

5-29-2013

Losing the Hacienda: the Agrarian Reform's Effect on Landowners in the Peruvian Andes

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(503) 883-2708

MEMORANDUM

DATE: **July 23, 2012**
TO: Susana Fajardo

FROM: **Kay Livesay**
Committee for Human Research Participation (CHRP)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
IORG0002606

RE: **CHRP/IRB 201112-55**
Title of research: Palmira Torres Giron de Fajardo and the Peruvian Agrarian Reform

The IRB has reviewed the above titled application and grant IRB approval to the research. You may start collecting data. As the primary investigator for this project you hereby accept the responsibility to comply with the standards and requirements established by the Belmont Report to protect the rights and welfare of human participants involved in research conducted under this application. By preceding with your research you acknowledge that you are responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of each research participant, and that the participant's rights and welfare must take precedence over the goals of the research.

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If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (503) 883-2708.

Thank you,

Kay Livesay
Associate Professor of Psychology
Chair IRB
klivesa@linfield.edu
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Losing the Hacienda: the Agrarian Reform's Effect on Landowners in the Peruvian Andes

Susana Fajardo

Anthropology, Linfield College

May 29, 2013

Abstract

In 1968 the Peruvian government was overtaken by a military coup, ushering in the agrarian reform—a system of land distribution that would irrevocably change the country. Concepción,¹ a member of the land-owning elite, lived in a time and place at the very heart of the agrarian reform. As both a woman and acting manager for her family's haciendas during the 1950s and 1960s, she provides an excellent case study of how Peru's national agrarian reform policies changed the lives of land-owners in the highlands of Ayacucho. I will use her life to do an ethnography of the particular² to examine the central need for region-level analysis when studying the agrarian reform. Examination of class structure, racial differences, gender, and land-ownership show that rather than being truly revolutionary, the agrarian reform was just the final straw for a system already in steep deterioration.

Introduction

Undeniably, the Peruvian agrarian reform has left a legacy that still impacts the country to this day. After their conquest of the Inca empire was completed, the Spanish crown began instituting a land tenure system in the form of haciendas—large swaths of land given as a reward

¹ All names have been changed to protect privacy.

² An ethnography of the particular is a method that uses the particular to study the whole. By deeply examining an individual or a small piece, a greater understanding of the greater picture can be achieved. Examples of this are *Nisa: the Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* by Marjorie Shostak and *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story* by Ruth Behar. In both of these cases, the author used the story of one woman to greater illuminate and examine aspects of the society as a whole (Shostak 1981; Behar 2003). Additionally, this method gives voice to the individual experience in ways that using a larger sample size can sometimes overlook.

to conquistadores and others (Klarén 2000, pp. 78). This feudalistic system gave much wealth and, in consequence, political power to a small group of hacienda owners called *hacendados*³. In addition to millions of acres of hacienda land, hacendados also acquired quasi-feudal rights over and obligations to the people who lived and worked the haciendas (Klarén 2000, pp. 78). Wealth, prestige, power, and money were funneled into the hands of a small group at the expense of millions of poor peasants who were forced to give labor, goods, or money to their hacendados (Klarén 2000,79). Although hacendados were obligated to give their peasants certain rights and protections, the system overall exploited the labor of workers. The hacienda system may have been current with the times when it was created in the seventeenth century, but by the twentieth century the haciendas were woefully out of date. Hundreds of years of mistreatment and little autonomy had, by then, created a great sense of injustice among the peasantry. Peasant unrest and unhappiness had always been part of the hacienda experience (Valencia 1984, 29) but by the mid-twentieth century it was becoming apparent that the haciendas were increasingly untenable.

On October 3, 1968 a highly skilled group of Peruvian army rangers crossed the Rimac River and invaded Peru's presidential palace. General Juan Velasco Alvarado, chief of the Peruvian armed forces, successfully lead the takeover of the Peruvian government and the arrest of then President Fernando Belaúnde. Velasco later became the leader of the Government of the Armed Forces, the group that would control Peru for the next twelve years. Even though Velasco's rise to power was sudden and accomplished by means of force, the Peruvian peasantry grew to love him, nicknaming him El Chino (The Chinese Guy). Velasco's regime treated them

³ The term *hacendado* is a Spanish word for a person who owns or controls a hacienda or haciendas. Most Spanish words are modified based on number and gender. This term is no different. When talking about a single, male hacienda owner the term is *hacendado*. A female hacienda owner is a *hacendada*. When speaking about more than one male hacienda owner the term is *hacendados*; when speaking about more than one female hacienda owner it is *hacendadas*. When speaking about more than one hacienda owner and at least one of the subjects is male the plural, male form—*hacendados*—is always used.

When the subject is ambiguous, assume that the term implies both genders. Thus, when I use the term *hacendados* it will refer to all hacienda owners, male and female, unless I explicitly state otherwise.

with more respect and dignity than any prior leaders had and let the average person in the political process in ways that had been previously barred to them. He was, however, unpopular with the upper classes and parts of the middle class. They saw him as a threat to their elevated social position. This was not without cause: within a few years Velasco had dramatically shifted the way the government treated them and had abolished many of the privileges that they had until then taken for granted (Mayer 2009, pp. 2-5).

In a 1969 speech Velasco announced to the poor of the country that “the landlord is no longer going to eat from your poverty” (Mayer 2009, pp. 20); the agrarian reform was thus begun. Within two days the government began taking control of coastal haciendas (Mayer 2009, pp. 20). Over the next ten years the government claimed over fifteen thousand properties and nine million hectares of land, all in the name of the people (Mayer 2009, pp. 20). This seized land was then redistributed to landless peasantry, the majority of which was pressured into joining agricultural cooperatives (Mayer 2009, pp. 20-21). Three hundred thousand families participated in these cooperatives—exercising an autonomy and self-determination that they had never before experienced (Mayer 2009, pp. 21). Although participation in political processes and local autonomy was greater than ever, thanks in large part to the cooperatives, the reform’s redistribution ultimately failed. The new system was not sustainable. The agrarian reform did succeed in breaking land monopolies but it did not solve many of the problems it hoped to address; instead, it transferred them from haciendas to the newly redistributed properties (Mayer 2009, pp. 23). Most cooperatives fell apart within a few years due to internal conflicts and Peru’s agricultural sector floundered until the mid-1980s (Mayer 2009, pp. 23).

Concepción, an hacendada in Ayacucho, was personally impacted by the sweeping changes brought about by the Government of the Armed Forces. Born in Huanta and later a

Map 1: Peru



From: http://www.theodora.com/maps/new9/peru_administrative_map.gif

member of the social elite in Huamanga (the state capitol of Ayacucho), she was raised in a life of privilege. Her father was a wealthy hacendado and her husband, Francisco, was both an hacendado and successful lawyer. A land-owning hacendada in her own right, she was greatly tied to the family estates and managed all of the family properties during the 1950s and 1960s. She remained in the state of Ayacucho until the early 1980s and experienced first-hand the

repossession of her family's property during the agrarian reform. Her story helps makes sense of how Peru's agrarian reform played out on the ground. She died in 2006, but living memory still rests with her children. For this study, her children Manuel, Carmen, Luis, and Jesús all agreed to

Map 2: The State of Ayacucho



From: http://www.ayacucho Peru.com/archivos/imagen/mapa_ayacucho.gif

be interviewed. Through the use of their narratives, I will use her story as a lens to answer this central question: how did the agrarian reform affect those living in the state of Ayacucho, Peru, particularly landowners? Additionally, I will argue against macro-level analysis and demonstrate

the absolute need for regionalized analysis when studying the agrarian reform. Furthermore, I will argue that with its inclusion of prestige and social status as analytical categories, a Weberian approach makes far more sense of this case than does a Marxian approach focused solely on class to understanding Peru's social realities.

Theory

Karl Marx, father of conflict theory, argues that “the history of all hitherto society is the history of class struggle” (Marx 1948). Ultimately, Marx sees humanity's struggles bound up in the fight for control over the means of production. Capitalist societies, he argues, are organized into two distinct classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie control the means of production—they own capital and wield power in society because of it (Marx 1848). The proletariat, however, work for the bourgeoisie and provide the labor necessary for the production of new material goods. Moreover, labor is itself treated as a commodity. Laborers (proletariat), therefore, must monetize the work they perform, in essence selling themselves as a commodity—all the while competing against each other within their class. The proletariat, in order to sell their labor, must undercut the value of their own work in order to make themselves more appealing to potential employers. On the whole, while they provide the raw labor that fuels industrialized capitalism, they are caught in a constant cycle of exploitation. The proletariat, as the disenfranchised and disempowered, struggle to gain power in society. The bourgeoisie, however, struggle equally as hard to maintain and solidify the power they already have. It is this constant class-based fight for dominance that propels society forward, propels invention and modernization.

While Marx remains popular over a century later not all conflict theorists agree with his assessment. Max Weber, another prominent theorist, does believe in the utility of some form of class concept but also sees society as more complexly organized. He argues that there are three basic principles around which people organize: class, status, and party. In his analysis of classes Weber says that:

“Classes are not communities; they merely represent possible, and frequent, bases for communal action. We may speak of a “class” when 1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chance, in so far as 2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and 3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets” (Weber 1922, pp. 98).

That is, classes have more to do with specific life-chances. People in the same class will have similar opportunities for economic advancement, education, material wealth, power, etc. Overall, classes are heavily tied to socioeconomics.

Status, on the other hand, is less to do with wealth or life-chances and more to do with what esteem society holds a person in. Weber argues that “in contrast to the purely economically determined ‘class situation’ we wish to designate as ‘status situation’ every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*” (Weber 1922: 103). This honor can cut across classes and vary widely within social classes. More than anything, it boils down to prestige, prestige that can be both earned and lost in the course of one’s life.

Additionally, Weber argues that parties are groups whose “action is oriented toward the acquisition of social ‘power’” (Weber 1922: 108). That is, that groups, or parties, are formulated and act with the specific purpose of gaining or exercising influence over others and social life in general. They can exist across classes and statuses.

While Weber sees societies as organized along three distinct but intersecting axes—class, status, and party—theorist Pierre Bourdieu sees advancement as centering on the deployment of accumulated capital, which can take various forms, in fields. Bourdieu argues that capital, in its essence, is “accumulated labor” which, “when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor” (Bourdieu 1986). Labor, in other words, can be transformed into a social commodity that can then be used as leverage into a better social position.

Bourdieu (1986) argues that there are three basic types of capital: social, economic, and cultural. Economic capital is the most recognizable form of capital, given its central role in the capitalist economic system. It is the wealth that individuals accumulate or have at their disposal. Social capital is the network of acquaintances and relationships that individuals that can be mobilized to better one’s own social position (Bourdieu 1986). These networks may either be built by the individual or inherited from others. The larger and more influential the network, the more social capital an individual has. Cultural capital, finally, is non-economic or experiential assets that a person can use to elevate their own position in society (Bourdieu 1986). Education, for example, is a form of cultural capital that is earned through experience.

Each of the three types of capital can be converted into another type of capital at different rates, depending on the social field. For example, a broad social network (social capital) can lead to a good job that has with higher wages (economic capital). Social capital, then, turns into economic capital. At that job, the employee gains experience (cultural capital) and new contacts (social capital). Conversions can be repeated endlessly. Successful strategies hinge on appropriate cultural capital—the knowledge and consumption styles appropriate to the position being claimed.

Terminology

Like many places in Peru, the state of Ayacucho has a complicated history. Originally, before the Spanish conquest and during the colonial era, the name of the region and capital city was Huamanga. It was known under that name until Peruvian independence when the city's name was officially changed to Ayacucho. The town however, is still known by both names. To confuse matters further, Ayacucho is also the name of the state. Within the state are eleven provinces—one of which is named Huamanga, where the state capital of Ayacucho/Humanga is located. For obvious reasons, this dual terminology is confusing for informational purposes. Thus, for clarity, when referring to the state or greater region I will use the term Ayacucho. When speaking of the capital city, I will use the name Huamanga. Direct quotes will be adjusted to reflect this usage.

Additionally, what terminology to use is a charged topic of discussion in the literature on haciendas and the agrarian reform. While some terms—like peasant—are more or less direct translations from Spanish to English, their connotations are not always politically correct. Many are quite charged with layers of deep historical or racial significance (Indians vs. indigenous, for example), often painful ones for vulnerable communities. As a researcher, I know that using proper terminology is important. I also acknowledge that these debates are important within the discipline, but for the purposes of this paper I will use the terminology employed by my informants, with adjustments for specific localisms. This project relies heavily on interviews as the primary source of information, with direct quotes frequently used. Using the same terminology in my discussion as my informants used in interviews will provide continuity that will be easiest for readers to understand.

Literature Review

Although the literature on the Peruvian agrarian reform is vast, little of it focuses on the state of Ayacucho specifically. *Luchas Campesinas en el Contexto Semifeudal del Oriente de Lucanas (Ayacucho)* by Félix Valencia Quintanilla is one of the few works (possibly the only) that focuses solely on the agrarian reform in the state of Ayacucho. The author argues that the armed peasant uprisings against the ruling elite seen in Lucanas⁴ are exemplary of the struggles and peasant resistance that Peru experienced as a whole (Valencia 1984, pp. 127). Without the semi-feudalistic state that had been created in Peru because of the hacienda system the people of Lucanas would not have been able to create the combative and class-based movement that they did (Valencia 1984, 127). Valencia Quintanilla's historical analyses of the evolution of agriculture and economy in Lucanas provides a window into how the feudalistic past in Lucanas played a direct role in lighting the fire for later violent peasant uprisings. He points out that resistance to feudalism in Lucanas was not new but had, in fact, been a form of social protest since the early colonial period (Valencia 1984, 29). After successful, violent uprisings in the city of Chipao—prior to the beginning of the agrarian reform—brought positive changes to the life of the peasantry, the author boils down the lessons learned in Lucanas into six points:

1. “The peasantry, even when they are not politically organized, must collectively and spontaneously rise up in the defense of their legitimate, class-based investment in the land.
2. The revolutionary faction of the peasantry maintained the spirit necessary to give the movement the fire it needed.
3. The secret to the peasant movement's triumph was its capacity to generate mass-action firmly based in its own internal strength.
4. In the fight, the poor peasant is able to demonstrate their capacity for class-struggle.
5. Violence is the only path available to peasants if they want to liberate themselves from all of their social bondage

⁴ A province in Ayacucho

6. In the city of Chipao during this time, the determining factor for the movement's success was the peasant's support of favorable socio-economic conditions" (Valencia Quintanilla 1984, 50).⁵

These lessons, Valencia Quintanilla argues, played a pivotal role in shaping the nature of class struggle in Lucanas over the next decade and well into the beginning of the reform era (Valencia 1984, 50). As is obvious in this excerpt, due to his frequent references to class-struggle and social bondage, the author's analysis relies heavily on Marx's theories about power, conflict, modes of production, and class-based society. He sees this manifest itself not only in Peru other ideologically-based conflicts, the Vietnam War in particular. Throughout the book many comparisons between Vietnam and Peru are made. He makes the argument that fighting is necessary for revolutionary change—which is why peasants being spirited enough to take up arms in places like Lucanas is important to understanding the entirety of the reform. The struggles seen in both Lucanas, and Peru as a whole, he believes demonstrates how the revolutionary proletariat can overcome the bourgeoisie's power and the shadow of imperialism (Valencia 1984, 139). In this way, the author holds that the struggles seen in Ayacucho are important to understanding the whole of the reform.

Luchas Campesinas is laden with historical-based analysis and macro-level generalizations. While this is useful in its way, it glosses over the deeply personal impacts that sweeping changes can have on individuals. One of the best records of personal experience for the agrarian reform is *La Reforma Agraria Peruana* by Hernando Guerra Garcia Cueva. The author worked as a land administrator during the reform and is a graduate of the National Agrarian University of la Molina in Lima. Because of his work in agriculture and academia, the agrarian reform influenced his life greatly and his work aims to bring the agrarian reform back into public consciousness (Guerra 2009, 11-12). Forty years after the reform the author still strives to record

⁵ This quote was originally in Spanish. I have translated it for easier reading.

the effect of the reform on individual lives. Many of the impacts the reform had and the stories that it generated, he believed, are being lost from public memory despite the reform's continual effect on contemporary Peru (Guerra 2009, pp 11).

The work is a series of interviews with people who experienced the reform firsthand, all of which are transcribed and edited. The majority of his interviewees were professionals during the reform—doctors, lawyers, agricultural engineers, professors, etc. His sample suffers bias from a lack of diversity, though it could be argued that the focus on people of a higher social class sets it apart from the many primarily peasant-driven narratives. Because of the work's focus on individuals, he brings depth and realism to deep issues that could easily be overlooked. This collection of first-hand data is ripe for use in conjunction with data any researcher has already collected or other preexisting research. Because it is a collection of interview transcriptions the work offers no arguments or analysis—instead, it offers the opportunity for the reader to look at a plethora of information and come to their own conclusion.

Another work focusing on individual experience is *Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform* by Enrique Mayer (2009). Arguably the most well-known and respected book on the Peruvian agrarian reform, this work investigates what a diverse mix of Peruvians remember from the reform and how they evaluate it now, years after the reform's end (Mayer 2009, xix). By mixing historical research, critical analysis, and a series of oral histories from Peruvians of all walks of life, Mayer avoids problems noted above. Of special interest to the author was how people managed *tumbos de vida*, a local term for constant and dramatic shifts in circumstance (Mayer 2009, xix). The author cautions that “[t]his book is not a history of the agrarian reform, but an invitation to readers to remember and reflect, to tell each other more stories about those

times, to reminisce, and to ponder what was important to them and to the nation as events unfolded forty years ago” (Mayer 2009, xx).

In this endeavor Mayer interviewed numerous hacendados who owned large swaths of land before the reform hit. Almost overnight they went from members of an incredibly influential group who had held centuries-old prestige to “class enemies” that aimed to keep the common people down (Mayer 2009, 77). Mayer’s inclusion of hacendado viewpoints stands out because, even though they played an important role in the reform, hacendados are often forgotten in discussions of it. Although the hacienda system was already in a steady decline, the expropriation of land and end of the feudal system still came as a sudden shock to many hacendados (Mayer 2009, pp. 108). They felt that the government was taking advantage of law abiding—if wealthy—citizens because the hacienda system had been codified for hundreds of years (Mayer 2009, pp. 83). Their cries were, however, largely ignored. Mayer admits that “... the landowners were very eager to provide me with their points of view as they felt that since the reform no one had given them a chance to express them” (Mayer 2009, pp. 77).

The testimonies he collected tell a difficult story. On the one hand, the hacienda system was clearly built upon the exploitation of the peasantry. On the other, the hacendados went from culturally valued citizens to being the object of collective national outrage. Lands that had once been theirs were taken from them, parceled up and given to landless individuals or peasant cooperatives (Mayer 2009, pp. 107). Without the guidance of the hacendados much of the land was mishandled (Mayer 2009, pp. 98-99). The loss of tradition, family honor, and wealth was oftentimes very painful. As Don Alberto Eduardo Amat, an hacendado declared, “I have been stabbed right here in the heart!” (Mayer 2009, pp. 77). The monetary compensation they received for their land was not nearly enough to compensate for their loss (Mayer 2009, pp. 90). An

hacendado named Lucho Alcázar speaks on when he received the appropriation papers for his hacienda:

“With that paper I ceased to be an owner of what had been mine for so many years, something that had belonged to my grandparents. And that paper said that it was because of the social system that I would cease to be the owner of the hacienda that had cost us so much work to bring about. The paper made it clear that I had very few options, very little that I could do about it” (Mayer 2009, pp. 90).

Mayer points out that, although there was much emotional pain, ultimately most hacendados were not left destitute despite the appropriation of their land. Many retained their ties in business, politics, the financial sector, and their positions as power-brokers in general (Mayer 2009, pp. 108). Although they lost much of their wealth during the reform, those hacendados who have managed to retain their affluence “have become the ‘good’ guys in the global neoliberal age” (Mayer 2009, pp. 108).

Mayer reports such common feelings of justice and frustration with informants’ memory as his primary source of information (Mayer 2009, pp. xv). Though it would be naïve to believe that memories are free from bias or that they are by any means unadulterated, complete accounts, it would be just as naïve to believe that “personal experiences stand for larger social processes unleashed by the massive process of expropriation and redistribution” in Peru (Mayer 2009, pp. xvii). Yet they are still valid forms of primary data because they stand as testimony to what cannot, and should not, be forgotten. Allowing readers access to the raw emotions and palpable realism that comes from stories allows them to come as close as possible to first-hand experience.

This was the task of Ruth Behar in *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza’s Story*. (1993) Using both memory and understanding through transference of first-hand accounts Behar’s work is exemplary of postmodernist methodology. The author tells the

story of one woman, Esperanza Hernández, a social outcast and suspected witch living near the U.S.-Mexico (Behar 1993, pp. 2). Over the course of many years Behar interviewed Esperanza about her life and her experiences in order to analyze *mestiza*⁶ identity and the larger societal forces that shape it (Behar 1993, pp. 10-11). *Translated Woman* relies not only on oral histories but also tells the narrative of one life. In deeply examining the singular—and how it relates to the surrounding environment—it is easier to view and analyze the whole. Having a solid information base with which to compare other points of view and other realities allows a unique perspective in which to examine larger issues, whether it be mestiza identity or the agrarian reform.

Behar's work relies heavily on oral histories and she notes the importance of life histories or life stories. The Spanish term *historia* is most appropriate for this type of research because it does not make a distinction between a story and a history (Behar 1993, pp. 16). A *historia* is neither and both simultaneously because the two categories are so enmeshed that the "border between history and story, reality and fiction, is a fluid one." (Behar 1993, pp. 16). Behar argues that histories and stories were not divided until the nineteenth century when history became an academic discipline (Behar 1993, pp. 16-17). The separation—or joining—of history and story is at the center of the debate about truth. In the search for truth the speaker shapes the way the information is received because they choose what information to include or exclude. Retelling stories and relaying information—such as in Behar's work and in mine—changes the information because narratives are rarely told the same way twice. Esperanza herself noted that the way in which a narrative is told changes its believability (Behar 1993, pp. 18).

In truth, this is why it is often difficult to easily separate histories and stories into two neat categories. Much anthropological research—especially postmodernist work—relies on this reality (Behar 1993, pp. 17). Behar notes that "recent telling of ethnographic tales... rely on

⁶ A woman of mixed heritage, usually indigenous and Anglo.

blurred or mixed genres that make it increasingly difficult to give a single label to a work” (Behar 1993, pp. 17). This makes finding the complete “truth” complex and labyrinthine. The American academy has already begun to accept that the complete truth in both history and ethnography may be impossible to find (Behar 1993, 17). Acknowledging the subjectivity and fluidity in narratives and transfer of information necessarily implies that point of view is of central concern. This is why telling *historias* becomes and remains so important. *Historias* make their point of view clearly evident which allows the reader to more easily draw their own conclusions about the truth and validity of the work.

Methods

Concepción, the focal point for this project, died seven years ago at an admirably old age. So did her siblings and others in her close cohort. Because of this, the memories of people who were closest to her are the most reliable resources for piecing together her past. In this case, the subject’s children and close relatives were the best choice and served as the primary informants for this project. Concepción’s four children—Luis, Jesús, Carmen, and Manuel—are all aging, now grandparents, and are the last members of Concepción’s family who remember the haciendas as they were before the government repossessed them. Because each plays such a specific role within the project, basic information on each child is necessary:

- Jesús, the eldest, was the first to leave Huamanga and migrate to Lima. He, like his father, pursued careers in law and academia. During the reform he worked at a high level position in one of the national agrarian reform offices. His job entailed extensive review and implementation of research that had been done under Velasco. In the years since the

reform he has capitalized on this experience by writing books on Velasco and the reform's successes and failures.

- Luis became a wildly successful businessman. He was the last child to leave Huamanga, relocating to Lima in the 1980s due to Peru's brutal civil war. He also worked for the reform during Velasco's presidency, although not in such a lofty position as his brother.
- Carmen married young and became a housewife. When her children were grown she began to take jobs outside of the house. But, because she was not tied to a job until later in life, she spent the most time with her mother and was the closest to her emotionally.
- Manuel left for military service and became a doctor. He was the youngest child and spent much of his time on the haciendas before they were taken. Out of the four he has the clearest recollection of the land itself.

During the interviewing process I found each had a unique perspective and areas of knowledge in which their memories were particularly rich. All, however, were more than willing to cooperate and happily shared stories about their mother.

According to Carmen, Concepción grew up on an hacienda in northern Ayacucho. But, because she came from a wealthy family, her father sent her to a boarding school in Huamanga beginning in childhood. During her teenage years she met Francisco, a local boy who ate lunch at a café attached to her school, who was being raised by his aunt. While he was also an hacendado, he was not nearly as wealthy as Concepción. They met and secretly courted for months before finally deciding to elope. Concepción's father was deeply hurt by the scandal and ostracized her at first, reconciling a decade later. Because Francisco's education and career were tied to Huamanga city, the two decided to live there permanently rather than moving onto one of the

family's haciendas. Francisco went off to pursue careers both in law and academia; she became a housewife and raised the family.

Because Francisco was focusing on a career, Concepción managed and oversaw the two relatively sizeable haciendas that the couple owned. These haciendas were far from the city and were only accessible on horseback. Though they functioned as status symbols and points of personal pride, the haciendas were not economically sustainable. The family knew this all too well—they were not financially viable despite their large size. Because of this, in the 1960s the couple decided to sell both haciendas in order to finance the purchase of a smaller hacienda named Wayupacha. This hacienda, although small, was more accessible to the family and less of a financial drain. This was the hacienda later seized by Velasco. The couple, though deeply hurt by the reform, stayed in Huamanga for a decade after their land was taken. No member of the family ever went back to what had once been the family's estates. They simply continued their lives as usual. In the 1980s, however, Peru sank into a brutal civil war, whose epicenter was in Huamanga, so. Fearing for their safety, they fled in the early 1980s and relocated permanently to Lima (Carmen, personal communication, 2012).

Obviously, recounting personal information and stories—like that of their mother's life—opened many discomfiting aspects. Due to the intensely personal nature of each interview's subject matter, remaining sensitive at all times was of paramount important to me. One of the main hurdles was language. All interviewees were born in Peru and learned Spanish as their first language. Two, however, have spent significant amounts of time in the United States and have subsequently become fluent in English. All interviewees knew that English is my first and primary language but that I have also learned Spanish in recent years. Due to this situation, sensitivity to language was very important. Before interviewing, I asked the bilingual speakers

what their preferred language was in order to make feel at ease. Both chose English so that was the interview language used. I, obviously, spoke Spanish to those who did not know English. The same set of basic interview questions was used for all interviews, translated into the appropriate language as needed. Those questions were used as a starting point to lead to further conversation. Because of this all interviews were semi-structured; each lasted between 45 and 80 minutes.

Interviews provided the main source of information, but getting them from such a specific pool provided difficult. Research participants were spread across the Western hemisphere. All four subjects were interviewed between August and November 2012, in both Peru and the United States. Before interviewing I explained the project and obtained informed consent. Once secured, each interview took place individually and was digitally recorded.

Discussion

In order to understand the hacienda system—a system that is, at its most basic level, a system of extremely unequal land ownership—understanding the geography of Peru is necessary (see Map 1). The extraordinary diversity of climates and resources within the country have had an immense effect on the country's history, particularly the agrarian reform. Klarén asserts that to understand any part of Peru's history “one needs to begin with Peru's environment and ecology...Peru is truly a land of contrasts. Its diverse terrain includes lifeless deserts; teeming rain forests; precipitous intermontane valleys; and high, windswept plains” (Klarén 2000, pp. 1). For the most part Peru's terrain can be split into three broad categories: coastal desert, mountain,

and jungle. The large estate system, because it stretched across the entire country, included all of these terrain types to some degree.⁷

One of those areas, the coastal region of La Libertad, had an especially great effect on the country's trajectory due to the way that the estate system manifested itself there. Jesús, when asked about the northern coast, stated that the haciendas in the La Libertad region were more like Caribbean plantations than anything found in the Andes. This made them somewhat unique. They, for the most part, grew sugar cane and were hugely profitable due to their large size (again, Jesús said that they were "bigger than Belgium"), the high demand for sugar, and easy access to oceanic shipping routes.

Overall, coastal estates were economic powerhouses and their owners wielded enormous power over Peru as a whole. Jesús said that they were "practically the owners of the country" (Jesús, personal communication, 2012). He further asserted that this was not the case for every hacienda, even for every region. As a researcher and a high-level employee of in one of the national agrarian reform offices he had unique insight into the situation. He stated that "[in other places] the situation was different. For instance, in Cuzco haciendas were [sometimes] like Belgium, that size" (Jesús, personal communication, 2012). And, he added, the Cuzco region is generally more productive because the land in the southern mountains receives more rainfall. Although not overly productive, the haciendas in Cuzco were somewhat profitable economically as much from access to outside markets as arable land available. In this Ayacucho and Cuzco differed. According to Jesus, when discussing Ayacucho, "we have to start with this: in Ayacucho there were only a few, big haciendas" (Jesús, personal communication, 2012). Overall, he said, the haciendas in that region were small, sometimes more akin to a family farm.

⁷ While the distinction between haciendas and plantations are important, I will not elaborate on them in this work. For a thorough analysis see "Haciendas and Plantations in Middle America and the Antilles" by Wolf and Mintz (1957).

And, because of the high altitude and generally arid climate,⁸ haciendas overall were not productive, and even if large would not have conferred much wealth upon their owners. This was not always the case in mountainous regions but was the case in Ayacucho.

La Libertad, Ayacucho, and Cuzco are just three of the many regions in Peru and yet are vastly different. Obviously, assuming that haciendas worked uniformly all over the country would be inherently detrimental to any academic analysis because it oversimplifies a complex system. At the outset of any analysis of the agrarian reform it is important to remember this widespread ecological variation. It meant that haciendas were not uniform across Peru. Although there were similarities between haciendas in different parts of the country—that social value was placed upon hacienda ownership, for instance—overall there was considerable variation between regions.

Another type of variation that played into regionalization is local history. Although located in a rugged area of the central Andes, Ayacucho has played a surprisingly central part in Peru's long history. Huamanga, the capital, was founded in the 1500s after Spain's successful takeover of the Inca Empire (Luis, personal communication, 2012). Because of the high and rugged mountains, the region is difficult to traverse and not very productive agriculturally (Luis, personal communication, 2012). What made the city wealthy, however, was its location relative to Cuzco and Lima—two of the country's economic centers. According to Luis, until the new roads and rail lines were built, any merchant or trading caravan that wanted to get to Cuzco from the capital was forced to come through Ayacucho. Huamanga, for this reason, was somewhat of an economic center because of all the wealth flowing through it. The prosperity that trade brought is still evident in the city. Known as "The City of Thirty Three Churches," Huamanga is

⁸ This is somewhat of a generalization. For the most part the region is rugged and dry. There are parts, like Huanta, where the land is fertile. These are pockets rather than the norm.

blessed with an unusually high number of highly ornate churches. Affording and accumulating sufficient patronage to build and furnish all thirty-three with an appropriate level of grandeur required an uncommon concentration of wealth over the centuries. But, as Luis told me, after more direct travel routes were constructed between Cuzco and Lima trade bypassed Ayacucho completely. After that, Jesús said, both the region and city declined in status and wealth, never quite recovering their former glory.

It is evident from this history that the region itself was not wealthy in that it could not generate its own wealth. Instead, wealth was imported in from external sites. The region's wealth was in its location, not in its land or resources per se. All my informants agreed that while in some areas productive haciendas were money-making powerhouses--like Cuzco or Trujillo-- the sierra haciendas in Ayacucho served more as status symbols than sources of income. This point was argued adamantly by all my informants. They stated that in Ayacucho there were few, if any, haciendas that made their owners wealthy on their own. Yet, it was a point of pride to have one. It marked that you were of a higher social class, even if socioeconomically the hacienda was somewhat of a financial drain.⁹ That is not to say that in other regions haciendas were not status symbols, but because of the dry, arid mountainous terrain the land itself is not very productive—a large portion of the local vegetation is scrub grass and cacti. Haciendas, therefore, were not a way to maintain a good living because they could not offer high production yields.

To gain any significant economic headway, hacendados had to pursue another profession while maintaining their hacienda. When asked the significance of land-ownership, Luis responded by stating that “basically, to own a piece of land showed the social class you belonged to” (Luis, personal communication, 212). More than anything, hacienda ownership was a status symbol in the community; it meant that you had wealth. There is a paradox, however, in that

⁹ I will elaborate more on this point later in the discussion.

while owning a hacienda conferred status, actually running it—or, as my informants said, “being a farmer”—was not held in high esteem (Luis, personal communication, 2012). Part of this was linked to the way that haciendas had changed. Rather than the being wholly feudalistic and based on serfdom, like during the early colonial days, haciendas had changed to become a renter-landlord system (Manuel, personal communication, 2012).

The language used when talking about them illustrates this point. The word hacienda when directly translated is something akin to “estate” or “holding.” This would have been an apt translation in colonial times when haciendas did function in a quasi-feudalistic manner. My informants, however, both used the word “farm” when speaking in English. Differences in connotation between “estate” and “farm” illustrate the way that haciendas had come to be conceptualized. Even in linguistic treatment the grandness of haciendas had diminished considerably. Moreover, haciendas were associated with farm work and manual labor—two types of work that hacendados typically did not do (Manuel, personal communication, 2012). In general, they were managers and planners rather than physical laborers. As Manuel said, “it was simply not something the gentry would do.” Thus, being an hacendado had lost some of the prestige it once held. In order to be well-regarded within elite circles another profession was needed. Manuel adamantly stated:

“In those times farming was not a prestigious thing to do. The farmers, especially the rich farmers, wanted their sons to become lawyers, or doctors, or priests, or to go to the military. That was the prestigious thing to do. And that’s exactly what happened to my father” (Manuel, personal communication, 2012).

Because men were pushed into professions other than “farmer,” the duty of caretaking and managing their holdings was often pushed onto other family members, especially wives. In essence, men—who traditionally have been given higher social value in Latin America—were put on tracks to take higher power positions. Women, who had less social value and less power,

were shuffled the task of devalued labor. While this was done, to some extent, to preserve the high social status of men it in some ways, ironically, allowed women to have substantial influence within their hacienda if they chose to capitalize on the opportunity.¹⁰

For Concepción and Francisco having Concepción run the haciendas was unintentionally the best choice from a management position. While it was done to preserve Francisco's career it actually allowed the most qualified person to handle the job. According to Manuel, Francisco, for all that he enjoyed being an hacendado, viewed and treated his holdings more as a "hobby" than "a dedication" (Manuel, personal communication, 2012). In general, "she was a lot more savvy about administration and about agriculture than [her husband] was" (Manuel, personal communication, 2012). Francisco was a city boy at heart. Concepción, however, spent her childhood on her parents' hacienda. Farming and land management were large parts of her life from the beginning. Her parents were "completely dedicated to the farm and she grew up in that type of environment" (Manuel, personal communication, 2012). Her initial hatred of Spanish beautifully illustrates this point.

In the highlands the two main languages are Quechua and Spanish, with Spanish being more of a city language and Quechua a more rural one. Her parents, both educated in the city, were the only people on the hacienda who spoke Spanish. Because of this, she overwhelmingly spoke in Quechua. Spanish was, in effect, her second language. She rarely spoke in Spanish, preferring Quechua as it was her everyday tongue. A year before she was sent to primary school in Huamanga her parents insisted that she switch and speak primarily in Spanish. Education at the time was solely taught in Spanish and they did not want her to be left behind. Stories of

¹⁰ Gender roles and gender norms in Latin America are well documented and a perennial topic for research. While interesting, and relevant to the agrarian reform, they do not directly pertain to this discussion. Full analysis could easily fill another work entirely and so, for the sake of brevity, will not be delved into for this discussion.

Concepción's childhood protestations were infamous within the family. She was adamantly opposed to the idea because "Spanish made her tongue swell up" (Manuel, personal communication, 2012).

That Concepción, for a time, only spoke the language of the rural haciendas exemplifies how much a part of her personal history the hacienda system was. Haciendas were an important part of her life. Francisco, by all accounts, did not see the haciendas in the same way. He, for example, treated the family's last hacienda, Wayupacha¹¹, as an "ornament," a place to spend the weekend and have parties rather than as a source of income.¹² This hacienda was bought after the two previous ones, larger by far, were sold for twenty thousand soles,¹³ far less than the land was valued at (Manuel, personal communication, 2012). Wayupacha, because of its access to water and close proximity to Huamanga, was "one tenth or one twentieth" the size of Francisco's other haciendas but was still worth a substantial sum. From what my informants said it sounded as if the hacienda was bought at a financial loss. Over the years this last hacienda continued to be an economic drain on the family.

Francisco knew, however, that being able to say he was an hacendado would open professional opportunities for his own career and those of his children. Initially spending money (economic capital) on the purchase of an hacienda could be turned into greater economic capital in the future. Social class was, in many ways, determined by land ownership. To own land was to be in a higher social class. It was an investment as much in social life as well as route toward economic stability. In this way, having the hacienda cemented the family's social position.

Hacendados were tied to their specific socioeconomic class through their land but their class did not necessarily translate directly to wealth or prestige. That is, hacienda ownership

¹¹ To protect the anonymity of my informants I have changed all hacienda names.

¹² "Really, the hacienda was kind of ornament to go [to on] weekends, to have parties."- Jesús

¹³ Peru's currency

marked class affiliation and opened doors to prestigious professional opportunities but did not offer much status on its own. To put it differently, class was determined by one's relationship to haciendas but social status still depended largely on an individual's merits and work. According to my informants, being part of an elite class created opportunities for education, military service, etc. All of these professions were considered both desirable and honorable. They demanded respect because they were professions largely reserved for the elite. Francisco, because he owned an hacienda, was able to translate his class affiliation into a smooth entrance into both academia and law. Being a well-respected academic and lawyer, in turn, gave him social status. By the time he reached middle-age he was a well-regarded and well-respected member of the community with great power and influence in local politics and business.

Part of the reason why this was possible was that the haciendas, due to their long history in the region, had already converted a great deal of economic capital into social and cultural capital. Long before the reform began a process was created wherein social capital (hacienda ownership) had been transformed into cultural capital (entry into the military, medicine, law, academia, etc.) which then translated experience into economic capital (wealth and wages). As was previously stated, there was an expectation of professionalism for hacienda owners. Necessary social mechanisms—like social networks—had to be in place for this expectation to be realistic (which, according to my informants, it was). These highly valued professions, due largely to their elite status, could then convert social capital into economic capital via salary. Wealth would thus be accumulated. Obviously, this rather straightforward professional path was a luxury afforded only to landowners. Hacendado families expected and promoted this—hence Francisco's career trajectory—because it had already been happening for generations. Jesús told stories of his grandfather, a great military general, and, based on stories in *Ugly Stories of the*

Peruvian Agrarian Reform, it seemed that every hacendado was related to some noteworthy individual by the beginning of Velasco's presidency.

The haciendas, therefore, generated a great deal of capital for their owners, social and otherwise. Velasco's hope was that by distributing property to everyone then similar outcomes would occur for people not fortunate enough to be among the landed elite. Unfortunately, because the conversion process had already been in motion for generations before the reform, when land was finally made available to the peasantry Velasco's plan was not possible. What economic capital there had been in the land (from crops, livestock, mining, etc.) was finite, sometimes long gone. Moreover, parceling out resources among many diminishes total wealth for any one individual. Distribution of wealth among many would not have created great wealth for any one recipient. And, unfortunately, social and cultural capital require a certain amount of exclusivity, since distinction is at the heart of the effectiveness of social and cultural capital. If made widely available (like in the case of mass land distribution), the social worth devalues quickly. Mass consumption cheapens the worth of social and cultural capital; exceptionality sets it apart. What had made the haciendas profitable previously was, by the very nature of the national availability, largely destroyed in the reform. Profitability of haciendas depended on a small group controlling resources and power. Once mass privatization occurred all that had been built up was lost.

That is not to say, however, that hacienda ownership was always desirable. Even with the possibility of accumulating prestige and social capital, oftentimes social benefits did not outweigh the trouble it took to run an hacienda. Farming was hard work for not much material benefit. The story of Concepcion's father exemplifies this. He owned a sizeable hacienda outside

Huanta¹⁴ that neither Concepción nor her many siblings wanted to take over when he died. All had already moved on to marriages or professions and did not see the benefit in investing in farms later in life. They did not even bother to try to sell the property. Instead, they let it be. Eventually the land went fallow and landless peasants continued to work the land, effectively becoming their own masters. All of this occurred long before the reform began (Manuel, personal communication, 2012). This family had, by choice, given up their family holdings with no compensation. If they had kept the land the reform would have forced them into this position. Bypassing the issue entirely allowed the family to focus on their careers. The deep economic drain that maintaining the family's hacienda would have caused would have hindered members of the family from climbing the social ladder. Ultimately, they were all successful without it.

Those who were in the land-working (vs. land-owning) class did not have the same options, being of lower socioeconomic status. Nor could they earn social status or capital as easily. Instead, they suffered the other side of the dialectic. High prestige came from owning land, low prestige came from working it. This split, unfortunately, tended to fall along racial and ethnic lines. My informants, when speaking, reflected this. In the Spanish interviews they used the word *campesino*, a term connoting darker-skinned, Quechua-speaking, traditionally-dressed individuals. My informants used the word *indio* (in English, "Indian") interchangeably with "peasant" even though "indio" has an even more racist connotation in the Andes. This illustrates the strong connection between indigenous descent and being a peasant/tenant. Effectively, being indigenous equated to a lower social class and, unfortunately, for the most part, the lower classes fared very poorly.

According to Concepción's children, many peasants were illiterate and most were tied to the land they rented. All my informants agreed that, because they had spent their whole lives

¹⁴ A large city in Ayacucho (see Map 2).

doing farm work, many peasants lacked basic skills, such as reading or any training in another profession. While not directly bound to the property—as a slave would be—they had little social capital or any social network once they left. So, while tenants could indeed choose to leave the hacienda, their prospects were few and they risked losing the support that kinship networks provided on their home hacienda and nearby communities. Furthermore, if they chose to leave their home hacienda and seek employment elsewhere, they ran the risk of suffering under an exploitive boss or hacendado.

To complicate the situation race and heritage were also bound up in prestige and land ownership as a whole. According to Luis in Ayacucho:

“Owning an hacienda signified what class you came from, your access to owning land. Huamanga was a city divided, basically, by two points of view... cultural and racial. The indigenous people descended from the Incas. And the upper-class from the city came, basically, from the Spanish. In the beginning the Spanish owned but did not work the land. So owning an hacienda meant you were from that social class. [Your skin color] was the image that said what social class you belonged to. This is what happened in Huamanga for the descendents of the indigenous people and the descendants of the Spanish. Later on to appear Spanish meant that you had a piece of land. This was a part of everything. The base of Ayacucho, the principal activity, was agriculture. Or the mines in Huancavelica.¹⁵ Later on there was a little bit of industry. But basically land was important and to have a piece of land showed what social class you belonged to. This land-owning class that [my father] belonged to” (Luis, personal communication, 2012).

This quote illustrates the complex relationship between race, class, and land ownership. The hacienda system, because of its historical roots, manifested itself in racial relations across Ayacucho. Obviously, due to this, race and class were intimately bound in Ayacucho, especially in Huamanga. In effect, one’s membership to a class acted as a code for racial identity. This began in the early colonial times, with the white Europeans as landowners and the dark-skinned indigenous people as tenants or slaves (Manuel, personal communication, 2012). The perpetuation of this division persisted for centuries so that the race-based origins of local

¹⁵ A city in Ayacucho.

conceptions of class were widely felt even centuries later when the hacienda system was dismantled. Race signified not only whether one was a land owner but also what social class one belonged to. A radical change in land-ownership, like the agrarian reform, would have had extreme effects on the understood relationship between class and race. Based on personal observations I made during trips to Huamanga over the past few years, it seems that land-ownership has largely been removed from racial perceptions. Instead, it seems that darker skin is tied to lower socioeconomic class and lighter skin is tied to more affluent socioeconomic positioning. Because access to land ownership became widely accessible after the reform the ties between land ownership and class had been removed to some extent, even as race is declining in social significance.

Those of indigenous descent, however, continue to suffer. This has been a normalized reality for generations. Manuel adamantly said that overall under the hacienda system, “the Indians were very much exploited” (Manuel, personal communication, 2012). Because of their poverty and the discrimination they faced, those of indigenous descent/peasants were an extremely vulnerable population. Most were poorly educated, even illiterate, and had limited access to the world outside of the local niche. But, at least in Manuel’s family, there was a sense of responsibility towards those that worked the land. Outward exploitation was not permitted. He stated that “[his] grandfather had a tremendous sense of justice, and he wanted to make sure that everybody got their due. The way that worked was, basically, the tenants would have plots to cultivate” (Manuel, personal communication, 2012). While the hacienda system, as a whole, was designed to favor the landowners, Concepción’s tenants, by all accounts, fared much better than others because of mutual respect and a concerted effort at fairness. There is a potential for informant bias, however, because they were speaking of their own parents. But, while they did

seem to adore their parents, none of my informants appeared particularly approving of the hacienda system—two even actively worked to end it. This, along with the uniformity in their testimonies, leads me to believe that there is at least some truth to what they said.

Manuel, during an interview, recounted the system of tenant accountability that his grandfather used and that his mother, Concepción, learned. Because most of the tenants could neither read nor write his family had to create a system of accountability for rental payment.

What they ended up with was a bean counting method. Manuel remembers:

“And I remember [my grandfather and the tenants] with beans. They would pull [some] out and say you worked on such a date and such a date and such a date and pulling out as many beans that [the tenant has] worked. And after they would say you have forty-five days and say therefore you owe so much. But you have this much land. And therefore I owe you so much. And they would come back with the balance. And either it was my father had to pay somebody or then they had to pay him something. And as the Indians had no money, or not very much, they paid on potatoes or chickens or whatever. And that was the way that they, that they accounted for payment. Payment for the rent” (Manuel, personal communication, 2012).

While they may not all have had skills enough to leave the hacienda, all her children believed that tenants were basically content to stay. Concepción’s father, according to all their accounts, broke the mold for most hacendados. He had a “tremendous sense of justice” (Manuel, personal communication, 2012) and would not stand for the mistreatment or exploitation of those on his land. He instilled this ethic in all his children. Concepción’s children were unanimously and independently adamant that the tenants on Concepción’s land were content to stay.

But, even if peasants decided to stay on the hacienda, they were still situated in a way to improve their social positioning. In Ayacucho, generally, upward mobility was possible even without owning land. Wealth—even for landless tenants—was not unachievable. For example, during my interviews I heard about a tenant on the family’s hacienda. He worked a plot of land and paid rent to the family but still managed to accumulate his own wealth over time. Eventually

he managed to accumulate enough capital to own five hundred heads of cattle all on his own (Carmen, personal communication, 2012). He worked his way into wealth and changed his socioeconomic status. Social mobility was possible.

Because of this race and class—while still important—were not wholly determinative of one's fate. Jesús, well-versed in regional history after a career in academia, said that Ayacucho had always had some tension along race and class lines. He told me that Ayacucho had “different [social] classes, but also high [social] mobility. Many former peasants became land-owners. And Ayacucho was declining economically. It is why many hacendados sold their haciendas and emigrated to Lima. And many peasants bought the haciendas and became land-owners” (Jesús, personal communication, 2012). In the decades leading up to the agrarian reform many hacendados, my informants told me, were migrating to the capital in order to pursue careers or start businesses. Ayacucho, a rural province, offered limited opportunities for such advancement. Simply put, better prospects were available in Lima.

Because of this migration many haciendas—and the cultural capital that came along with it—were available for purchase. This meant that social honor and positions once reserved for the landed elite were opened up to wealthier members of the landless peasantry. In many ways, this was revolutionary even if it was a gradual process spanning many years. Indeed, such progressions inevitably affect the social fabric. Class divisions that had existed rigidly in earlier times were thrown out the window. Hacienda deeds (and, to an extent, social position) were up for sale to anybody who could afford them. Because of this, old class divisions blurred considerably. That is not to say that class separation was not wholly gone or unimportant by the time the reform began—indeed, it still remains in Peru—but the separation between classes was not as distinct or straightforward as it once had been.

This is a far cry from Marx's theories about clear, defined class divisions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. His theories state that the bourgeoisie would use their power, influence, and control of the means of production to maintain control of society. They were, in effect, the masters of society—a small group, but an organized and therefore powerful one. The proletariat were not so lucky. Due to their disorganization and individual inability to control or affect the means of production, they were perpetually stuck in a state of relative helplessness and were overall subjugated by the class-based system. Individual proletariat, try as they might, could not work their way into wealth. Though they had little power, influence, or capital individually, the proletariat had the potential to mobilize *en masse*. Their only power rested in their overwhelming number. Therefore, the bourgeoisie could be overthrown with the sheer force of numbers if nothing else (Marx 1848). Marx's analysis, then, zooms in on a central question: against such demographic odds, how does the bourgeoisie maintain its differential control on the means of production?

Marx argues that competition among the bourgeoisie themselves makes necessary constant innovation to maintain control over the means of production. This innovation not only propels invention that modernizes society but also creates competition among the proletariat. In their quest for capital and sustenance the proletariat must fight amongst themselves for wages and earning opportunities. In essence, they themselves turn into a commodity and are thereby complicit in their own subjugation process. This, in turn, saps their energy so that they are focused on the competition for wages rather than liberation. Once, however, the industrialized workers can collectively mobilize they will initiate the change that leads to the ultimate classless society (Marx 1848).

Despite Marx's rather clear prescription, how a society progresses from a class-based to classless one continues to be debated fiercely. Marxist theorists have split into many factions over the years, discussion of which could fill another work entirely. In Peru, however, two main veins stand out: Maoist and Marxist-Leninist. The Marxist-Leninist theorists argue, more or less, for the progression originally outlined in the *Communist Manifesto*. That is, that society needs to move from agrarianism to industrialized capitalism. The proletariat—industrial workers historically produced as a class—will then rise up and propel society into a classless future. Maoists, on the other hand, argue that industrialized capitalism may be skipped wholly. With the right political leadership the agrarian, rural peasantry could mobilize to move society directly to its ideal classless socialist form.

In the 1980s and 1990s a violent, horrific civil war ravaged Peru as Maoists attempted to push through a peasant uprising. During this period—known as the Time of Terror—guerilla fighters battled the Peruvian military for control of the country. Unfortunately, many civilians were caught in the middle and thousands, especially peasants, died or disappeared. This conflict began and in its earlier phase was centered in Ayacucho.. That debate and its relevance for understanding events in Ayacucho subsequent to the agrarian reform era, however, are well beyond the scope of this project. Instead, I will leave that to the numerous other works already written on the subject.¹⁶

The argument for Maoist (and armed) reform is, however, important when analyzing Valencia's assessment of Lucanas during the reform. He states on the last page of *Luchas Campesinas* that:

“Only through armed rebellion can a small people, like those in Peru, triumph against the bourgeoisie and imperialism; only through strong armament can those

¹⁶ For a good explanation see *Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform*.

divided into small communities take the stance for independence and liberation” (Valencia 1984, pp. 139).

His analysis, characterizing the local peasantry as the proletariat battling the bourgeoisie, is an inaccurate generalization. Marx, in his analysis of the industrialized capitalism during the last half of the 19th century, asserted that one’s relationship to the means of production (either owner or worker) was the only determiner of social positioning. The proletariat was virtually at the mercy of the bourgeoisie due to their lack of capital. The core terms “proletariat” and “bourgeoisie” describe groups that are inherently capitalistic and industrial in nature. Lucanas, however, was a non-industrialized, rural province that largely relied on farming and raising animals. Moreover, the towns that he holds up in the book as model communities were small, rural, and traditional. To smash industrialized categories onto a rural culture so vastly different makes little sense.¹⁷ To base an entire book off such an inaccurate premise is rife with problems.

Moreover, the idea of a class-based rebellion seems far-fetched. As I stated before, haciendas were bought and sold with some frequency before the reform was even conceptualized. It was possible, even as an hacienda tenant, to accumulate wealth. If, as my informants suggest, wealth accumulation and therefore upward social mobility was more attainable than most observers might suspect, class conflict would not be necessary. Collective action would have been subverted from the beginning if the possibility of land ownership were sufficiently available to enough people that persistent stories would discourage interest in participating in social upheaval. Marx saw in religion and ideologies in general such false consciousness, much the same way the American Dream perpetuates the status quo in the United

¹⁷ Credit where credit is due, this point was made clear to me by my advisor, Dr. Tom Love.

States. Marx's idea of class conflict depends on the premise that participation in class action is the only way to better one's life. Mass mobilization needs to be the only viable option.

That is not to say that Valencia's assessment of the situation in rural Lucanas is wholly without merit. To say that the people of Lucanas struggled and fought themselves is true. To say that they liberated themselves, however, is not. There was some amount of self-determination and community involvement but it was at the heels of the larger, national social policy. The inception of the reform demonstrates this. As I outlined previously, the reform began with an executive statement made in one of Velasco's speeches. Moreover, though Velasco was himself of humble social origins who rose through the ranks of the military, he was himself nevertheless a member of an elite, powerful group at the time of the reform (a powerful military general before seizing the presidency). His executive leadership during the reform created a top-down model where national offices would send out representatives to distant provinces, seen as heavy-handed by outsiders but necessary by insiders to marshal the power of the state to counteract the ongoing power of the landed elite. Both my informants Luis and Jesús took part in this. While their home base was in Lima they would travel to research and systematically implement reform policy.

Obviously, the common people were not the main drivers of the agrarian reform. The government was. It was a top-down change rather than a bottom-up one. While the average person could take part it was always at the heels of national policy or with the help of a national representative. Valencia's idea that the reform was a peasant-led fight for freedom is inaccurate. Moreover, the reform appears to be anything but a class-led struggle. Any type of Marxist analysis would be problematic for the simple fact that instead of moving to a classless, non-capitalist society, collectivized estates meant in practice that the government simply replaced the

old hacendado – a rather modest change, in reality, from one system of ownership to another.

The core problem that the reform meant to address—inequality stemming from social status and property ownership—was never fully addressed.

That is not to say that, overall, the peasantry had no part in the reform. Many at the time wanted to be active participants (Jesús, personal communication, 2012). The reform would have been a complete disaster without some buy-in from individuals on the ground, unsustainable without support. Jesús says of the overall feeling in Peru at the time:

“[The country was] mystic at that time. People saw that things could be, could improve. So many people went to work. It was a kind of renaissance. And for a while everything was so uplifting. When they made quechua an official language the newspaper started pages in quechua. Also the TV in quechua. And so many people would start working in those things. So they said they saw that they were useful. And for people it was even a rediscovery of themselves. Like many people that before were ashamed to speak quechua, when it became an official language they started to feel proud that they spoke the two official languages of the country. So the ambiance was so... so nice” (Jesús, personal communication, 2012).

Hence, the general sentiment felt in Lucanas—the need to join in—was surely not uncommon. In general, the effects of the reform were felt on very personally. And, as much as the hacienda system had changed to focus on economics, some level of personal connection remained. Concepción, my informants told me, never recovered from the pain that the reform caused. Her daughter Carmen reported that she felt betrayed and carried a deep sense of loss. The characterization seemed almost maternal. Carmen said that Concepción felt that “she knew what the people needed” better than a random reform worker. Because she had been trained to see the broader picture she could help people in ways that others could not. Although in the end she “accepted” the inevitability of the reform—her hacienda was taken a couple of years after the process began—she continued to “cry from her pain” for many decades (Carmen, personal communication, 2012).

Such stories were not uncommon. Mayer's book houses similar sentiments. From cover to cover his work is speckled with stories of pre-reform relationships continuing long past the reform's end. One of the most touching is a story told by Carlos Iván Degregori, a prominent Peruvian writer, at the book's end. A former hacendada in Huamanga was living in relative poverty after having lost the family's fortune in the reform process, ending up as poor as her former renters had been. But, when the civil war began to ravage the countryside, a former tenant fled to the city. The hacendada was her only connection in Huamanga so the tenant begged her for help. Although in poverty herself, the hacendada took her in and gave her protection (Mayer 2009, pp. 331-332). Even after the reform's end the social bonds continued. Cultural obligations did not cease. Try as the reform did to break the social bonds that perpetuated poverty, some bonds—like patronage and family loyalty—ran too deep to be cut off suddenly at the government's behest. In the end, there was some part of the hacienda system that had profound meaning for the people involved.

Obviously, the hacienda system was already complex before the agrarian reform began, a reform that muddled an already varied situation. As I have shown, there was much more complexity within the hacienda system than a simple renter-tenant or serf-landlord relationship. Social class, local status, race, etc. all played into the social equation of which the haciendas were just one part. Because of this, the agrarian reform did have an effect on people living in Ayacucho—particularly landowners—but they were not swept up in an overwhelming, revolutionary change that is often touted in the literature. The reform was a significant historical process but it was coming on the heels of change already in motion. But, because of Peru's geographic and social landscape, this generalization cannot be projected onto other areas within Peru.

Local variability existed to a high degree. Analysis of local context—such as regions or states—paints a more accurate picture of the uneven experience of the reform missed by larger, macro-level analysis. Broad, nation-wide analysis, while interesting, is actually less useful when studying this topic. Because of this, the oversimplification that can come from Marxist analysis—such as that found in *Luchas Campesinas*—should be avoided. Any similar analysis would be woefully inaccurate. Class-derived action seen through a modes of production lens was, indeed, a factor in the agrarian reform, but other elements—like status and social capital—played integral roles. Moreover, Peru was experiencing rapid social change. Peru's economy, for the most part, was already transitioning rapidly from an agrarian past, toward industrialism even in areas away from Lima and other larger cities.

Suggestions for Further Research

It has been over forty years since the reform began. Even those who were young at that time have reached middle age. Most of the hacienda owners who suffered the loss of land are dead or dying. The living memory from that age slowly will be gone before long as the last witnesses die out. Gathering testimonials, conducting interviews, preserving important documents, and recording oral histories while first-hand observers and actors are still alive will be of immeasurable value to future scholars. A diverse array of primary sources no doubt will be of great importance.

Because the reform's effects varied greatly depending on region and socioeconomic class, as I have argued, a more comprehensive approach to the literature is needed. At present, there is a dearth of information and first-hand accounts from those who implemented the reform's policies and from hacendados. The literature is heavily skewed towards those who were

able to own land for the first time. While this is interesting, it is unbalanced. Additionally, there needs to be more literature focused on regionalized issues and experiences. As I have shown, there was considerable regional differentiation. A variety of region-specific information is necessary for accurate analysis, especially with those who have first-hand knowledge of the reform dying out.

Conclusion

By the time that Velasco's policies were implemented in the late 1960s, Ayacucho's social landscape was already changing—social mobility was possible, hacendados were selling their land and migrating to Lima, and benefits of hacienda ownership were not what they had once been. As the example of Concepción's family illustrates, the agrarian reform affected Ayacucho but did not radically change the social landscape. The hacienda system, at its inception, was a functional system of land ownership but, by the 20th century, had decayed drastically. Regionalized differences between haciendas grew from this deterioration. Local contexts, therefore, must be the basis for analysis as social landscapes were intimately bound to the haciendas. When studying regional variations like this, then, big, macro-level analysis and generalizations should be put aside in favor theorists that take into account prestige, race, gender, and social status which align more with micro and regional trends.

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