

# The Transformation of Cultural Anthropology : The Decline of Ecology and Structure and the Rise of Political Economy and the Cultural Construction of Social Reality\*

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*Deux principales approches dominent la recherche anthropologique actuelle aux Etats-Unis : l'économie politique et la construction culturelle de l'« autre », motifs qui ont largement remplacé les analyses écologiques et structuralo-symboliques proposées il y a encore dix ans. Cet article rend compte de ces développements dans l'ethnographie des Andes de ces vingt-cinq dernières années.*

*Dans les Andes, pendant les années 1970 et 1980, de nombreux chercheurs ont étudié l'écosystème vertical, stimulés par l'hypothèse de l'archipel vertical de John Murra et l'écologie culturelle de Julian Steward et Marvin Harris. L'hypothèse de Murra et le fort zeitgeist écologique des années 1970 ont orienté la recherche andine pendant plus de deux*

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décennies. Plusieurs chercheurs ont organisé leurs ethnographies de manière écologique, en explorant les adaptations des communautés rurales sur les versants montagneux verticaux, révélant les variations écologiques selon chaque niveau d'altitude et l'importance de ces adaptations pour l'organisation économique et sociale. Pendant cette même période, un autre groupe de chercheurs mettait l'accent sur le structurel et le symbolique, travaux qui étaient stimulés par la recherche de Tom Zuidema sur l'organisation sociale de Cuzco.

Mis à part quelques assertions hâtives dans un paragraphe ou un chapitre introductif, les chercheurs qui employaient les stratégies de recherche écologiques et structurales n'incorporaient jamais vraiment dans leurs explications les relations importantes que les populations locales maintiennent avec le monde extérieur, même si ces relations influencent ou aident à structurer l'organisation sociale locale. Dans les années 1980, cette tendance à voir les peuples autochtones comme isolés devint moins acceptable, un changement qui, dans les Andes, fut impulsé par la guerre de guérilla commencée par le Sentier Lumineux en 1980. Comment expliquer la guerre si l'on se concentre uniquement sur l'écologie et la structure locales sans prendre en considération l'économie politique ? De plus, nous en sommes venus à réaliser que la façon dont les gens se construisent eux-mêmes et sont construits par les autres fait partie de l'économie politique.

En conclusion, les écoles contemporaines en économie politique et en « construction sociale » proposent des explications complémentaires sur la vie paysanne. Malheureusement, les fondements écologiques ont été négligés dans les recherches récentes, ainsi, par exemple, la pression démographique qui est une part importante de ces contraintes écologiques. La valeur d'une utilisation conjointe de ces trois approches (écologie, économie politique et construction sociale) est illustrée par une brève analyse du changement social dans le Pérou contemporain.

## Introduction

Two major approaches dominate current sociocultural research in the United States : political economy and the cultural construction of ourselves and the « other », motifs that have largely replaced the ecological and structural-symbolic analyses found only ten years ago. We can see these changes at recent meetings of the American Anthropological Association. In 1992, for example, instead of the many listings under « ecology » and « structure » that would have been found only a short time ago, the program index listed only six symposia under « ecology » (one of which was entitled « What Happened to Ecological Anthropology »), four under

« symbol », and none under « structure ». On the other hand, there were twenty-one listings under « identity », ten under « discourse », and eight under « ideology ». There were only two papers listed under « political economy », a reflection, I think, of the tendency in American anthropology to focus on culture and meaning. Nonetheless, much of the current scholarship on identity incorporates issues of political economy.

### **Andean research**

One can also see these changes in the research on the Andes during the last twenty-five years. In the late 1960s and lasting well into the 1980s, many Andeanists studied cultural ecology and the vertical ecosystem. Much of this research was stimulated by John Murra's vertical archipelago hypothesis (Murra 1972, 1975, 1980). Like mountain peoples everywhere, the inhabitants of the Andes exploited (and continue to exploit) altitude zones distributed contiguously along the mountain slope. Unlike adaptations elsewhere, however, Murra proposed that the Andean peoples also developed institutions to utilize noncontiguous altitude zones. For example, a group of people whose base was in the *altiplano*, growing potatoes and raising camelids, also had colonists (known as *mitimaes*) in distant ecological zones, separated by the lands of other ethnic polities. These colonists sent their zonal products (such as maize and coca leaves) back home, thereby maximizing their use of the great environmental diversity of the Andean region.

Murra's model grew out of his earlier work (1960, 1968), but its primary expression was published in 1972, a time when the cultural ecology of Julian Steward (1949, 1955) and Marvin Harris (1966, 1968, 1974, 1977, 1979) was a dominant approach in American anthropology. Rappaport's *Pigs for the Ancestors* and Lee and DeVore's *Man the Hunter* had been published only four years earlier in 1968. This was a period of intense environmental awareness in the United States, one that was paralleled in the universities, many of which had developed strong environmental and ecological programs. Many scholars also attempted to integrate social anthropology, archeology, and ethnohistory to discover processes of social evolution. The Columbia University seminar on Ecological Systems and Cultural Evolution was an exciting place to be in the 1960s and 1970s. In anthropology many of us were reading and citing the work of Boserup (1965), Carneiro (1970), Harner (1970, 1977), Price

(1978, 1982), Ross (1978, 1980), Sanders and Price (1968)<sup>1</sup>.

Murra's hypothesis and the strong ecological zeitgeist stimulated the direction of Andean ecological work for more than two decades (Masuda et al. 1985). Some scholars such as Bruce Winterhalder and Brooke Thomas (1978) worked on the actual ecological characteristics of the Andes (Thomas 1973, Winterhalder and Thomas 1978). Many others organized their ethnographies ecologically, exploring the adaptations of rural communities to the vertical mountain slope, demonstrating the ecological variations found at each altitude level and the importance of these adaptations for economic and social organization (see, for example, Arnold 1975, Brush 1976, 1977, Fonseca 1972, Fonseca and Mayer 1978, Gade 1975, Mayer 1971, 1977, 1985, Millones and Tomeda 1982, Orlove 1977c, Vallee 1971, and Webster 1971). I studied the ecological zonation in the central highlands, showing how the irrigation system was a mechanism to extend maize cultivation into higher altitudes and how the data from a contemporary community might illuminate theories of state evolution (Mitchell 1976a, 1976b, 1980). Students of Andean ecology also compared the Andes to other mountain environments, exploring especially the similarities and differences between the Andes and the Himalayas (Guillet 1983, Orlove and Guillet 1985, Rhoades and Thompson 1975).

During this same period another group of scholars took a different approach by emphasizing the structural and symbolic. In the Andes much of this work was stimulated by Tom Zuidema, another ethnohistorian. His structural analysis of the *ceque* system of Cuzco, the series of imaginary lines emanating from Cuzco that formed pie-shaped sociopolitical sectors in the Inca period, influenced many of his students (Zuidema 1964, 1986, 1990). So too did the theories of Levi-Strauss and Victor Turner. Perhaps the best known work from that tradition is Billie Jean Isbell's book, *To Defend Ourselves ; Ecology and Ritual in an Andean Village*, 1978. In this book Isbell explored the symbolism, ritual, and spacial concepts in the community of Chuschi. Isbell was also interested in ecology, but she focused on its cultural and symbolic meaning rather than on its adaptational potential.

I do not wish to oversimplify the Andean literature, for many scholars were working on other issues : the economy (Orlove 1977a, 1977b), aggression and psychobiological issues (Bolton 1973, 1976, 1979), kinship (Bolton and Mayer 1977), the Agrarian Reform (Guillet 1979, Matos Mar and Mejia 1980, Mejia and Diaz 1975), migration (Altamirano

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<sup>1</sup> This list and other citations listed in my text are not meant to be exhaustive but illustrative. I apologize to colleagues not mentioned.

1984a, 1984b, Buechler 1970, Guillet and Uzell 1976), women and gender (Bourque and Warren 1981), technology (Lechtman and Soldi 1981, Ravines 1978), and miners (Nash 1979), among other topics. Norman Long and Bryan Roberts (1978, 1984) had a long-term project analyzing the political economy of production in the Mantaro Valley in Peru. Nonetheless, the ecological and structural approaches were dominant intellectual strands, as indeed they were generally in anthropology.

Aside from cursory statements in an introductory paragraph or chapter, neither the structural nor ecological research strategies incorporated the interrelationship of local populations with the outside world into their explanations. In spite of great evidence to the contrary, scholars tended to study rural and native peoples as if they were isolated and living in a time warp, an ethnographic (or timeless) present that scholars had to discover. This tendency has a long history in anthropology. Franz Boas, for example, eliminated the English signs on the buildings at Fort Rupert in the Northwest coast of North America from the model of the town that he had constructed for the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Removing the English words, clearly displayed in the photograph used to construct the model, certainly made the Kwakiutl of Fort Rupert « timeless » and « authentic », but that timelessness and authenticity were more a reflection of Anthropology's needs than of Northwest Coast reality. Indeed, the research methodologies employed in Latin American anthropology for much of this century often have been focused on the « closed corporate community » (Wolf 1957), or the simple « folk » or « little » community (Redfield 1947) that may be « breaking down » or « progressing » but that still can be discerned in the cultural amalgam that remains.

### **The rise of political economy**

In the 1980s this tendency to view native peoples as isolated became less acceptable. Alain de Janvry (1981) and Claude Meillassoux (1981) were demonstrating in Latin America and Africa respectively that peasants and other rural peoples are not social isolates but intrinsic parts of national and international economic systems. Similar points had been made even earlier for the Caribbean, an area long affected by international capital (e.g., Mintz 1974, Steward 1956). In the Andes, some scholars were also stressing the connections between rural populations and the larger economic context (Guillet 1980, Lehmann 1982, Long and Roberts 1978, 1984, Nash 1979, Orlove 1977b, and Whyte and Alberti 1976). Much of this trend to incorporate (rather than just mention) political economy into our explanatory

arguments was solidified in 1982 with the publication of Eric Wolf's book, *Europe and the People without History*. After the publication of this book, it became difficult to treat rural areas or the peasant as isolated.

In the Andes this effort to incorporate the larger socioeconomic world into our perspective, rather than just paying it lip service, was given special urgency by the guerilla war begun by Shining Path in 1980. This war forced many of us to re-evaluate what we were doing. How could we focus only on vertical adaptations or the symbolic meaning of ritual when people were killing one another, when large numbers of peasants were forced to flee their villages? Something was missing from our ethnographies. We had, in the words of one critic (Orin Starn 1991, 1994), « missed the war ». Our research had not systematically dealt with the material and social realities that had led to Shining Path.

What is missing in much of the research of the 1970s, of course, is an understanding of the relationship that exists between rural populations and the larger society, especially the political and economic context of local production. The earlier ecological and symbolic approaches were too narrowly local. We paid too little attention to social class, repression, exploitation, and the impact of Peruvian and international economies on local populations. We also ignored — and most scholars still ignore — demographic growth.

That isolationist perspective is odd, for it contrasts markedly with earlier anthropological research in the Andes associated with applied anthropology and economic development programs. The Vicos experiment in northern Peru, led by Alan Holmberg of Cornell University in the 1950s and into the 1960s, focused on the necessity for agrarian reform and the need to free peasants from the economic and social oppression of hacienda peonage (Dobyns, Doughty, and Laswell 1964 [1971]). The goals and strategy of the Vicos experiment, therefore, were strongly rooted in political economy, even if that phrase was never used in project analyses. Even so, Andean ethnographies from this period still tended to describe a single locality in the static terms of the widely employed timeless present (Doughty 1968, Stein 1961). In a sense, anthropologists exhibited a kind of schizophrenia. We knew that peasants and other rural peoples exist in a larger, exploitative context (see, for example, Steward 1950), but we often continued to study and describe them as if that context made little difference.

Rural communities, however, are not isolated and timeless, but are constantly changing, molded by local and nonlocal ecological, economic, and political forces. In Peru the peasantry has been subjected to class domination and surplus extraction since pre-Inca times (Patterson 1991). Peruvian elites, like those everywhere, have acted to control and appropriate

the labor (or energy) of others. The allocation of land during the Inca Empire to the Inca lords, the religion (the sun), and the peasantry was not the result of some utopian socialism but to a considerable extent a mechanism to obtain the labor of the peasantry that had to work all those lands (Mitchell 1980, 1991b). In colonial and republican Peru foreign conquerors continued this domination of rural labor. The hacienda system is not merely a system to appropriate land, but a system that uses control of land and water to obtain the scarce labor of peasants. Throughout the colonial period and into this century, peasants also have had to work for elites in forced labor tribute.

This system of elite labor extraction has had a profound impact on the ability of rural people to obtain labor for their own needs. They have found (and find) it difficult to feed and clothe themselves and they have structured local social organization partly to obtain scarce labor. The *fiesta* and *cargo* systems of Peruvian Roman Catholicism, for example, are in part mechanisms to recruit agricultural labor. In Quinua, the community that I have studied for more than twenty years and which is located in what has been the heart of Shining Path country, rich peasants were able to obtain laborers for their fields only through participation in the *fiesta* system. As farming and the need for farm labor has declined in importance, the *fiesta* system has declined concomitantly (Mitchell 1991a: 167-170). The Andean systems of reciprocity known as *ayni* and *yanapay* and the festive work groups known as *minka* have operated similarly — helping distribute labor under conditions of labor scarcity (Mitchell 1991b). The rural political system in highland Peru known as the *varayoc* must also be viewed as part of this exploitative context (Mitchell 1991a: 149-155, 172-173). The *varayoc* were the local police force, operating under the authority of the governor of the community, and they acted, among other things, to obtain free labor for the local and nonlocal gentry. They also rounded up young men for military service.

In addition to the direct appropriation of peasant labor, Andean elites have also relied on indirect mechanisms to obtain peasant labor. In Quinua, peasants have insufficient land and water to support themselves from their own agrarian resources (Mitchell 1991a, 1993, in press-b). They must work for others, often at very unequal rates of exchange. Until the 1960s, haciendas controlled most of the water used by free peasants, exchanging that water for peasant labor (Mitchell 1993). Haciendas also controlled the richest valley lands, forcing peasants onto less productive mountain slopes, or sometimes exchanging land for labor.

Because Quinuenos rarely own enough land to provision themselves, they have also had to migrate cyclically to capitalist centers of production

to earn additional income to buy food and other goods. They have worked on guano production (which helped create the agricultural infrastructure of the European industrial revolution), on the harvest of cotton (for foreign and national textile manufacture), on highway construction (to facilitate domestic and foreign markets), and recently on pottery manufacture (for markets in the United States, Europe, and Japan) and coca leaf cultivation (which, of course, supplies the international cocaine market). Some Quinuenos have also worked on wool, sugar, and mineral production (for export to the industrial world). In the colonial period, Quinuenos and other Peruvian peasants were forced to migrate to the mines to produce the gold and silver that contributed to the formation of European capitalism (Tawney 1962 [1926]).

Quinuenos have also had to sell their agricultural produce to buy processed foods (e.g., cooking oil, fats, noodles) and other manufactured goods (e.g., textiles, school supplies, detergents, candles, and kerosene). They thus depend on outside markets, markets that have tended to treat them unfavorably. Since at least the mid 1940s, Peruvian government controls on food prices have driven down peasant agricultural prices. Peasant income has been lowered still more by Peruvian purchases of foreign grain cheapened by subsidies provided by international grain exporters. Since income from wages and the sale of artisan and pastoral products has not declined as rapidly as has that from peasant farming, peasants have been forced to devote more and more labor to nonagricultural activities. The percentage of men listed in the Quinoa birth records as working in nonfarm occupations (e.g., commercial ceramic manufacture) rose from 16,4 percent in 1955 to 36,5 percent in 1985 (Mitchell 1991a : 105). Still other peasants have left Quinoa permanently. Today about 50 percent of the children born in Quinoa leave permanently for the outside nonfarm labor market, sometimes abandoning their lands in the village (Mitchell 1987, 1991a : 110-114, 1991c, 1993, in press-b).

Contemporary research, therefore, has come to emphasize the relations of local populations to larger political and economic structures, connections that have been (and are) transforming local communities (Babb 1989, Lehmann 1982, Orlove and Custred 1980, Orlove and Love 1989, Smith 1989). Jane Collins (1988) discusses the impact of seasonal migrations and its attendant labor scarcity on a highland Peruvian community. Sallnow (1987) examines local religious cults from the perspective of the regional system. In addition to the points already made above, I have shown that Quinuenos have opted to build schools with their scarce labor rather than expand their irrigation system. In spite of their great need for more water, they have invested their scarce labor in schools in order

to prepare their children for nonfarm work (Mitchell 1993).

### **Cultural construction and identity**

Grouped under the rubric « cultural studies » in the United States, the symbolic and structural traditions in anthropology have also evolved in ways that I find useful. One direction of this research explores how anthropologists and social groups construct and utilize notions of « themselves », « the other », « class », « ethnicity », « race », and « gender » (Dirks, Eley, and Ortner 1994). Drawing on Foucault, among other sources (Hall 1994), many scholars are exploring the role of identity in maintaining systems of hierarchy and power. I find this approach congenial to the kinds of materialist analyses I favor: studying, for example, the relationship between conceptions of masculinity and changing systems of production (Greenberg 1988) or the role of American films in creating new social classes (Traube 1993). Another useful direction of identity research utilizes the work of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) on the « invention of tradition », uncovering how people construct their past to conform to the needs of the present.

It is important to emphasize here that, although our postmodern sensibility emphasizes that both scholars and subjects actively construct culture, there is a social reality that is knowable. We do not face a nihilistic world. Our task as social scientists is to uncover social reality, regardless of the difficulty in doing so (Hobsbawm 1993). Hitler did or did not exist. The life of the peasant in Peru has or has not become more difficult. It is our job to discern these events, even though peasants and anthropologists may distort them. The Shining Path war in Peru can be seen as either the evil work of particular individuals or the symptom of severe social stress. Nonetheless, there has been a war and it is our job to analyze the war, its causes, and how various participants (including the scholarly community) have constructed it (Mitchell in press-a).

I am much more comfortable with the above approaches to identity and power than I am with contemporary work that emphasizes performance or the earlier symbolic and structural schools. These new approaches emphasize that people are actors rather than static transmitters of culture. They also place local events in larger class and economic contexts, complementing and adding to research on political economy. Indeed, such identity constructions are integral to political economy.

In the Andes we have only begun work on identity and power. Catherine Allen (1988) presents a beautiful portrait of the meaning of life

for the people of Sonqo near Cuzco, but she tends to neglect the hierarchical setting. Several scholars, however, have begun to question the role of anthropologists and other intellectuals in creating our conceptions of Andean peoples. Orin Starn (1991, 1994) has criticized many of us for « orientализing » (to use Edward Said's word [Said 1978]) the Andean people by creating an almost primeval Andean stereotype (« *lo andino* »), as if the contemporary people of Peru are exotic holdovers from some ancient and pristine past.

Starn's analysis has itself been attacked, but I think too broadly. Some of his comments are wide of the mark. He fails to contextualize earlier research and he also neglects the many works that do not conform to his thesis (see, for example, Guillet 1979, 1980, Mitchell 1987, Orlove 1977b, Long and Roberts 1978, 1984). Nonetheless, I believe his general point is well taken. We did tend to construct a timeless peasant. I certainly did. When first in the field in the 1960s, I pushed people away as they spoke to me of their dissatisfaction with the fiesta system. I wanted to know about their *real* religion in which they celebrated the mountain god (*tayta urqu*) and the Catholic saints. Unfortunately for this overzealous anthropologist, approximately half the population of Quinoa today is Protestant !

Others have analyzed the role of scholars in portraying Shining Path. Deborah Poole and Gerardo Rénique (1992) have criticized the relationship between scholarship on Shining Path and the interests of American foreign policy. Enrique Mayer (1991) has explored the use of anthropology in the Vargas Llosa report on the massacre of the journalists in Uchuraccay. In a recent paper, I have proposed that excessive scholarly stress on cocaine production and the Shining Path war has obscured the underlying social transformation in the Andes, of which these phenomena are only part (Mitchell in press-a). Recent scholarship is also reconstructing our notion of Peru, stressing that the country is today more an urban than rural country (Altamirano and Hirabayashi in press, Matos Mar 1984).

## Conclusion

Currently, therefore, I see two approaches in contemporary anthropology that add to the kind of materialist analyses I favor : political economy and cultural studies focused on the construction of identity and power. These approaches complement one other. Peasants exist in macro-economic and political contexts that constrain their production, favoring certain decisions over others. National economic systems are structured to obtain peasant

labor and produce as cheaply as possible, in order to support sectors of the economy devoted to exports and the earning of foreign exchange.

Peasants also exist in an ideological context in which they are constructed by elite classes as lazy, ignorant, and dirty. These beliefs explain peasant poverty as an unfortunate consequence of peasant backwardness, rather than of exploitation, thereby helping to sustain exploitative class relationships. Prevailing racial categories do the same. Upper classes construct the Peruvian peasant as Indian and therefore racially different. In a variation on the theme that « biology is destiny », class relationships are viewed as fixed in nature and thereby removed from human control. That ideology makes it difficult (but not impossible) for peasants to succeed outside their local communities. It also justifies economic disbursements in which Lima, the capital of Peru, receives far more in government resources (e.g., capital, market roads, schools and technical training) than areas seen as Indian. Racism has also facilitated the brutality of the military during the Shining Path war, allowing the military to murder peasants simply because they are peasants. Conceived as Indians, peasants are often viewed as worthless.

Scholars also construct their research, emphasizing certain topics over others. These constructions have real consequences. The national and international focus on Shining Path terror rather than on the underlying social stress has helped to justify military atrocities in Peru and the repression of peasant social movements that agitate for peaceful social change (Mitchell in press-a). Research constructions also determine in part what is found. If we focus only on the ecological setting of the Andes, it is impossible to understand why the people of Quinoa are behaving the way they do. Living in a semi-arid region, they say that their major problem is aridity. Yet, these peasants are building schools at a faster rate than irrigation systems (Mitchell 1993). Such behavior only makes sense when we understand that the political economy favors nonfarm work.

The political economy and social construction schools, therefore, offer complementary explanations of peasant life. Unfortunately, the ecological bedrock has been neglected in much recent research, a neglect that must be rectified. It makes sense to me to look at people as constantly jockeying with one another (for wealth, power, and prestige) in particular ecological, economic, and social circumstances. Environmental variables are transformed into human goods by means of technology and social arrangements, but these social arrangements partly rest on systems of production that themselves depend upon ecological contexts : temperature, humidity, soils, sunlight, altitude, crops, minerals, other resources, and population. In Peru peasant farmers have encountered ecological constraints to increasing

farm production in response to population growth and the pressures of national and international economic forces.

Population pressure is an important part of these ecological constraints. While it is true that population pressure has often been used as a way of justifying exploitation, blaming the reproductive decisions of the poor for their poverty (Lappé and Collins 1978, Ross 1986), population does have real consequences, among which person-land ratios are only one aspect. In the Andes and much of the non-industrial world, rapid demographic growth caused by a decline in infant mortality has produced an exceedingly young population that has increased the economic pressures on parents.

In Peru, therefore, parents must provide for large families on land seriously constrained by local ecology. Water is scarce. Most of the central Andes is too high and cold or too low and dry for easy agriculture. Farmers, therefore, find it difficult to expand agriculture into new areas. Prevailing systems of private land ownership further prevent access to uncultivated land. These pressures have been intensified by the declining value of peasant produce in national markets and reductions in opportunities for cyclical migration. It takes more sacks of potatoes to buy kerosene today than it did twenty years ago.

Squeezed by local ecological forces and the political economy, peasants often abandon farming for nonfarm occupations (Mitchell 1991a, 1993, in press-b). Many Quinuenos have also adopted Protestantism and abandoned much of the local fiesta system, doing so as part of the shift from farm to nonfarm production. Racism and ethnocentrism limit peasant choices still more and many children of peasants have been pushed out of their communities into a society that has little place for them. They have become a class of depeasantized youth, struggling for social justice and sometimes joining Shining Path (Favre 1984, Mitchell 1994).

Peasant communities are dynamic entities that change in response to the interplay of ecological, economic, and political forces. The way in which their reality is constructed further influences choice. To say that we have always known that social constructions are important is true. What is different today is the consistent incorporation of identity into our explanations, as well as a focus on the role of identity in maintaining structures of class and power — structures that affect the ability of people to use their natural and social resources. Racism has consistently functioned that way in the United States, limiting choice for the discriminated against and inhibiting the formation of worker alliances. Ecological, political economy and social construction approaches, therefore, all help us understand the people we live with and study. Like you and me, they live in a

real world and make real choices about scarce resources, often acting to survive in a context of power and hierarchy, and trying to create meaningful lives as they do so.

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## SUMMARY

Two major approaches dominate current anthropological research in the United States: political economy and the cultural construction of the other, motifs that have largely replaced the ecological and structural-symbolic analyses found only ten years ago. This paper assesses these developments in Andean ethnography over the last twenty-five years.

In the Andes during the 1970s and into the 1980s, many scholars studied the vertical ecosystem, stimulated by John Murra's vertical archipelago hypothesis and the cultural ecology of Julian Steward and Marvin Harris. Murra's hypothesis and the strong ecological zeitgeist of the 1970s stimulated the direction of Andean research for more than two decades. Many scholars organized their ethnographies ecologically, exploring the adaptations of rural communities to the vertical mountain slope, demonstrating the ecological variations found at each altitude level and the importance of these adaptations for economic and social organization. During this same period another group of scholars emphasized the structural and symbolic, work that was stimulated by Tom Zuidema's research on the social organization of Cuzco.

Aside from cursory statements in an introductory paragraph or chapter,

scholars that employed the ecological and structural research strategies never really incorporated into their explanations the important connections that local populations maintain with the outside world, even though those connections influence and help structure local social organization. In the 1980s, this tendency to view native peoples as isolated became less acceptable, a change that in the Andes was spurred by the guerilla war begun by Shining Path in 1980. How do we explain the war if we only focus on local ecology and structure without a consideration of political economy? In addition, we have come to realize that the way people construct themselves and are constructed by others is part of this political economy.

The paper concludes that the contemporary political economy and social construction schools offer complementary explanations of peasant life. Unfortunately, the ecological bedrock has been neglected in recent research, a neglect that needs to be rectified. Population pressure is an important part of these ecological constraints. The value of utilizing all three approaches (ecological, political economy, and social construction) is illustrated by a brief analysis of social change in contemporary Peru.

## RESUMEN

Dos enfoques principales predominan actualmente en la investigación antropológica en Estados Unidos: la economía política y la construcción cultural del « otro », que han reemplazado ampliamente los análisis ecológicos y estructuralo-simbólicos propuestos hace apenas diez años. Este artículo refiere tales desarrollos en la etnografía de los Andes durante los últimos veinticinco años.

En los Andes, durante los años '70 y '80, numerosos investigadores estudiaron el ecosistema vertical, estimulados por la hipótesis del archipiélago vertical de John Murra y por la ecología cultural de Julien Steward y Marvin Harris. La hipótesis de Murra y la fuerte tendencia ecológica de los años '70 orientaron la investigación andina durante más de dos décadas. Hubo investigadores que organizaron sus etnografías según los cánones de la ecología, explorando las adaptaciones de las comunidades rurales a las vertientes montañosas verticales, demostrando las variaciones ecológicas halladas a cada nivel de altitud y la importancia de estas adaptaciones para la organización económica y social. Durante este mismo período otro grupo de investigadores, estimulados por la investigación de Tom Zuidema sobre la organización social en Cuzco, pusieron énfasis en lo estructural y lo simbólico.

Dejando de lado ciertas afirmaciones ligeras en algún párrafo o capítulo introductorio, los investigadores que emplearon las estrategias de investigación ecológicas y estructurales, jamás incorporaron verdaderamente en sus explicaciones las importantes relaciones de las poblaciones locales con el mundo exterior, aun cuando tales relaciones influyeran en y ayudaran a estructurar la organización social local. En los años '80, esta tendencia a ver aislados los pueblos autóctonos se hizo menos aceptable, cambio que en los Andes fue impulsado por la guerra de guerrilla iniciada por el Sendero Lumi-

noso en 1980. ¿Cómo explicar la guerra concentrándose únicamente en la ecología y la estructura locales, sin tomar en cuenta la economía política? Además, nos hemos dado cuenta de que la manera en que la identidad de los pueblos es construida por ellos mismos y por los demás forma parte de la economía política.

En conclusión, las escuelas contemporáneas de economía política y de « construcción social » proponen explicaciones complementarias sobre la vida campesina. Desafortunadamente, los fundamentos ecológicos han sido descuidados en las investigaciones recientes ; así, por ejemplo, la presión demográfica, que constituye una parte importante del condicionamiento ecológico. El valor de una utilización conjunta de estos tres enfoques (ecología, economía política y construcción social) es ilustrado mediante un breve análisis del cambio social en el Perú contemporáneo.