun to study Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley (between Cuzco and Machu Picchu). Ollantaytambo is remarkable not only for its superb Inca civic-ceremonial precinct, but because that zone was associated with an Inca town whose layout and architecture is still well preserved and inhabited. Thus, Ollantaytambo is a major tourist attraction. It has become even more so in recent years as a convenient point of departure for Machu Picchu. Uncontrolled tourism development is occurring in town. Local entrepreneurs are building hotels with no regard for the historic urban environment and in just two years the plaza has been completely converted to tourism services. At the same time, however, Ollantaytambo has very strong, enduring traditions, an intangible cultural heritage and pattern of social life that is lived alongside dramatically increased tourism and in spite of internal social, political and economic changes. This is the ideal time (indeed, change happened so fast between 2012 and 2014 that it is almost too late) to study the processes at work.