

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN
INDIGENOUS POLITICAL STRUCTURES IN PERU

Joanna Drzewieniecki
State University of New York at Buffalo
j65d65@gmail.com

Prepared for delivery at the 1995 Annual Meeting
of the American Political Science Association
The Chicago Hilton, August 31 - September 3, 1995

Copyright by the American Political Science Association

1. Introduction

This paper analyzes continuity and change in the political structures of the indigenous people of the Peruvian Andes in the 19th and 20th centuries, from Peruvian independence in 1821 to 1969, the year when a new military government carried out a sweeping agrarian reform considerably altering power relationships in the mountains.* During this period indigenous people constituted about 60% of the population of Peru and maintained a form of political organization based on indigenous communities that was significantly different than the Peruvian national system and semiautonomous from it.

This study challenges previous conceptualizations of unchanging tradition, part-societies, and cultural resistance and argues that the political organization of the Quechua and Aymara people of Peru was constantly re-created, modified, and adapted in response to changing political, social, and economic circumstances. In these processes, indigenous politics was both influenced by and itself influenced developments in the rest of Peruvian society. The approach used here incorporates the notion of change into historical structural analysis. It assumes that there are recognizable political structures that persist over time and help structure political behavior. These structures, however, are constantly being modified through the actions of individuals in response to changing circumstances. The most important political structures of Andean peoples are analyzed in turn with attention to how they changed over time and the factors that influenced these changes (Giddens 1984).

Political scientists have paid scant attention to the politics of indigenous groups in Latin America except for peasant rebellions or peasant affiliation with guerrilla groups. This neglect of the politics of subnational groups extends to studies of other parts of the "Third World" and, in general, it is fair to say that comparative politics dealing with the Third World has been notably state-centered. While political scientists have often noted the weaknesses of Third World states, there have been relatively few analyses of the alternative forms of power and political structures that usually exist in such states. This has been an unfortunate omission since politics in any given country cannot not be fully understood without analyzing all the loci of power that exist within that country. This essay, along with the broader study of which it is a part, attempts to remedy some of these deficiencies in the case of Peruvian studies.

The discussion that follows concentrates on selected structural aspects of indigenous politics. The first section provides an historical context for understanding

* Research for this paper and the dissertation on which it is based ("Indigenous Politics, Local Power, and the State in Peru, 1824-1968") was partially funded by a Fulbright-Hays dissertation grant, 1991-1992.

indigenous life in the Andes. The next section describes the basic unit of indigenous political organization, the indigenous community and its various permutations. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the major structural factors that define political relationships within Andean communities and influence communities' relationships with other sectors of Peruvian society. The last section of the paper describes the formal organizational structure of the community.

2. Historical Context

In order to understand indigenous politics in Peru and the limitations and possibilities that indigenous people encountered when they tried to advance their interests some background information on the Peruvian social, economic and political system is necessary. To start, something needs to be said about Peru's unusual geography.

The indigenous people of the Andes live in rugged and hostile high mountain terrain. While creative and complex adaptations to this environment before the Conquest led to the development of sophisticated civilizations such as the Incas, after the European invasion, Andean geography has presented many obstacles to ruling elites. The difficult Andean terrain made it difficult to apply modern farming methods and limited export agriculture and modern economic development. Transportation and communication difficulties tended to reinforce localism and regionalism and helped slow the consolidation of central state control over territory. It also resulted in considerable diversity in social, economic, and political conditions across the Andes. What were disadvantages to elites, sometimes became advantages for indigenous people who were able to retain at least some of their land (though often not the best land), to preserve their cultural distinctness, and to maintain varying degrees of political autonomy.

Indigenous peoples in the Andes are primarily peasants and the poorest sector of the Andean population though there has been considerable variation in wealth over time and space and some communities and individual indigenous people were much better off than others. Indigenous people have suffered constant racial and cultural discrimination. During the period under consideration, they also have had fewer rights than other citizens, either legally or defacto, and suffered considerable exploitation and violence not only from landowners but from other powerful sectors of society.

Indigenous people* in the Peruvian Andes do not share a modern ethnic

* Indigenous people are also referred to in this study as Andean peoples, Indians or peasants.

identity though they are aware of common cultural bonds and common social-economic status. The basic unit to which loyalty is owed is the indigenous community. Traditionally, indigenous people who gave up their community membership also lost their ethnic status and were considered to have joined the "others." While most community members (*comuneros*) are Native Americans racially, community membership is a much stronger indicator of ethnicity than is race. Through the 1960s, the overwhelming majority of *comuneros* spoke as their mother tongue either *Quechua* (the majority language) or *Aymara*. Knowledge of Spanish was minimal until well into the 20th century. In the 19th century and the first decades of this century, many non-Indians in heavily indigenous regions also spoke one of the Indian languages.

The predominant economic activity in the Peruvian Andes is agriculture though mining also has played an important role. Agricultural activity since the Conquest until the agrarian reform in 1969, was primarily carried out by indigenous communities or on *haciendas* (plantations) though a certain number of medium-sized properties always existed. *Haciendas* dominated most of the best agricultural land and relied on indigenous labor, obtaining it either from communities living on its lands (captive communities) and/or from nearby communities. Instead of wages, *haciendas* gave peasants plots of land and/or grazing rights as well as paternalistic favors in exchange for labor. Relations between *haciendas* and indigenous people as a rule were highly exploitative, unjust, and oppressive. However, there were significant variations in peasant-*hacienda* relations over time and space. These variations had considerable political implications because they affected the extent to which indigenous people were able to advance their economic and political interests and maintain varying degrees of autonomy (Bourricaud 1967:142; Maltby 1980; Martinez-Alier 1977). Another factor that affected indigenous communities were changes in the fortunes of *hacienda* owners. While some *haciendas* remained intact for centuries, many others were broken up for various reasons. Indigenous people were sometimes able to take advantage of these situations to expand their land holdings and ameliorate exploitative relations.

Long term trends also affected land tenure and the situation of indigenous people. By the 1890s, for example, demographic pressures and increased opportunities for commercial agriculture led to a rapid expansion of Andean *haciendas*. This expansion was short lived, however, grinding to a halt by the 1940s as a result of massive waves of peasant rebellions, the geographical and other limits to the growth of modern agriculture in the Andes, and the declining national fortunes of Andean landowners. The period of *hacienda* expansion and decline brought many changes for indigenous communities, both favorable and

unfavorable, and altered power relationships in many local areas providing openings for indigenous efforts to advance their interests.¹

Local politics in the Andes were long dominated by landowners who worked with local state authorities to run things with little central state interference until well into the 20th century. Conflicts between local elites were endemic, however, and this was another factor that sometimes benefitted peasants. While elites would immediately unite against indigenous people if they felt sufficiently threatened (as in the case of a rebellion), under normal circumstances, indigenous people regularly were able to take advantage of elite conflicts to make small gains or ameliorate exploitation (Drzewieniecki forthcoming).

From the end of the 19th century, new political and economic actors began to influence politics in the Andes, including a small middle class, professional elites, and a few modern entrepreneurs. As these elites challenged landowner power, they sometimes allied with indigenous people who thereby obtained some benefits for themselves. By the second decade of the 20th century, other processes of modernization began to affect the Andes. Of particular interest for indigenous people were the appearance of ideologies favoring the elimination of exploitation of peasants, the gradual opening of schools in many rural areas, building of roads, legislation granting Indians more rights, and the establishment of state agencies that worked as advocates for indigenous people. All these improvements brought fruit only gradually, but they did serve to erode landlord power and increase peasants' political opportunities.

This discussion would be incomplete without some additional attention to the Peruvian state. Despite the modernization process the Peruvian state was still quite weak at the end of the 1960s and relatively limited in its ability to enforce policies that could make a difference at the local level in the Andes. However, there is one way that the state did greatly influence the shape of political life in the Andes and elsewhere and that was through its institutional-legal structure. For indigenous people, there were several features of this structure that were particularly important. First, the administrative divisions of Peru tied indigenous people into particular local power structures. The fact that administrative divisions could be subdivided gave some communities the opportunity to secure more independence. Secondly, the structure of political authority also influenced the form of political activity in the Andes, affecting all sectors of society. Thirdly, the Peruvian legal system and legal culture greatly influenced the way political conflicts were handled. The legal system provided an additional and important forum for some types of disputes between peasants as well as for disputes between peasants and others. Fourthly, while many laws designed to help indigenous people were never applied or ignored

(Davies 1974), there were some others that significantly influenced the way that indigenous politics developed. Prominent among these was the elimination of mandatory tribute payments by indigenous people to the Peruvian state in 1854 and the granting of legal status to communities in the 1920 constitution. More information on impact of some of these structural features of the Peruvian political system will be provided in the discussion that follows.²

The picture that emerges is of a complex and highly conflictive political, economic, and social system with considerable variation over time and space. Indigenous people while at a permanent disadvantage were not without opportunities to protect and sometimes advance their interests. Unable to wholly master their destiny, they always had some room to maneuver. How much room they had varied considerably even within small regions. How much they were able to accomplish was also highly variable. The way that these struggles were carried out was influenced by both the factors discussed above and by indigenous political thought and organization. It is to this that we will now turn our attention.

3. Indigenous Political Structures

The political organization, political thought, and political behavior of indigenous people in the Peruvian Andes has a number of important structural features. First, the indigenous community is the basic unit of indigenous political organization.* Indigenous political behavior can only be understood within the context of this organizational unit. Political relationships within the community and between the community and other political actors are shaped by several additional structural characteristics. The most important and durable of these are kinship structure, norms of reciprocity, factionalism, a dualistic conception of the world, and community ideology. All of these structures have had a fundamental role in shaping the way that Andean peoples see the material and spiritual world and the way that they interact with it. Finally, communities have their own formal political organization. Before looking at these structures, something more needs to be about structures in general.

The conception of structure used here is derived from structuralist theorist Anthony Giddens (1979) who views structure as a "flexible, negotiated, concrete set of relations that is embodied in the social activity of constructing shared understandings and that serves as a program for orienting social action" (Hill 1988:6). This kind of structuralism has the great advantage of incorporating both

* Communities many have anywhere several hundred to several thousand members.

change and the agency of individuals in reproducing and changing structures. Giddens (1984) notes that "the structural properties of social systems exist only in so far as forms of social conduct are reproduced chronically across time and space." In all social groups, forms of organization are reproduced through the normal, routine actions of individuals. In such processes of reproduction changes are always being made, sometimes small and barely perceptible and sometimes larger as societies, groups, and individuals respond to many different variables in their internal and external environments.

The following discussion focuses on those structural characteristics that are of particular importance for indigenous politics. However, it should be kept in mind that in Andean societies, politics, economics, religion, and culture are all interconnected. To separate them out is to create an artificial construct that cannot exactly correspond to reality. Nevertheless, such a construct, however incomplete, does permit important insights about how politics works in the Andes. In addition, all the structures discussed here worked together to shape Andean politics and some of these interconnections will be analyzed. Due to limitations of space, some very interesting political structures will not be dealt with in detail here, including Andean cosmology, the structural aspects of the rebellions so common in Andean history, and relations between communities. This drawback is partially made up for by the fact that the structural features discussed here are also relevant to both rebellions and intercommunity relations.

4. The Indigenous Community

The indigenous community became the basic unit of indigenous social, economic, and political organization during the colonial period. Before the Conquest, Andean peoples belonged to a hierarchically organized "series of nested units," membership in which was defined by kinship ties (Spalding 1984:52) and which culminated in the political structures of the Inca Empire. After the European Conquest, higher level units gradually began to break up and indigenous people reorganized themselves on the basis of Andean political, social, and economic principles into smaller units which coalesced into the indigenous community (Glave 1990). In some areas ties to larger groups were preserved for a long time but their importance was small in comparison to what it once was.

Indigenous communities are best understood as relatively autonomous social units that are differentiated from non-indigenous Peruvian society by their internal structure and dynamics and by their ethnicity (Sánchez-Parga³ 1986:23).⁴ The indigenous community has shown itself to be a remarkably durable institution that even modern organizational forms such as unions, cooperatives, and parties,

have been unable to replace entirely. During the period under consideration, and despite their constant interaction with the dominant economic and political system, communities maintained their own model of economic production, a distinct social and political organization as well as a distinct culture. Communities have survived so long because they are both an efficient and a flexible form of organization that has shown itself capable of adapting to many political, social, and economic changes.

4.1 Types of Communities

Each indigenous community has its own political dynamic and each has developed slightly differently. It is possible to generalize about communities because all have been subject to similar structural dynamics. They all inherited very similar cultural characteristics that then helped structure the social, political, and economic changes. Similarly, all were affected by the broad structural characteristics and trends of Peruvian society as described above. Nevertheless, there were some important regional variations and many smaller local ones that resulted in differences between communities. The most important differences were between the northern Peruvian Andes, where indigenous culture and many communities slowly began to disappear beginning in the 19th century, the central Andes, where some of the most prosperous and politically independent communities are to be found, and the southern Andes where most indigenous people continue to live.

Another important type of variation between communities has to do with their degree of political autonomy. There were always a certain number of communities that managed to maintain considerable political and economic autonomy as a result of their remote location, tradition of rebellion, or in the case of the central sierra, a combination of historical factors (Manrique 1981; Ordoñez 1919:31-32; Ossio & Fuenzalida 1983:46-50).

At the other extreme from the independent communities, were "captive communities" that existed within the bounds of *haciendas*. Only recently recognized as such, these communities had many of the structural characteristics of independent communities described below but had their political independence severely curtailed though they were able to guard some prerogatives to themselves (Ramón 1987, 1991). Eventually, all captive communities gained their independence, some as a result of rebellion and the decline of *haciendas*, and the rest when the agrarian reform was carried out in 1969.

In between these two extremes, there were great many different intermediate situations. The relative political and economic independence of many communities

depended on historical factors and the particular strength of landowners and local power sectors at any given point in time. In some parts of the Andes, these conditions remained stable for long periods of time, but in most areas the distribution of power could vary considerably over time. These variations depended on the dynamics and long term trends described in Section 2, on specific local developments, and on the initiatives of local communities.

One particular type of situation deserves special mention. In various parts of the mountains, there were communities that were divided into indigenous and *mestizo* segments.* Mixed indigenous-*mestizo* communities usually resulted in considerable domination of indigenous people by *mestizos*. However, even here there were gradations with the greatest cooperation between the two sectors in the central sierra (Adams 1959; Grondin 1978). In the 20th century, the relationships in mixed communities tended either slowly to improve or else the communities split in two.

5. Structural Factors that Define Major Political Relationships

One of the premises of this study is that indigenous politics cannot be understood without considering the political dynamics originating within the indigenous community. An essential part of these dynamics originated in Andean culture which was significantly different than the culture of the rest of Peruvian society. While since the Conquest, the development of Andean culture was influenced by interactions with the culture of the rest of Peruvian society, Andean culture remained recognizably different. It is precisely this difference that has given communities their own dynamics. This section discusses the major structural factors that defined political relationships within communities and influenced communities relations with other political actors. Kinship structure, reciprocity norms, factionalism, dualistic conceptions of the world, and community ideology are all organizational principles that go back centuries if not millennia.⁵ Constantly recreated in the daily political, economic, and social practice of Andean people, they have continued to influence political life in the Andes to the present time.

As noted above, none of the structures discussed below is exclusively political. All are intimately connected with economic production, social relations, and cultural practice. Each structure is incorporated into the ideological and moral beliefs

* As a racial category, *mestizo* refers to a mixture of Indian and white. In the Andes *mestizo* refers primarily to members of the local power structure who do not follow the moral norms of indigenous people and are not members of the wealthy landowning elite. The exact characteristics of those perceived as *mestizos* has tended to change over time (Drzewieniecki forthcoming).

of indigenous people and reinforced through ritual practice.

5.1 Kinship Structures

In terms of social organization, the most important and most durable structural characteristic of communities is their kinship structure. Kinship ties are "the basis of the organization of production and distribution" as well as "the foundation of the political order" in Andean societies (Spalding 1984:23). Andeans recognize several types of ties expressed in kinship terminology, including blood links, marriage alliances, affinity groups, ritual kinship (*compadrazgo*), and other reciprocal relationships (Sánchez-Parga 1989:88-89). For the sake of brevity, all of these ties are referred to as kinship ties in the following discussion.

While some kinship ties are inherited, each household and larger kin groups have some flexibility in establishing kinship relations. For example, when a new household is formed through marriage, families take on certain fixed kinship responsibilities but they also have the freedom to establish other new relationships (Guillet 1979; Isbell 1978; Sánchez-Parga 1989). Larger kin groups also manipulate some of their kinship relations. All these relationships may change somewhat over time depending on current needs. Kinship alliances are constantly used to accomplish a wide variety of household, kin group, or community goals, including access to a variety of resources such as labor, land, and political influence.

In forming alliances and in other situations, Andeans usually act as a social unit and individualism tends to be discouraged (Sánchez-Parga 1989:101-102). Fixed and negotiated kinship alliances primarily increase the power and prestige of the group and strengthen "its internal cohesion and diversify its spheres of influence" (Sánchez-Parga 1986:116; translation mine). This more collectivist orientation of Andean culture does not mean that petty jealousies or conflicts between individuals do not exist. What it does mean is that conflict is structured differently than it is in more individualistic and atomized societies. Kinship structure is itself one form of structuring conflicts in Andean societies.

Kinship structure cannot be considered apart from the community. Kinship ties are woven into the very fabric of the community and kinship relationships of various sorts, as well as conflicts between kinship groups are sanctioned by the community and often ritualized. The strong endogamic tendencies of communities (i.e. *comuneros* usually do not marry outside the community) also serve to tie kinship groups into the community.

There are other important political dimensions of kinship structure in Andean communities. First, the flexibility of kin and kin-like relations means that indigenous people spend a good deal of time negotiating and renegotiating alliances of various

sorts in order to accomplish their goals. Negotiation is a necessary skill to do well within the community and many indigenous people are accomplished negotiators. Negotiation of alliances is a skill and a strategy that is carried over to indigenous relations with political actors outside the community.

More broadly, kinship structure represents the major way that systems of power are constructed in Andean societies (Ramón 1990:121). A *comunero* with few kinship ties can accomplish little and receives minimal little respect. Power and influence can only be had through kinship ties.* Important decisions on any issue are almost never taken without consulting other linked families (Sánchez-Parga 1989:151) and policy positions on important community decisions are first discussed within kinship groups. The heads of family groups then help forge community-wide agreements and later it is kinship groups that assure these agreements are put into practice (Peña Jampa 1991:143).

Andean kinship structure is one of several mechanisms in Andean communities that limit accumulation of power in the hands of individuals or groups (Sánchez-Parga 1986:114-115). Since individuals (no matter what their prestige) cannot take important decisions that affect others or, just as importantly, implement them without consulting larger groups it is impossible to accumulate a great deal of individual power. Furthermore, the structured competition between kinship groups which is part of Andean political culture (see below) tends to assure that competing groups always exist and no one is ever completely defeated (Sánchez-Parga 1989:179-180).

One type of kin-like relationship that deserves special attention is ritual coparenthood or *compadrazgo*. *Compadrazgo* relationships imply mutual obligations and are established through participation in the Catholic rituals of baptism, confirmation or marriage or the indigenous ceremony of *uma rutukuy* "first haircutting" (Gutiérrez Galindo 1969; Sallnow 1987:111). *Compadrazgo* relationship may be established between households within communities (Isbell 1978; Ossio 1992), with households in other communities (Custred 1977:79; Sánchez-Parga 1986:78,88), or with *mestizos* or other people in positions of power outside the community.

One the most important characteristics of the *compadrazgo* mechanism is "its adaptiveness to different situations" (Mintz & Wolf 1977:4). *Compadrazgo* has been used in the past and in the present to achieve many different goals by both *comuneros* and *mestizos*. Peasants consider *compadrazgo* relations with *mestizos*

* In Andean societies there is no necessary link between wealth and power even though the two often go together.

as an indispensable tool for accomplishing an infinite variety of economic and political goals for individual households, kinships, and the community including such things as a steady market for their products, diminishing the demands of elites on their resources, help in legal proceedings, favors from political leaders, and access to state authorities. For the *mestizos* who become *compadres* to peasants, *compadrazgo* is an essential mechanism to provide access to labor and goods. *Mestizos* and other sectors of Peruvian society also use *compadrazgo* to establish reciprocal relationships with more powerful people.

Clientalistic relationships such as *compadrazgo* are always asymmetrical with more benefits accruing to the patron and more obligations to the client. In Peru, as in many other places, they also provide ways for non-indigenous people to cheat Andean peoples. However, as we shall see in the discussion of reciprocity below, there have always been limits to the abuse indigenous people would tolerate and the asymmetry of clientalistic relations changed over time.

5.2 Reciprocity

Reciprocity is perhaps the most important ideological principle that governs political, economic, and even religious relationships within communities and also imposes itself on many of the relationships *comuneros* have with outsiders. Traditionally, elaborate cultural norms have governed the various forms of reciprocal relationships prescribing how exchanges should be carried out and the mutual obligations involved.⁶ These rules and the principle of reciprocity itself have a strong moral component and those *comuneros* who do not meet their reciprocal obligations face moral sanctions from others and from their consciences (Mamani 1988:127; Mayer 1974).

Reciprocity is firmly grounded in economics. It is a virtual necessity in the Andes given the scarcity of resources, the difficult geographical conditions, and the peasant ideal of self-sufficiency. In order to assure the survival of the family, kinship groups, and the community as a whole not only is it necessary to exchange some goods but most importantly, cooperation with others is essential to accomplish a great many different agricultural tasks and construction projects.

Reciprocal exchanges can take place between a wide variety of partners and are constantly being negotiated. First, reciprocity is a key part of the kinship relations which are "maintained and expressed through continuous reciprocal relations" (Mayer 1972:79). Reciprocal relationships can also be established outside kinship relationships in order to obtain a particular good or service that is needed and to establish a relationship that will be useful in the future. In order to understand reciprocal relationships it is useful to think of them as having as their ultimate end

the establishment of political alliances and not just the achievement of an immediate economic goal, as Sánchez-Parga (1989:195) suggests. The fact that a reciprocal relationship can be used for a variety of purposes in the future is just as important as the equivalencies of things exchanged (Sánchez-Parga 1989).

Much has been written about "symmetrical" and "asymmetrical" exchanges within the community and without. In regards to reciprocity within communities, economic approaches to the study of Andean communities often stress the negative aspects of asymmetrical relationships between richer and poorer community members (e.g. Mallon 1983; Sánchez 1987). While these negative aspects do exist, indigenous people do not necessarily see them as disadvantageous. Poorer peasants establish reciprocal relationships precisely to narrow inequalities by establishing alliances with wealthy peasants and by committing them to the reciprocal obligations sanctioned by moral norms (Sánchez-Parga 1989:119). In this way, reciprocal norms tend to keep inequalities in check by redistributing both wealth and power and maintaining a relatively stable balance between kinship groups (Sánchez-Parga 1986:421). It is only in communities where these norms begin to breakdown that significant exploitation becomes possible and even then there remain cultural limits on this exploitation.

Reciprocity also has other important political dimensions. For example, community authorities cannot fulfill their various responsibilities, be they ritual, economic, or political without seeking help based on reciprocity. In the ritual sphere, authorities fulfill their role with help from their network of kin relations to whom they must reciprocate (Isbell 1972). In order to accomplish any other tasks that require communal labor, communal authorities also use principles of reciprocity to put together the team that is needed. Cooperation is not automatic but must always be negotiated.

In sum, reciprocity is a very important ideological structure that influences many aspects of the political, economic, social, and religious life of indigenous people. When well-regulated by moral and cultural norms, reciprocity contributes to the smooth functioning of communities' economic and political system, holds inequalities in check without eliminating them, and helps to limit the power of authorities. The penetration of capitalist relations into communities tends to put a strain on reciprocal relations and increases asymmetrical relations without however leading to a breakdown of community organization.

Comuneros and the community as a whole also established reciprocal relationships with outsiders. These can be set up with other communities or their members (e.g. Custred 1977:79) or with landowners or other members of the local elite.⁷ For example, reciprocal norms are part of all *compadrazgo* relations. In

addition, state authorities and landowners have had to follow Andean reciprocal norms to obtain the labor they needed. Every way possible was found to manipulate these Andean norms and there was considerable exploitation.

Orlove (1977) points out that the peasant finds himself in a very disadvantageous position with the landowner who receives highly valuable labor from the peasant and gives the peasant in return something that costs him very little but is very important to the peasant. Like many other scholars, Orlove (1977:214) concludes that where the "ownership of wealth and productive resources is concentrated," reciprocal forms can "perpetuate a system of inequality" and prevent challenges to such a system.* There are several reasons to doubt this statement.

First, the fact that outsiders had to follow Andean norms (however skewed) in their relationships with communities is also testimony to the relative power of Andean peoples. Outsiders had to do it the Andean way or get no labor at all. It was impossible to create other labor arrangements that might have been more economically advantageous. In addition, the fact that relationships between *comuneros* and outsiders were asymmetrical does not point to a flaw in principles of reciprocity as such but rather to the way that they were applied in a situation of unequal power. In fact, the most important challenge to the argument of Orlove and others is that the degree of asymmetry tended to vary depending on the relative correlation of forces between peasants and others. First, Andeans always put limits to the amount of abuse they would take before withdrawing their cooperation. Abuses connected to reciprocal arrangements for collective labor were a frequent source of indigenous complaints, law suits, and even the cause of some rebellions from the colonial period well into the 20th century (O'Phelan Godoy 1986; Manrique 1981:230). As already indicated, in time and especially after the 1920s (with the usual considerable variation across the Andes), the limits to acceptable abuse began to change and local power sectors could no longer negotiate such exploitative arrangements as in the past. Finally, there is no evidence that peasants in Latin American countries where reciprocal norms were weak or nonexistent were subject to less abuse. In fact, examples such as Brazil suggest otherwise (Foweraker 1981).

5.3 Dualism

If kinship structure and reciprocity help structure cooperation in Andean communities and beyond them, the principle of dual organization helps hold in

* In general, Orlove's work is rich in both data and interpretation and a must for anyone working on Andean studies.

check conflict by ordering it. Dualistic principles have been a feature of Andean society since before the Conquest (Zuidema 1989) and have served as a kind of "global logic" in Andean political and social thought and organization since then (Murra & Wachtel 1986:6). Dualistic principles permeate Andean thinking in many different areas including cosmology, conceptions of nature and space, relations between men and women and between kin groups, ethnic relations, economics, and administrative and political organization.⁸

Andean dualistic principles seek to organize the world into complementary opposites, competition between which is natural and ordered. Dual structures (moieties) may be further subdivided into segmentary parts. Any part of a segmentary structure is incomplete without its other half, starting with the married couple. In general, dualistic principles are a way of maintaining stability and institutionalizing equilibrium in Andean and in many other societies (Maybury-Lewis 1989:10). Socially and politically, equilibrium is achieved through symmetry (Sánchez-Parga 1989:81).

There are many political manifestations of dualism in Andean thought and organization and only some can be treated here. One of the most important manifestations the subdivision of communities into smaller units, usually two or four major units which then may be subdivided into smaller units. By the 20th century, there was considerable diversity in the number of parts into which communities were divided, the criteria for membership in each part, and the relationship between the various parts. Despite all this diversity, several important structural characteristics are evident.

First, the existence of segmentary divisions of communities (moieties) usually decentralized political authority since major divisions of communities normally had their own authorities. In addition, the principle of segmentary division which implied the possibility of the coexistence of more than one set of authorities made it possible for Andeans to incorporate new sets of authorities into the community without doing away with former authority structures further diluting power.

Secondly, segmentary divisions tended to institutionalize and ritualize conflict. There are always strong rivalries between moieties and they competed in many different areas including collective labor, organizing celebrations, or even more recently, soccer matches (e.g. Mayer 1974:278). For most of the period until 1968, ritualized aggressive physical encounters between parts of communities were common (e.g. Orlove 1994); Sallnow 1987). None of these competitions tore groups apart, instead they tended to solidify unity and cooperation by ritualizing conflict (Sánchez-Parga 1989).

Andean dualism provides a perfect example of how Andean and Peruvian political structures intersected and were adapted to each other. In the colonial period, Andeans reorganized themselves into moieties despite Spanish efforts to the contrary (Abercrombie 1986:59-60). At the same time, the Spaniards incorporated Andean dual structures into various divisions of the Viceroyalty of Peru (Abercrombie 1986:95). These dual structures continued into the Republican period and it was only in the 1860s that the practice of having two mayors in each municipality was eliminated (Celestino & Meyers 1981:183).

In the colonial period and perhaps earlier moieties sometimes split off from larger entities (Abercrombie 1986:59-60). This trend accelerated later in the Republican period as result of demographic growth and the increased insertion of moieties into regional economies which resulted in increased differentiation and pressures to privatize communal lands (Contreras 1991). These internal motivations combined with factors outside the community.

In 1844, the Peruvian government reorganized the political divisions of Peru and created the possibility of the multiplication of the lowest administrative political unit, the district. This provided moieties with the opportunity to gain more independence and control over their affairs by seeking district status (Contreras 1991). The dimensions of this process can be seen in one area of Peru (Jauja) where there were 9 communities in 1846 and today there are 300. In the same area, there were 9 districts in 1846 and by 1940 there were 43 (Contreras 1991). The separation of moieties to create new communities continued during the whole period under consideration and offers us a prime example of indigenous people applying Andean norms at the same time as they took advantage of opportunities offered them by the Peruvian administrative system. It should be noted that this process of fission may well have been detrimental to some communities in the long run as the new communities had fewer resources and were thus less powerful. Something similar happened with the legalization of communities in the 1920s. This law which benefitted indigenous people in various ways also provided the opportunity for moieties to split off to form a new community and seek legal status.

Thus far the dualistic principles that have been discussed in relations to horizontal relationships. Andean notions of dualism also refer to hierarchical relations (Ossio 1992:390). Before the Conquest and well into the 20th century,

* Unfortunately, the few authors who have dealt with this subject make no distinction between indigenous and *mestizo* communities, making it impossible for us know when indigenous moieties separated from *mestizo* moieties and when two indigenous moieties parted ways. In the case of the former, indigenous communities undoubtedly improved their position.

Andean political units were divided into a upper and lower part (*hanan* and *hurin*), with the upper being the more prestigious and influential without this implying absolute dominance. Another expression of hierarchical dualism is that between indigenous people and others. Until 1968, in most areas of the Andes, indigenous people saw a binary opposition between themselves and others (Isbell 1978:67,187,218). This conceptualization served to maintain ethnic identity and a sense of difference. It also integrated non-indigenous people into Andean conceptions of an ordered world and thus granted partial legitimation to the ordering of Peruvian society.

One additional example of dualism can illustrate the degree to which Andean culture penetrated non-indigenous sectors of Peruvian society through the early decades of the 20th century. Burga & Flores Galindo (1987:107-108) report that a *hacienda* owner who was a member of the Peruvian Congress, proposed a highly original project in 1909 to the Peruvian Congress for a United States of Peru that was to be divided into four parts like the Inca Empire. Each successive part was then to be divided into four more and so forth! Much has been written about the syncretism of Andean and hispanized culture in indigenous communities, but the same kind of mixture among local power sectors has received little attention. This is a pity, since this syncretism also had an important role in shaping power relations.

5.4 Factionalism

Conflict has been a permanent feature of Andean societies as it has been elsewhere. Andean societies have mechanisms to control conflict and keep it from endangering the integrity of communities. We have already seen some of the sources of potential conflict and some of the ways that conflict is regulated. This section summarizes these findings and provides additional information.

One of the important sources of conflict arises from the flexibility of kinship structures. As we have seen alliances are always being renegotiated and strategies revised as a result of shifting economic and political needs and goals. This inevitably leads to conflicts between kin groups (Mayer 1988). Even reciprocal arrangements have their competitive edge and are a source of rivalries (Mayer 1974; Stern 1982:9). There are several different methods by which these conflicts are resolved. First, both community authorities and kin group leaders mediate conflict. Some types of conflicts are taken to local authorities or to the legal system. In addition, several structural features of communities help keep conflict under control.

If kinship structure is a source of conflict, the interdependencies it creates and the constant need to form alliances also create strong incentives for rapid resolutions to conflicts. The need for community consensus building and the norm of

widespread participation in communal decisions are additional incentive. The various mechanisms discussed above that limit the consolidation of long-lasting power blocs and prevent winner-take-all situations also help hold conflict within bounds. Finally, community ideology that sets up the community as a unit separate (and against) the rest of society whose interests in the last instance always overcome individual or group interests serve to keep conflict from destroying communities.⁹

Segmentary divisions of communities are another structural source of conflict. As noted, there is structured competition between segmentary parts of communities and even ritualized battles at regular intervals (Harris & Bouysee-Cassagne 1988:240-243; Orlove 1994; Sánchez-Parga 1989:196-201). The fact that rivalries and conflicts are given regular, accepted ways in which they can be expressed stops the conflicts from getting out of hand and harming community unity. Even when segments of communities separate, the new communities tend to have their own segmentary parts and structured competition resumes.

Modernization in the 20th century brought new types of conflicts into communities. Among these, were conflicts between young returning migrants imbued with new ideas from the cities and more traditional community members, beginning in the 1940s (Celestino 1972; Instituto Indigenista Peruano 1967-1969). In general, modernization trends put strains on communities and affected community conflicts, often increasing them. However, the structural mechanisms to control conflict discussed here continued to work relatively successfully (though ritualized battles virtually disappeared). Their success is attributable both the utility of the mechanisms and to the fact that after the 1940s migration increasingly became a safety valve which reduced some of the conflicts arising from demographic growth, differentiation, and modernization in general.

5.5 Community Ideology

The discussion so far has shown many different mechanisms that held together communities. This section describes two contrasting aspects of community ideology, its moral power and the way it is used in very pragmatic ways to achieve concrete goals. As has been indicated, communities have been the main unit of ethnic identity in Peru. This ethnic identity was considerably different from that of the rest of Peruvian society, a fact of which indigenous people were always aware. Like many ethnic groups with and without their own states, part of indigenous peoples' view of themselves was a sense of moral superiority. The oppression they suffered from others tended to reinforce this view of their own morality as against others and affected their relationships with all members of the rest of Peruvian society

(Drzewieniecki Forthcoming). One expression of this view was *comuneros*' often repeated statement that "we are all equal" ("*todos somos iguales*"). This statement is regularly dismissed as a curious myth by researchers who emphasize economic differentiation within communities. But, in fact, it has very little to do with differentiation and much to do with *comuneros*' evaluation of their own politics and morality versus that of outsiders. First, "we are all equal," means that while among *comuneros* there are few inequalities, the inequalities in Peruvian society as a whole are very large. Secondly and most importantly, this statement refers to the moral aspect of relationships within the community. *Comuneros* are "all equal" because they all meet morally-sanctioned responsibilities to those tied to them by kinship ties and to the community. In communities, everyone is subject to the same rules. For indigenous people this contrasts sharply with the rest of Peruvian society which not only treats them unjustly but also treats its own members in way that *comuneros* think is unfair (Drzewieniecki forthcoming).*

Another aspect of community ideology which is notable is its plasticity. Much like other aspects of Andean culture, the ideological concept of community changed somewhat over time and has been utilized politically in various ways. Studies by Smith (1989, 1991), for example, show a variety of different ways that *comuneros* employed the notion of community in the last several decades. The same data also show that within the community, *comuneros* sometimes manipulated the concept of community in order to try to accomplish goals that they thought were important. *Comuneros* also employed the same tactic with the rest of society. From at least the time of the pro-Indigenous movements of the 1920s, some community leaders became aware that for outsiders the concept of community could have a kind of idealized mystique. In trying to advance their interests, indigenous leaders sometimes appeal to this idealized image to gain support.

Community ideology then can function in many different ways. Here we have seen that it can have great moral power in uniting *comuneros* as against an oppressive society, morally discredited in *comuneros*' eyes. At the same time, the pragmatic manipulation of community ideology can be used to achieve concrete goals. Like most of our stories about ourselves, community ideology has both functional and pragmatic uses.

* The existence of such an ideological framework does not mean of course that *comuneros* are unaware of unjust individuals or behaviors within their community. Their conception of their morality is one of their myths about themselves, a myth most societies share to one extent or another. The fact that it is a myth does not detract from its power, on the contrary.

6. Authorities and Assemblies

The political structures discussed thus far have been very important in shaping political activity within communities and between communities and others and are fundamental to understanding communities' formal political organization. It is to these institutions to which we will now turn our attention. While the variety among communities that is the result of the independent development of each community as a political entity is particularly evident in the realm of political organization, there are nevertheless identifiable structural patterns in the political organization of all communities.

One of the remarkable features of Andean political organization is the existence of multiple authority structures. From Peruvian independence until the legalization of communities started in the 1920s, all communities had a set of authorities that had evolved on the basis of Andean traditions and that for convenience sake will be called "traditional authorities" here. In addition, communities also had state authorities that were responsible to non-indigenous state officials. Finally, as each community was legalized, a set of authorities mandated by the government was also introduced. At any given time, a particular community had at least two different types of authority structures. Some had more. This was far less bewildering to indigenous people than it would be to us since multiple authority structures had existed since well before the Conquest and a multiple authority structure fit in well with Andean conceptions of segmentary divisions.

6.1 Traditional Authorities

At the beginning of the 19th century, the authority structure of communities had just about finished the long process of change it had undergone since the Conquest (Rasnake 1988) and the traditional authority structure achieved a certain stability for about a hundred years. After that traditional authorities in the Andes as a whole entered a very slow and as yet incomplete period of decline. Like other changes, this process happened more quickly in the central mountains and much more slowly in the southern area. Later some of the reasons for the decline of these authorities will be discussed. In the meantime, it should be understood that during most of the period under consideration traditional authorities were the most important authorities in most communities.

The traditional authority structure is made up of a set of hierarchically arranged offices called *cargos* that community males¹⁰ normally take on for a year at a time starting with the lowest *cargo*. The highest level in the *cargo* system is most often called the *varayoc* (Quechua) or *hilacata* (Aymara). While the lower

cargos are obligatory to every responsible *comunero*, the highest *cargos* go only to the most worthy (Earls 1973:79) and are generally elected in community assemblies. A community may have more than one set of traditional authorities if it is divided into segmentary parts. In this case one of the *varayoc/hilacata* predominates over the others. The number of *cargos* in each community varies but most everyone participates at some point in their life, usually more than once.

The traditional authority structure is one of the main ways that the political, economic, cultural, religious, and ideological reproduction of the community takes place (Montoya 80:256). The responsibilities of traditional authorities are highly varied and can include duties such as enforcing community moral values, maintaining law and order, resolving conflicts between *comuneros*, organizing collective labor and assuring communal cooperation for a wide variety of tasks, taking care of communal fields, making sure the sick are taken care of, and a variety of ritual responsibilities connected with all these tasks as well as religious duties (Montoya 1980:250-251).

Cargos are considered to be a service to the community and where traditional authorities are strong all self-respecting *comuneros* participate willingly (Montoya 1980:250). Participation in the *cargo* system is a way of validating community membership and entitles one to receive community benefits (Mayer 1974:247), putting the *comunero* in a reciprocal relationship with the community. The *cargo* system has a very strong moral legitimacy and nonparticipants suffer ridicule and criticism (Carter & Albo:480). Sanctions are not only human but also divine and it is thought that terrible misfortunes can happen to those who do not participate (Peña Jampa 1991:146). Where the *cargo* system is on the decline, moral sanctions are one of the main forms that supporters use to maintain it (Arguedas 1964:270).

No one receives payment for taking on *cargos*. The highest *cargos*, and especially that of *varayoc/hilacata*, require considerable expenditures. In order to carry out his duties and gain the cooperation of *comuneros* in community tasks, the *varayoc/hilacata* is expected to follow reciprocal norms by organizing feasts and exchanging services making the *cargo* system a redistributive mechanism (Mayer 1974). In order to marshal the considerable resources he needs, the *varayoc/hilacata* must rely on his kinship group. His kin group also benefits in terms of status and prestige and to some extent materially as well (Carter & Albo 1988:478; Smith 1989:83).

Given the expenses involved in the office of *varayoc/hilacata*, it is usually only the better off *comuneros* that can afford the office. However, *varayoc/hilacatas* are not always the most wealthy. Moral qualifications, skills, dedication to the

community, a strong kin network, status, and age (since one has to have passed all the other *cargos* first) are all important criteria (Matos Mar 1964:136; Mayer 1974:237,241).

The *varayoc/hilacata* has little power to command people to obey him and "functions more as a mediator and supporter of decisions" than a decision-maker (Forman 1972:14). The limitations on the political power of *varayoc/hilacatas* are multiple.¹¹ First, in most communities there is more than one set of these authorities and even though one *varayoc/hilacata* is the most important, he still has to consult with others. *Varayoc/hilacatas* have to be re-elected yearly and in some cases cannot continue past a certain number of terms. Any really important decision involving the whole community has to take place in an assembly of all *comuneros* in which the *varayoc/hilacata* has influence but cannot impose his will. The power of rival kinship groups and the segmentary parts of the community also limit the power of authorities as does the factionalism which, as described, never leads to absolute winners. The flexibility of kinship ties that results in the constant possibility of losing essential alliances also limits authoritarian behavior. The necessity to reciprocate all services is yet another limitation. Finally, cultural and ideological factors such as moral sanctions, the emphasis on consensus in decision-making and on broad participation, and ritual also serve to reproduce social relations that limit power (Forman 1972; Sánchez-Parga 1986, 1989).

Now, this dispersion of power in Andean societies and the limits on the power of community leaders does not mean that there are never abuses or that everyone is always pleased with community authorities. People can always find ways to abuse authority even when their authority is limited and where there are strong moral sanctions against doing so. *Varayoc/hilacatas* could always find small ways to benefit themselves through their offices. Some authorities did little for the community or were less responsible than others.¹² The very limitations to the power and influence of authorities could also lead to problems. Perceived small "offenses against authority" could be taken very seriously by leaders and could lead to conflicts (Forman 1972:256). In general, authorities' power always needed to be renegotiated and this led to constant political activity in which conflicts were always possible. The factionalism inherent to Andean societies also led to the maintenance of a steady everyday level of conflict.

6.2 Assemblies

In addition to community authorities, community assemblies are the other formal decision-making structure. Assemblies are meetings of all *comuneros* in which all heads of households, male or female in the case of widows, have a voice.

No matter what kind of authorities a community may have at any given time, community assemblies always play an important role. Assemblies usually meet at regular intervals and when important issues arise. They are presided over by community authorities.

All important decisions involving the whole community must be discussed and ratified in assembly meetings. Such decisions can include approval of a new community project, the distribution of tasks for a major project, and the undertaking of a major military action. The latter may include a land invasion, a rebellion, or -- especially in the 19th century -- participation in military action with non-indigenous allies. Assemblies also decide on the punishment of major transgressions by community members and sometimes by outsiders as well.¹³ Finally, as noted above, assemblies are a very important way of limiting the power of community authorities since no authority can take an important decisions without them (Ansi3n 1987:187).

Generally speaking, assemblies operate on consensus and not by majority vote with all the advantages and disadvantages this kind of decision-making implies. On one hand, decision by consensus leads to solid, unified commitment to the decision by all community members, on the other hand, it makes it more difficult for more controversial but possibly very useful projects to be undertaken. Decisions taken in assemblies generally have already been thoroughly discussed before hand within and between kinship groups with the usual negotiation of alliances and reciprocal agreements (S3nchez-Parga 1986; Urrutia Personal Communication). This results in assemblies having the ritual function of committing everyone to already taken decisions (Urrutia Personal Communication) though they are not always limited to this function. Finally, it should be noted that the agreements of assemblies are generally but not always adhered to because they are the result of previous negotiations and alignments which may fall apart later.

6.3 Post-Legalization Authorities

The 1920 Peruvian constitution that gave communities juridical status also specified that they should have a set of officially recognized authorities. In order to be legalized, communities had to submit an application and meet a series of criteria specified by the law. Communities applied for recognition only gradually for a variety of local reasons and in 1987, about 19% of communities still did not have official recognition, though some of these may well have been the products of community fission (Revilla & Price 1992). Upon recognition and occasionally even without it, communities created the new official set of authorities. As mandated by law, these authorities were elected for fixed periods of time in community assemblies. In many

communities, these authorities were incorporated into the community along side traditional authorities and took over the role of community "foreign affairs" (Mayer 1974:250) while in others, they gradually replaced traditional authorities. The latter was particularly likely to happen in communities undergoing cultural modernization in which the ritual traditions sustaining authorities were dying out and younger community members with knowledge of the outside were yearning for more power.

6.4 State Authorities

In addition to its other authorities, each community always has one or more *comuneros* who serve as local level state authorities (usually *teniente gobernador* or lieutenant governor). In the period under consideration, the office of lieutenant governor had little prestige and was not considered a *cargo* though in some communities lieutenant governors were vested with some of the ritual accoutrements of traditional authorities (Ossio & Fuenzalida 1983:67). Duties of lieutenant governors were not defined under the law in this period but usually they were expected to carry out the errands of *mestizo* officials, organize labor for the benefit of the town or the *mestizos*, and had some responsibilities in the enforcement of state laws under the direction of *mestizo* officials.¹⁴

6.5 Relations Between Indigenous Authorities and Local Power Sectors

Local power sectors, sometimes regional authorities, and in later years also the central state impinged in various degrees on the autonomy of community authorities and assemblies and on the matters over which they could take decisions though degrees of autonomy varied considerably as discussed above. Communities' political organs were also partially shaped by the communities' interactions with the rest of Peruvian society. In this section, the political relations of the *varayoc/hilacata* with local power sectors are described to illustrate some of the possibilities and limitations inherent in these relationships.

Local *mestizo* officials and through them local landowners made demands of indigenous people not only through the office of lieutenant governor but also by direct demands to traditional authorities. Whatever the official relationship, the demands made on the time, labor, and other resources of indigenous people were always exploitative.

The relationship of traditional authorities to local power sectors has been a source of debate not only for scholars but for indigenous people themselves. Scholars have often presented traditional authorities as virtually powerless vis-à-vis local powers and sometimes as having sold out to them.¹⁵ My reading of the available evidence leads me to slightly different conclusions. It is argued that in the

19th and 20th centuries, in those communities in which Andean culture continued to be strong, traditional authorities played a very important role in negotiating with local power sectors and generally tried to reach agreements that were the least unfavorable to the community given the unequal correlations of forces.

Traditional authorities' relations with local power sectors seem to have been guided by several sets of criteria. First, for a long time, indigenous peoples saw local powers and the state as part of a segmentary system much as they saw their own communities. Relationships between the community and non-indigenous society were asymmetrical but were contained within a whole. The non-indigenous half was much more powerful and possibly could count from extra help from the gods (Earls 1969).

Secondly, traditional authorities insisted on the negotiation of agreements with *mestizos* and landowners based on Andean forms of reciprocity when indigenous services, resources, and labor were needed. As result some more onerous forms of exploitation were avoided and authorities constantly had the opportunity to negotiate agreements and complain and threaten to withdraw cooperation when these agreements were violated. The record shows that these kinds of complaints were indeed common. The ability of traditional authorities to negotiate the least possible abusive agreements was influenced by a number of variables including the relative independence of their community, the relative strength of various sectors of local elites, the patterns of conflicts between local elites, the ritual kinship relationships between community leaders and elites, how abusive or benevolent *mestizos* were, how adept community leaders were at negotiation and how committed to the community and, even, how brave they were, and what other resources they could muster. All these factors were subject to considerable variation across time and space and indigenous authorities showed considerable skill in taking advantage of openings offered by changes of correlations of power once they became aware of them.

Given the extreme forms of exploitation that existed well into the 20th century, community leaders' dealings with local elites were constantly full of a great deal of underlying tensions and conflicts. The threat of the use of force or violence by either party was always close to the surface. Indigenous authorities who did not cooperate with local power sectors could be jailed for a day or two or suffer physical abuse. When abuses were too great indigenous people also could and did resort to violence (Manrique 1981:230). These kinds of actions were taken only in extreme cases and were decided in assemblies. They could be led by traditional authorities or others (Mendez 1991:170,178; Ossio & Fuenzalida 1983:50). Punishment for such actions could be severe and there were almost always deaths. However,

sometimes concrete goals were accomplished and just as importantly elites were always aware of the threat of violence. Indigenous people, in fact, were quite aware that the implicit threat of violence was a weapon (Drzewieniecki Forthcoming).

The kinds of agreements struck by traditional authorities with local power sectors may seem extremely disadvantageous from the perspective of an industrialized western society. Indigenous people, after all, remained in a highly unfavorable position. However, for people living in politically and economically precarious positions, little differences can be very important and it is in this context that the work of traditional authorities were judged by indigenous people themselves. Of course, indigenous perceptions of what was an acceptable negotiated agreement tended to vary considerably over time and space. Among the factors that could influence these perceptions, were changes in correlations of power among local elites and indigenous people, changes in the economic situation of indigenous people, and the spread of new ideologies. For example, millenarian ideologies aimed at the creation of an indigenous state spread from time to time among communities (Flores Galindo 1988; Ossio 1973) awakening hopes of complete liberation from oppression. In the 20th century, progressive movements to help indigenous people and paternalistic legislation in the 1920s also awakened hopes of significant changes in exploitative relations. The same was true of modern ideas and leftist ideologies. Whether originating in indigenous communities, brought by returning migrants, introduced by middle class allies, or by political party representatives, all these ideas tended to redefine the acceptable limits to exploitation. The same was true of the improved understanding of the outside world gained by those communities that expanded their economic and political contacts with the outside world.

The reaction of traditional authorities to all of these changes varied. In some communities they adjusted their behavior to changes in the environment and in the perceptions of *comuneros*. In others, they did not and began to be seen by *comuneros* as subservient to *mestizos* (Instituto Indigenista Peruano 1967-1969), and were gradually replaced in power and influence by official authorities. Official community authorities continued relations with local power sectors under similar pressures.

For many decades, then, traditional authorities played a very important role in defining the relations between communities and the outside world. They enjoyed enormous legitimacy within communities and as representatives of the interests of *comuneros*. They also represented an obstacle to local power sectors who made several efforts to outlaw them in the 19th century (Ordoñez 1919:27,34). Many traditional authorities did their best to ameliorate the difficult conditions in which

indigenous people found themselves and their accomplishments in ameliorating oppression and accomplishing community goals must be judged in the context of what could actually be accomplished given prevailing conditions. The political legitimacy of traditional authorities began to decline through the joint action of processes of modernization affecting all of Peruvian society and Andean *comuneros'* gradual adoption of more western ideas undermined some of the cosmology and ritual which helped sustain the political rationale of the system of traditional authorities. As noted already, this process is still not complete and there continue to be traditional authorities in Andean communities though often their functions are more limited and official authorities play a much more important role in dealings with outsiders.

7. Conclusions

The analysis presented here differs from the majority of previous studies that deal with indigenous people in the Andes.¹⁶ Usually these empirical studies concentrate on one community or one region over a very short period of time or, more recently, for longer periods. Their narrow historical focus makes it difficult to recognize some of the recurring patterns in Andean political behavior. In addition, all too often studies on indigenous people either stress the persistence of Andean culture to the exclusion of outside influences or discount the importance of Andean culture and present communities as more or less fully integrated into the capitalist and westernized political and economic system of Peru.

This study has demonstrated the utility of a structural approach in understanding patterns of indigenous political behavior over long periods of time. Only by looking at political structures historically and across the Andes is it possible to discern not only why indigenous people behaved the way they did but the kind of change that took place. Furthermore, it has been shown that political structures originating in Andean culture had a very important influence on peasant politics into the 1960s and even later. It is only possible to assess this influence if we take into consideration that these political structures constantly underwent adaptations and changes but, and this is very important, they also continued to have a dynamic of their own that was different (in varying degrees over time) from the dynamics from the rest of Peruvian society. Communities constantly reproduced themselves politically reinterpreting Andean norms and sometimes incorporating or utilizing norms from the rest of Peruvian society.

The information presented also challenges some other prevalent ideas about indigenous communities. For example, a preliminary argument is presented on the nature of egalitarianism in Andean societies. In comparison to many similar

societies around the world, Andean communities in the Republican period have been remarkably egalitarian. This egalitarianism, however, did not mean that everyone was absolutely equal or that conflict did not exist. This kind of egalitarianism never existed anywhere. Differences in wealth, power, and prestige as well as conflicts a plenty were always present in Andean communities. What is interesting is the mechanisms that communities developed over centuries to keep these conflicts and inequalities in check and how these mechanisms continued to work, though somewhat weakened, even in the face of modernization.

Finally, this study has also illustrated the many different ways that a people who live under conditions of severe domination can engage in politics. We have seen that within communities virtually everyone participated in politics in some way to a degree unimaginable in our society. In addition, many communities, far from accepting domination submissively, incessantly engaged in political activity designed to ameliorate conditions of exploitation or advance indigenous interests, often sensitive to changes in local correlation of forces and taking advantage of the possibilities they offered. Through all these political efforts, they not only shaped their own history but also the history of Peru.¹⁷

NOTES

- ¹ In 1969 the Peruvian government expropriated the remaining *haciendas* and distributed land to peasants. For a variety of reasons their economic situation did not improve very much though the political changes both real and symbolic were important.
- ² See also Drzewieniecki (1995a, forthcoming).
- ³ Sánchez-Parga's work is on Ecuador. There are sufficient similarities in the situation of indigenous people in the Andean countries of Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia to permit the judicious use of some Ecuadoran and Bolivian sources for interpreting indigenous politics and culture in Peru.
- ⁴ The characteristics and functions of communities have been the subject of much debate. For major some contrasting views see Carter & Albo (1988), Fuenzalida (1976), Gonzáles de Olarte (1984), Matos Mar (1976), Sánchez (1982), and Sánchez-Parga (1985, 1986, 1989).
- ⁵ I am indebted to the structural analysis of Andean societies by José Sánchez-Parga (1986, 1989) for the basic conceptualization of the role of political structures in Andean societies underlying the following discussion.
- ⁶ As in other aspects of Andean social organization, there is a good deal of variety across communities in the exact form and content of the major types of reciprocal exchanges (Fonseca 1972; Guillet 1980; Isbell 1978; Mayer 1972; Orlove 1977).
- ⁷ There is evidence that indigenous people also viewed their relationship with the state as reciprocal, at least in the first half of the 19th century (Hünefeldt 1989; Platt 1988; Thurner 1993:456-57).
- ⁸ The literature on dualism is rich. Some works important works include Bolton & Mayer (1977), Earls (1973), Mayer (1974), Ossio (1992:387-394), Platt (1986), Sánchez-Parga (1989). For the preConquest period see Rostworowski (1988) and Zuidema (1989).
- ⁹ The information in this paragraph is based on ground-breaking analysis of factionalism in Andean communities by Sánchez-Parga (1989); see also Albo (1976).
- ¹⁰ In a few communities there were also parallel women authorities (Mayer 1974:242; Silverblatt 1988; Valderrama & Escalante 1988).
- ¹¹ Not covered here is the role of community elders (usually former *varayod/hilacatas* who have an important consultative role in most communities (e.g. Arguedas 1976:119; Doughty 1971:99).
- ¹² Some interesting *comunero* views on authorities, good and bad, can be found in Matos Mar (1986:66-74).
- ¹³ There are no general studies about the role of assemblies though there is much information about how they worked in particular cases. Some sources include Albo (1976:69), Coombs (1987:124-125), Mayer (1974:226) for project decisions, Brandt (1987), de Trazegnies (1977), and Revilla & Price (1992) for punishment, and Manrique (1981) and Drzewieniecki (forthcoming) for decisions on military and other similar actions. See Smith (1989) for general information on decision-making.
- ¹⁴ Communities varied considerably in the extent to which violations of the law (both customary and Peruvian) were taken to state authorities or handled by community authorities (see Drzewieniecki 1995a for a detailed discussion).
- ¹⁵ For example, see modernization theorists Dobyns, Doughty, and Lasswell (1964) and Whyte and Alberti (1976) as well as more nuanced approaches in Montoya (1980) and Tamayo Herrera (1982).
- ¹⁶ The exception is the work of Sánchez-Parga (1986, 1989).
- ¹⁷ Drzewieniecki (forthcoming) treats this subject in detail.