THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COLLECTIVITY IN ANDEAN STUDIES

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PRODUCCIÓN PARCELARIA Y UNIVERSO IDEOLÓGICO: EL CASO DE PUQUIO. By RODRIGO MONTOYA, M. J. SILVEIRA, and F. J. LINDOSO. (Lima: Mosca Azul Editores, 1979.)

One of the recurring themes in studies of Andean rural society is the nature of the relation between the individual and the collectivity. Understanding of this relation owes much to the original Redfieldian folk-urban continuum. From its influence emerged a search procedure for selecting a unit of analysis. One would pick a city in an agrarian country and delineate the network of roads, railway lines, paths, or trails leading away from it. At the end of one such corridor would lie a "community" to which the fieldworker would repair for a standard period of about a year, after ascertaining that no other student had been in the community before. Many fieldworkers made the journey into the Andes and returned to the city replete with field notes describing a social world that was bounded, visible, homogenous, and easily reconstructed through the vivid descriptions of the informants. Researchers often were struck by the propensity of rural folk to exchange labor and cooperate in public works projects, which led them to conclude that Andean social relations were generally harmonious, cooperative, and conflict-free, characterizations similar to those made by Redfield about the folk society. Later others returned with a different view—one that in encountering conflict and tension more closely resembled Oscar Lewis’s position in his debate with Redfield over the nature of social relations.¹ This notion of the community as coterminous with rural collectivity and as the major sphere of social relations is a constant in Andean studies. What changes are contemporary modes of explaining the dynamics of the community,
particularly the mix of materialism and idealism prevalent in sociocultural theory.

But was the community the sole collectivity in the Andean countryside? Obviously not, as studies made during the 1960s of haciendas stimulated by the Vicos experiment documented so well. The question of the inclusiveness of the community (now community-hacienda) model of rural collectivities has reappeared recently with the discovery of social worlds based on sex, age, class, and religion, as well as more amorphous forms of social organization.

Yet another legacy of the Redfieldian folk-urban continuum is its reinforcement of diffusionist theory of change and development, which holds that rural communities will develop as capital, new technology, and "modern" values "trickle down" from the cities to the countryside. This theory has come under attack in the last two decades, in part by those who observe discontinuous development of the city in relation to the countryside. Dependency theory is now a strong alternative to diffusionism in explaining change and development. As a result, new questions are being raised about the relationship of the individual and the collectivity; if capital, technology, and ideas do not "trickle down" in a predictable fashion, then what is the nature of these exchanges between rural collectivities and other groupings in complex agrarian societies? How do these flows change over time? Why is it that, in spite of evidence for both exogenous and endogamous change, one finds a strong sense of continuity at the local level? Does this continuity imply a defensive "closing off" or a more complex manipulation of cultural tradition by groups emerging through socioeconomic differentiation?

In recent years, these and other questions have led to much rethinking of the relation between the individual and the collectivity in the Andes. The three books discussed in this essay reflect the intellectual ferment now taking place.

_Land and Power in Latin America_ is a collection of papers organized around first, a shared criticism of the prevalent idea that Andean rural society is composed exclusively of communities and haciendas, and second, a suggestion for an alternative model. In the first chapter, the authors make explicit the nature of their criticism. A "three-tiered" model, they argue, consisting of the individual, the agricultural production unit, and the global economy, has characterized much of the recent literature on agrarian societies. The application of the model in the Andes, they find, results in the identification of haciendas and communities as basic agricultural production units. They criticize this conceptualization on several grounds: it ignores the great variety of relations of peasants to each other and to local elites, understates the importance of the peasant household as a social and economic unit, presents views of
the peasant as tradition-bound and passive, and presents the Andean countryside as static and unchanging.

Instead of looking “top down” at communities and haciendas, they argue in the second chapter, researchers should take the view from the “bottom up.” The authors formalize this approach into a model with four basic propositions: (1) The household, rather than the community or the hacienda, is the fundamental unit of agrarian society and economy in the Andes. (2) Households establish links with other households to form networks and corporate groups. (3) These networks and groups constitute adaptations to environmental, economic, and political constraints; they change as these constraints change, and in turn, they may influence these constraints. (4) The nature of these networks and corporate groups may be specified by three variables: content, organization, and stratification.

The advocacy of a model of networks and corporate groups represents a shift away from what is generally considered North American cultural anthropology toward the Manchester School of British social anthropology. In the former, culture is seen as an independent, patterned, and rule-governed force that, once understood, can be used to predict behavior. According to the British approach, the “stuff” of culture recedes from front stage to the wings as resources that actors call upon for use in their social, political, and economic struggles.3

In the second chapter, the model is applied to the ethnographic literature on southern Peru. Although the model helps to illuminate some rather obscure social forms, such as trading partnerships and retainerships, along with the well-known reciprocal labor arrangements and the “community,” it is less successful in suggesting the constraints that lead to the emergence of one form over another. Presumably, this aspect is a future task in the elaboration of the model.

One of the issues that represent a real test of alternative views of Andean rural social forms is the notion of the “community.” Proponents of a “culturalist” view argue that in the community is found a timeless and essential bulwark of Andean culture. Karl Yambert presents in his chapter a contrasting, revisionist analysis of the historical forces, particularly the character of the state, that mold the perception and the structure of the community over time. He finds that the community is not a survival of pre-Incan mental constructs, but a flexible matrix continually adapting to external conditions. Yambert’s analysis is persuasive, but does not completely dispel the sense of a common perception that, at least in part, underlies the ordering of the community over time.

The remaining chapters of the book reveal not so much a rigorous application of the network and corporate-group model as a loose collection of occasionally rich descriptions of rural process. The general thrust is critical in that each author takes pains to point out how the traditional
hacienda-community model is unable to account for the particular case he or she observes. The topics range widely and include: the historical context of the development of stratification (Karen Spalding), social networks in an hacienda (Laura Maltby), a comparison of the historical development of elite-peasant relationships in two adjacent communities (Benjamin Orlove), the role of schoolteachers in linking local and regional levels (George Primov), peasant ritual (Glynn Custred), and intraregional migration (Stephen Brush). The space allotted precludes reviewing the papers individually; however, three merit attention for either their methodological insights or for particular substantive contributions.

The essay by Benjamin Orlove on social banditry in the Andes is by far the most successful application of the network model. The concept of social bandits stems from the work of the historian Eric Hobsbawm, who found that social bandits occurred in societies where urbanization and capitalist penetration were in the initial stages. Bandits were able to operate on the fringes of these societies because of the lack of hegemony of the state. Based on subsequent work by Blok and Singelmann, social bandits came to be associated with economic and social domination and a processual view of rural structure. Orlove examines the phenomenon in the regions of Canas and Chumbivilcas, in the Peruvian southern highlands. These regions exhibit extreme domination by a resident elite, which provides the context for this study of cattle rustling. Orlove's use of the network model facilitates an ethnographic reconstruction of the process of cattle rustling, in which a central element is the creation of social networks crosscutting community and hacienda boundaries. He offers many insights into the nature of this common, if relatively ignored, feature of Andean rural society, plausibly explains the variation he encounters, and brings the Andean ethnographic material to bear on the larger theories of social banditry.

Pierre van den Berghe's essay on the Hacienda Capana in southern Peru is notable for its discussion of research strategies. He suggests that there are conditions that would make the network and corporate group model an unwise choice as a research strategy. He illustrates this contention by referring to his study of class and ethnicity in the southern highlands of Peru. Because the unit of analysis was the region, his research strategy required the collection of a wide range of data over a large geographical space in a relatively short period of time. These constraints, he argues, preclude the use of a "bottom up" approach, which yields a large number of people. The hacienda-community model of the countryside thus was chosen because it was a convenient, if heuristic, categorization that reflected native conceptions of the social universe. This decision did not rule out discovery within the region of diversity and differentiation, which are amply documented in the analysis of the
Hacienda Capana. Van den Berghe’s main conclusion is that the network and corporate-group model offers essentially a heuristic rather than a substantive choice.

The essay by Sutti Ortiz focuses on San Andres, a Paez Indian region in northern Colombia. San Andres differs from most Indian areas in the Central Andes of Peru and Bolivia in that it does not display a dominant hacienda-corporate community dichotomy. Instead, it contains a sparse population with a dispersed settlement pattern. Ortiz poses the question of the integration of San Andres into the larger region and nation, and suggests that the appropriate methodology is to adopt a transactional, actor-oriented model. She finds that although national political agencies are ineffectual as integrative mechanisms, commodity exchange serves this purpose. The nature of these exchanges, she points out, is extremely complex and cannot be reduced to a simple symmetrical-asymmetrical dichotomy. Her essay is a useful contribution to the revision of overly deterministic analysis of the dependency variety.

Producción parcelaria y universo ideológico: el caso de Puquio is a study of one district capital, a community of small holders in the Department of Ayacucho in southern Peru. It is the result of a team project that included faculty and students of anthropology at San Marcos University in Lima. Although the team spent the relatively short time of three months in the community, considerable depth and breadth of coverage were achieved because the researchers had prior knowledge of the region and were able to work in the local language, and because they carefully reviewed communal archives and the national censuses. The team effort in Peru has met with considerable success.

In the Introduction, the authors criticize the hacienda-community model on three grounds. First, by focusing on recognized peasant communities and annexes, it ignores almost entirely the district capital, an important lower rung of the urban hierarchy. Second, it leaves out communities of independent, small holders. Third, it tends to view the community in isolation from the region, the nation, and the world system of which it is a part. The authors hope in their analysis of Puquio to contribute to an understanding of small-holder communities and to a greater awareness of the manner in which they affect and are affected by larger economic and social systems.

In the team’s opinion, historical materialism is the key to the puzzle. It offers, they argue, a strong theoretical tool to uncover hidden dimensions of the relationship between the individual and the community. Thus, the first task is to explain the historical context in which Puquio developed as a small-holder community.

The choice of Puquio in this sense was fortunate because it has
been the subject of intensive ethnographic and fictional treatment during the years 1915 to 1930 by the noted Peruvian ethnologist and novelist José María Arguedas. The study made insightful use of Arguedas’s writings, particularly the novel Yawar Fiesta, to reconstruct the social and economic setting of this period. The roots of the social division between vecinos and indios are traced to the latter half of the nineteenth century, when German merchants established themselves in the community and began to cultivate alfalfa for fattening cattle that were to be transported by a land and sea route to Lima. Unlike other areas of the Peruvian highlands, Puquio did not develop a large-scale hacienda and servidumbre pattern nor is there evidence of patron-client relations or “enclave” communities. According to the authors, the reasons for this atypical development are economic and ecological in nature. Unlike grain, alfalfa can be grown profitably in small, intensively cultivated plots without the seasonal demand for large quantities of labor. Land suitable for alfalfa is limited, however, and the mountain slopes will not support intensive cultivation because of their steepness and fragility. Furthermore, the land and sea route did not overlap and compete with other market channels for large-scale export crops.

The completion of the road from Puquio to Lima in the 1930s intensified the penetration of mercantile capitalism into the countryside. By the middle 1970s, however, the cattle-fattening economy had collapsed. In a short and rather tentative reconstruction of the factors that led to its demise, the authors suggest the following elements: divisible inheritance and the uneconomic dispersion of holdings, migration to Lima of the descendents of the original entrepreneurs, the spread of an introduced grass (kikuyo) into alfalfa plots, and the “opening up” of the cattle-fattening option to small holders. Significantly, although participation in market production has been made available for the first time to small holders, real standards of living are declining. The apparent contrast between the case of Puquio and other “progressive” areas of small and middle holders such as the Mantaro Valley of Peru, Antioquia in Colombia, and the Cochabamba Valley of Bolivia invites further study.

Although a small-holder community, Puquio is not egalitarian. The degree of differentiation has been carefully documented using data derived from declaraciones juradas, forms describing property holdings that are required of all land owners by the 1969 Agrarian Reform: the padrón de regantes, list of irrigators who use community water; the padrón de comuneros, list of members of the recognized community of Puquio; and the 1961 and 1972 national censuses. An excellent discussion of the limitations of these sources is included in an annex. Although small holders are preponderant, small strata of large-scale landholders and propertyless peasants exist. Social relations deriving from the distribution of factors of production reveal “exploiting” classes of large land-
holders and a local bourgeoisie; middle sectors of rich peasants and urban civil servants; and "exploited" classes of the land-poor, landless semiproletariat, and the fully proletarianized. This community is characterized, in sum, as precapitalist and dependent, wherein the exploited contribute unequally to the accumulation of surplus in the urban sectors of Puquio, the region, and the nation.

The most interesting part of the study is the analysis of ideology. The authors begin with a digression into the classic Marxist texts. Not surprisingly, ideology derives from the productive structure of the community—the distribution of the means of production and their associated social relations. The authors reject the "culturalist" notion that cultural survivals represent a timeless life force with a peculiar rationale, structure, and ability to persist. In the authors' opinion, Andean beliefs survive when they facilitate the emergence of social relations of production at a given point in Peruvian socioeconomic history.

The historical context against which this explanation of the role of ideology must be set is a familiar theme in the Marxist and neo-Marxist literature on the Andes. Prior to its incorporation into a social formation dominated by the capitalist mode of production, Puquio was egalitarian and "communal" in ideology and practice. Market forces quickly changed this picture to one of "individualism," manifest in the emergence of private forms of land tenure, self-interest, "rational" production, and a fascination with commodities. In spite of these changes, the community continued to articulate the egalitarian and collective aspects of Andean tradition.

Because of market forces, however, a basic contradiction soon emerged. Although at the level of ideology, productive resources were equally distributed (i.e., "todos tienen tierra"), in practice there were obvious inequalities in the distribution of land and the use of water. This contradiction was conveniently ignored for two reasons: first, the community needed to solve collectively the problem of the construction and maintenance of the irrigation system; and second, these ideological principles were a shield, manipulated by richer peasants to cover up individual and class interests associated with capitalist motives. As socioeconomic differentiation proceeded apace, the gap widened. Ethnic differences encoded in the distinction between misti and runa masked the underlying class divisions.

The resulting contradictions are best seen in the system of irrigation, which generally conforms to patterns found elsewhere in Peru. While branch canals are maintained by individual households, the main canal is the responsibility of the collectivity (comunidad de regantes). Internally, the system is organized into four territorial divisions (barrios), each one responsible for a section of the main canal. These sections must be cleaned four times a year. Each irrigator is required to contribute
labor on these occasions and such labor is organized by a committee (junta de usuarios) elected from the members of a barrio. A fine can be paid instead of contributing labor, with the monies supposed to be used to hire replacement laborers. Most mistis, or members of the acculturated dominant stratum, possess cash and pay fines. In practice, however, fines are used not to hire replacement laborers, but to pay for operating expenses of the junta de usuarios. As a result, labor is intensified for the rest, usually Indians who cannot afford to buy out of contributing their labor.

An additional contradiction arises in the distribution of water. In theory, each irrigator is an equal user of the system and is required to participate with the same amount of labor. Although everyone is supposed to contribute labor on an equal basis, whoever has more land obviously uses more water. The rhetoric of equal input for equal reward fosters exploitation through the appropriation of the labor force of the small holders by the large holders. The same unequal relationship obtains in the construction of public works such as dams through collective labor. As the authors conclude, a formal and bureaucratic equality hides real inequality in access to water based on differential access to land.

In what sense does Puquio constitute a “community?” According to the authors, Puquio’s communality arises from the need for irrigation (pp. 202–3). Without an irrigation system, there would be no “community,” Andean tradition notwithstanding. At best Puquio would consist of short-term coalitions built up around demands by households for reciprocal labor. Andean culture then becomes a highly selective survival of those elements of tradition that coincide with the social relations of independent small-holders. This view of ideology seems mechanistic and forced, lacking in the depth and subtlety that has characterized recent treatments of Andean symbol and belief. Further, its determinism tends to underplay the negotiation, manipulation, and debate and compromise that are important aspects of rural process.

Women of the Andes is the outcome of collaboration between an anthropologist and a political scientist. Susan Bourque and Kay Warren became acquainted with Mayobamba (an agricultural community) and Chiuchin (a trade center) in the Peruvian central highlands in 1964. Ten years later, they began to focus on the women in these two areas. Since then they have spent a total of a year in residence researching their twin topics of patriarchy and social change.

In one sense, then, the book is a controlled comparison of two differing communities. The comparison is not designed to achieve a deeper understanding of the range of Andean communities (which becomes a by-product), but to situate the main theme: the role of women in Andean rural society.
One factor that shows the limitations of the hacienda-community model is its tendency to obscure social worlds based on criteria such as sex. Like their counterparts elsewhere, women have been “included out” in the Andean literature: their perceptions, beliefs, values, and behavior have been taken for granted rather than constituting the object of investigation. The present book goes a long way toward expanding our knowledge of this important sphere of Andean rural society through its illuminating and compassionate insights on Andean women.

The book nonetheless strives for a contribution of wider scope. It seeks to bring ethnographic insights to bear on the construction of theory of sexual hierarchies in state societies. The second and third chapters evaluate the analytical approaches used in studies of women’s domination. The result is a penetrating and lucid review that could stand in its own right as an introduction to the literature. The authors conclude their review by arguing for a combined approach using social ideology and class analysis to explain women’s domination. Social ideology refers to the valuations of sex roles that are part of a cultural tradition. Classes based on differential access to productive resources crosscut other categories of social groupings and help to explain the relative power and influence of women.

What, then, is the “community,” and how does it relate to women as individuals and as collectivities? In the view of the authors, the community regulates access to resources and defines and reinforces the social ideology of sex roles. It acts as a repository of cultural values and fosters their transmission through the enculturation process. It thus “structures” the beliefs and actions of individuals not only in relation to sex, but in relation to other areas of behavior. Further, it defines and legitimizes the relevant local strata based on the distribution of resources. Women will exercise differential power and influence depending on their class position. The variation among communities in their economic base can provide insights into the dynamics of women’s domination; this rationale is the basis for the two empirical cases in the book.

The bulk of the study examines those institutions within the community that are important mechanisms in maintaining sexual hierarchies. They include the sexual division of labor, the community power structure, the agrarian class system, and the institutions of marriage, family, and kinship. Chapters are organized to address each of these institutions and to attempt to balance beliefs, material existence, and economic change. The overriding theme is that women are held to subordinate roles within the resulting sexual hierarchies.

Women may be subordinate, but their lives are not completely determined. Social ideology and access to material resources dominate the lives of Andean women, however, each can be manipulated in the arena of the community. The study therefore takes a processual view.
closer to the position advocated by the authors of the Custred and Orlove volume than to the much more deterministic stance taken in the work on Puquio. In essence, through the utilization of material and nonmaterial resources, women negotiate, dispute, and on occasion, substantially change their position.

One mechanism available to women is the creation of social networks. These networks are formed to meet the demands of rural-urban migration, birthing, reciprocal labor, and trading. Unfortunately, the process of network formation and actualization is only sketchily presented in these cases. As a result, it is difficult to evaluate the extent to which networks offer the possibility for significant change in the position of women.

A second resource is access to new economic opportunities. Observers have known for some time that economic change was affecting Andean women. For example, evidence shows that women were taking advantage of opportunities created by the shift from subsistence to market production. It has been generally assumed that women benefited from such change. For the first time, this important assumption is examined in the comparisons of Mayobamba and Chiuchin. The authors find that although economic change can produce some new opportunities for women, it does not necessarily bring about significant improvement in their subordinate status. In Mayobamba, the shift to cash cropping causes the women to tend to lose control over management of family resources. In Chiuchin, women are unable to break into male control of commercial trade because of a strong ideology of the division of occupational roles by sex.

In general, Women of the Andes presents a well-written and tightly organized argument. Its clear set of hypotheses for the origin of sexual hierarchies in the Andes make it required reading for anyone contemplating future research in this area. If there are quibbles with this path-breaking study, they are to be found in two areas.

First, in the application of the theoretical synthesis, the argument for class rests on firmer grounds than that for social ideology. The latter hinges on the notion that social ideology molds division of labor. In rural Peru, the authors argue, women’s and men’s work overlap remarkably, with a minimal division of labor by sex. Further, the sexual specializations they encounter can only be explained by social ideology because “virtually none of the tendencies for sexual specialization would appear to be obligatory, monopolized by a single sex, or without important exceptions” (p. 114). In support of their position, the authors point out that irrigation, hand plowing, and loading sacks on the back of burros in Mayobamba are restricted to men’s work. According to the authors, such specialization has the effect of prohibiting women from the full realization of their potential: “... women are excluded from crucial
resources and from the full economic benefit of their work by a strong sexual division of labor at a few key junctures and by a social ideology which justifies such specializations" (p. 114). However, an extremely detailed energy flow study of Nunoa in southern Peru (Thomas 1973) has shown that sex (and age) divisions of labor help to allocate tasks by the most efficient body weight. Thomas’s work at least suggests an alternative model for division of labor that rests on material factors rather than on an illusive ideological factor. Social ideology may indeed exercise an influence, as is shown by the authors’ analysis of the ideology surrounding women and men’s participation in the commercial economy of Chiuchin. The Thomas study does suggest, however, that in mountain subsistence settings, physical factors may underlie sexual division of labor.

A second flaw in the work is the tendency to suggest generalizations that are not firmly grounded in quantitative data. In their introduction, the authors eschew a highly structured methodology, relying instead on participant observation and open-ended interviewing as a flexible research design that fosters more spontaneous and truthful responses than a “forced” quantitative design. Although their intentions are appealing, too often key findings are presented as assertions that are neither fully substantiated nor couched in comparative terms. The assertion is made, for example, that women and men have strong attitudes about family size, and some attempt is made to suggest the parameters of those attitudes (pp. 88–89). However, a carefully designed survey of attitudes toward ideal family size would have added substance to the rather loose generalizations about an important dimension of sex role behavior. Similarly, the assertion that women have longer work days than men in all social classes (p. 118) is weakened by the lack of reference to the energy expended in tasks, seasonality, and minimal data on actual work days by sex derived from time budgets. Lastly, the treatment of women’s participation in the power structure of the community owes much to the presence of female household heads compared with male household heads. Yet the discussion of this aspect of community political processes is carried on without benefit of a breakdown of household heads by age and sex. As a result, it is impossible to assess the potential for coalition formation by female household heads and other dimensions of community politics. Similar difficulties can be found with assertions concerning socioeconomic differentiation and reasons for women leaving home, as well as the suggestion that women are successful in maneuvering men to marry formally.

In the Andes, “something out there” exists at the end of the road that differs in nature from the city. What this something is and how individuals relate to it are questions that will continue to occupy the
hearts and minds of Andeanists. Although these books show that no consensus is at hand, the ongoing debate is to be welcomed because it ultimately will bring Andean studies into the mainstream of theory development in the social sciences.

NOTES

1. For a summary of the debate through the mid-1970s and an attempt to resolve the two conflicting views, see William F. Whyte, "Conflict and Cooperation in Andean Communities," *American Ethnologist* 2(1975):373–92.

2. Occasional studies of individual haciendas were made in prior decades, such as Maxime Kuczynski-Godard, "Un latifundio del sur: una contribución al conocimiento del problema social," *América Indígena* 6(1946):257–74. However, the major shift in focus in the 1960s toward haciendas resulted from attention given to the Cornell Project at Vicos and the plight of the labor force on haciendas in southern Peru. An especially important signal of the new direction was Mario Vásquez, *Hacienda, peonaje, y servidumbre en los Andes peruanos* (Lima: Editorial Estudios Andinos, 1961).


4. The most successful example of this genre is Fernando Fuenzalida et al., *Estructuras tradicionales y economía de indígenas de Huayopampa* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1968).
