

MEN AND WOMEN IN MATAPUQUIO

This paper has two aims: first, to illustrate how spatial distribution in the village of Matapuquio defines the woman's role and how symbolically it represents or encompasses the ideal expression of this role; second, to analyse how the Peruvian land reform is affecting the woman's role complex as represented in the spatial distribution of the woman's domain.

The paper is written after eighteen months fieldwork in 1976 and 1977 in Peru's southern sierra or high mountain region. The objective was to study the impact of Peruvian land reform on the traditional Indian community of the sierra. In Latin America, this land reform is second only to that of Cuba in its scope. The reform legislation was first passed in 1968; it was first implemented on the sugar and rice plantations of the coast and has only come into effect in the sierra in the last three or four years. The final land expropriation took place in June 1976. The hacienda at Pincos with which this paper will be concerned, was not expropriated until 1974. (A hacienda is a large landed estate owned, though rarely operated, by a white hacendado.)

We chose the village of Matapuquio for study because it lies in a very remote area of the southern sierra, an area with virtually no ethnographic documentation. Matapuquio lies in the Department of Apurimac, a department known for its peasant uprisings and land occupations. The area seemed to present an example of an independent peasant character existing within an area of many unsolved land tenure problems. On closer examination we found that of all the haciendas in the Department of Apurimac, the one at Pincos was the most lucrative. Pincos also provided us with a relatively uncomplicated one-to-one relationship where the Indians of one community provide the entire work force for one hacienda, or as it is now, one co-operative. Though reality did not prove to be as simple as this, it was convenient for us to try to limit the variables involved.

The status of Matapuquio as an independent village is also important to the analysis. Though surrounded by hacienda-owned land the actual village does not lie within the boundaries of the territory owned by the hacendado, Hans Duda. Consequently, labourers at the former hacienda worked more or less by choice. (They were not among the colonos class who were forced to work at the haciendas because their homes were situated on hacienda lands.) The comuneros from Matapuquio worked at the hacienda at Pincos for two reasons: to secure rights to pasture lands which did lie within the hacienda's boundaries and to earn money, the wages at Pincos being some of the highest in the sierra.

The setting

The village of Matapuquio is located between Andahuaylas and Abancay in the valley of Pincos. There are four former haciendas situated in the valley bottom, one of which is Pincos. All four of these haciendas were owned previously by one family, the Trelles family who, before the land reform, owned virtually all of the province of Abancay and much of the province of Andahuaylas. Matapuquio is situated on the mountain side one thousand metres above Pincos straight up. Pincos lies at 2000 metres above sea level (6000 feet) while the village is spread over the mountain side between three and four thousand metres above sea level (9000-12000 feet). Because of the extreme slope of the valley, horizontal distance is not great but obviously vertical distance is.

The extreme variation in altitude has a great effect on the existing agriculture. Pincos, in the valley bottom, lies within a semi-tropical climate. Here the fields are relatively flat and can be irrigated all year round from the Pincos River. The crops are sugar cane and citrus fruits, neither of which are traditional Indian crops. Production is concentrated on the sugar cane which is planted so as to ensure a steady

work-load of constant planting and harvesting in rotation from field to field. Labour needs are thus constant.

A thousand metres up, in the village, the agricultural situation is quite different. From about 3000-3700 metres corn, which is the most highly valued crop in the village, can be grown along with wheat and barley. Corn requires irrigation, the irrigation system being based on a number of springs or puquios located high up in the village. Because of warmer temperatures the corn grown in the lower regions of the village requires almost four months less to mature than does the corn grown in the higher regions of the village. This will be seen to have a definite influence on the women living in the different parts of the village. The region from about 3700 metres up to 4000 metres is the potato belt, an unirrigated region partially located on hacienda lands. A great variety of potatoes are grown. They form a substantial part of the diet but do not have as great a value as corn simply because corn has barter value. It is used in exchange for onions, beans and supplementary grains, and occasionally is sold for cash.

So far we have a picture without contour; a village lying flat up a vertical slope. However the image of a valley bottom, a mountain top, and a village situated on the connecting slope is far too simple to describe adequately the spatial distribution of the village. Matapuquio is cut diagonally by a deep gorge. This gorge is continually deepening due to erosion, especially evident during the rainy season. Since early colonial times the Andean slopes have been deforested, and there is nothing to hold back the soil which is washed down to the Pincos River and from there to the Amazon and the sea. The gorge divides the village in two and is a physical manifestation of the dual social organization existing in the village. About half the village population lives above the gorge in the part known as Antaccasa and about half lives below in the part called Matapuquio. Each half has its own school, its own magistrates and its own separate pasture lands. The principle of endogamy is operative in both parts. The degree of intermarriage between the two sectors is limited largely to the bordering barrios or wards.

As most of the literature on the Incan state and on the present day Quechua Indians discusses the existence of moieties within the traditional Indian communities, it was not surprising to find such a principle of organization present in Matapuquio. What did stand out however was the clarity with which the terrain reflected this principle. Locality here is always expressed in terms of higher and lower; a little bit higher, arribita (or yanan in Quechua), a little bit lower, abajito (or urin in Quechua). It is never expressed in terms of right and left, of horizontal contiguity, or of points of the compass, but always in terms of relative altitude.

Paralleling this are markedly different characterisations of those living above in Antaccasa, and of those living below in Matapuquio. Those from Antaccasa are stereotyped as being much more old-fashioned, as inclined to stick together, as having a greater sense of community spirit; those in the lower village as being more progressive, more independent and much more suspicious.

The Woman's Domain Within the Spatial Setting

Up to this point I have attempted to construct the framework within which the woman's role is played. The woman's position in relation to man is influenced first and foremost by the bilateral kinship system of the Quechua. The basic principles of bilateral kinship emphasize both father's and mother's family as being of equal importance; both family lines are perceived to be on

equal footing when an individual considers his relative genealogical position. Residence may be patrilocal or matrilocal in the first years of marriage but the ideal is neo-locality after the first few years of married life. Most important of all is that men and women inherit equally from both their parents, which means that a woman enters marriage with cattle and fields that are her private property. The husband-wife relationship is often coloured by how much material wealth each brings to the partnership. This seems to have some influence on residence patterns.

The division of labour between the sexes underlines the principles inherent in the bilateral kinship system. Though individual ownership of land and animals is always present, agricultural work is considered a joint responsibility. Men and Women together prepare, irrigate, plough and finally plant the fields. Both the male and the female principle are necessary to planting. The man drives the oxen and steers the plough while the woman plants the seed. The symbolic implications need hardly be pointed out. Harvesting is a joint effort as well; the men dig up the potato plants, cut the corn stalks and the grains. The women gather the potatoes, shuck the corn, and winnow the grain. Most important of all however, the women store the produce in a room of the house which only they can enter. The produce is sorted into what should be used for consumption and for barter, and what should be stored for next year's seeds. This is the woman's job, the woman's priority. She has the ultimate control over the produce.

The need for complementary effort in agriculture is expressed in the gifts given to a newly married couple. Where the woman receives from her family two cups, two plates, and two spoons, one each for herself and her husband, the husband receives from his family two lampos or digging sticks and two picks, one for himself and one for his wife. The girl's mother, however provides corn, potatoes, wheat, chickens and cuye (guinea pig) sufficient for their first year's needs.

Whereas the greatest amount of agricultural activity shared equally by men and women occurs in the mid-latitude between valley bottom and mountain top, the pasturelands lie at the top of the spatial continuum and represent an area more specifically associated with the woman's domain. The herding of cattle is an occupation strongly associated with women and with children and young adults of both sexes. Every morning the women leave for the heights with their animals: cows, sheep, goats and pigs, which are grazing animals in Peru. In the evening they return to their homes in the village to prepare the evening meal. Only women are allowed to do the milking of the cows and the goats and it is their responsibility to make cheese from the milk. Cheese is a highly valued part of the diet. Through the management of her animals a woman has the possibility of acquiring money. Whereas agricultural crops are exchanged largely for other agricultural crops, with corn as the medium or barter, animals are sold for cash, either to neighbours or friends, to neighbouring villages or even to the more distant towns of Huancarama and Andahuaylas. It is through careful animal husbandry that widows fulfill their monetary needs, that mothers provide for the festivities of a marrying offspring, or that women are able to stand as padrinas (sponsors) for a village fiesta. The complementary male activity in this regard is working for wages in the hacienda/co-operative. During summer holidays young boys work in Pincos to earn money for next term's clothing, while young girls herd with their mothers and receive clothing from their parents.

School holidays occur at the time of the yearly cycle when labour is most needed for herding. This is the rainy season. When the corn fields are planted in the village and have begun to sprout and grow, there is no room to keep the animals. Rules and regulations controlling conflicts over one family's

cows entering another family's corn are extensive. The solution to the problem has been a kind of transhumance, in which tiny grass huts are built higher up the mountain. In these huts, or chosas, the mothers and the children live for an extended period of time which varies from up to nine months for those from the upper regions of Antaccasa to five months for those from the lower regions of Matapuquio. The chosas are grouped in specific areas traditionally prescribed. Some of these areas lie on the lands of the former hacienda at Pincos which has meant that the men of these families, in order to ensure pasture rights, have had to work at Pincos. Other pasturelands lie on land owned formerly by the neighbouring hacienda, Palmira, which has meant that men of these families have had to work at Palmira for a prescribed number of days every year in order to obtain pasture rights. All of the families in the lower village have their traditional pasture lands on Pincos territory and most of those in the upper village have their traditional pasture lands on territory owned by the hacienda at Palmira. The chosas are arranged by the matrilineal principle in which sisters, mothers/daughters and mothers' sisters/sisters' daughters group together. Looking up the mountainside at the chosas matrilineal groups are laid out spatially. They help one another guard the animals and co-operate in cooking; they form an intimate social setting associated with chosa living in contrast to the dangerous, spirit-inhabited mountain-tops which are here very close.

Turns are taken in staying over-night in the chosas. For fear of robbery in their houses, in the village and in their fields, it is deemed desirable to have someone always in the house to guard things as well as one staying in the chosa to guard and care for the animals. For this reason older daughters are highly valued to share the burden. There is much to-ing and fro-ing between the chosas and the actual village on the one hand as well as great traffic between the valley bottom and the village on the other. Though most men work at the hacienda for a week at a time, living in the quarters provided for them, there is no room there for the young boys who are nevertheless working as extra help. At the same time there is a significant number of men who either have not managed to find accommodation at Pincos or who do not care for the extremely crowded and insanitary conditions available. In the evening the women come down from the mountain tops and the men come up from the valley bottom. They meet in their shared domain, the village.

As is often the case in anthropological field work, by focusing on the exceptions, on the deviant, we can learn much about the ideal—that which is accepted as the proper woman's role. There were women from Matapuquio, these being without exception from the lower village, who had moved to Pincos with their husbands. They were looked down on with contempt by the community. Living in Pincos was considered an evil, slovenly, non-Indian way of life. This was seen to be manifested in the women who lived there. In Pincos life is more easier for the women. With no animals to take care of, no fields to plant, guard, and harvest, they are responsible only for the tiny room in the Pincos barrack, where they live, and for their children. These women have chosen to live outside what F.G. Bailey (1971) calls the 'moral community'. This concept can best be understood in opposition to the mestizo, the extra-community, the outside world which is integral to an understanding of the Indians' position, and of the Indian woman's role within that position.

In Latin American literature, a mestizo is theoretically defined as a person with mixed Indian and white blood. In other words, the term is presented as a biological category. In reality, however, it is not the racial but the cultural manifestations that define the category. A person who appears white but lives in Indian style is an Indian while a person who appears Indian but who lives a white man's life style is considered a white. Culturally speaking a mestizo is one who falls between the two categories

of Indian and white, though culturally trying to achieve 'whiteness'. Whereas it is culturally Indian to speak Quechua, go barefoot, live in a village, hold certain religious beliefs in addition to those present in Catholic doctrine and to hold women in esteem, a mestizo will speak Spanish (most likely in addition to Quechua), wear shoes and white trousers, will live in town, be more or less literate, most likely not an agricultural worker, and will hold women in contempt. A third category which might be set between the Indian and that of the mestizo embraces those who wear shoes, speak some Spanish and are literate, but who still live in an Indian community and are involved with agricultural work. This is the category of the cholo. The three categories - Indian, cholo, and mestizo - are not mutually exclusive but should rather be seen as existing on a continuum. A single person can fall within more than one category or rather can move between categories as the situation demands. A mestizo is sometimes called a macho, a term which defines a particular kind of male behaviour pattern stressing toughness, hard drinking, and male comradeship, and within which woman is merely the source of satisfaction for male sexuality. The macho behaviour pattern is one accepted by mestizo women, but it is not acceptable to Indian women. The cholo women living in Pincos speak Spanish, wear shoes, buy all their clothes and most of their food. They are much more mobile, having access to Pincos cars driving in and out of town. They have a tendency to take produce from the co-operative, selling it in Andahuaylas for their own cash needs.

In the specific case of Matapuquio we see the men acting as the necessary intermediaries between the Indian moral community and the outside mestizo world. The men act in two cultural contexts. They are Indians in the village and cholos in the valley. Because the mestizized form of male behaviour as idealized in the macho is very degrading in the eyes of the Indian woman, any woman choosing to live in such surroundings must be bad. In fact life at Pincos - male life at Pincos - is characterized by tough drinking, brawls and illicit sex. In this sense the Indian women can be seen as the guardians of Indian culture.

They are the ones largely responsible for raising the children and they are the ones that would be forced to accept a degraded position in relation to men by integrating with the outside world.

To summarize the spatial arrangement of the woman's domain, we can say that greater altitude in the terrain represents a purer area of women's activity. The valley bottom, the area of pure male activity, is conceptualized as being opposed to the Indian woman's ideal of equal status with men both materially and socially. The middle area in the spectrum is the actual village shared by men and women. The upper village, Antaccasa, is associated with more traditional Indian values and there is the lower village, Matapuquio, where the women are perhaps less associated with the upper regions due to the shorter period of transhumance necessary, and where the men have greater ties to the hacienda at Pincos.

The Impact of the Peruvian Land Reform on the Woman's Role Complex

To begin a discussion of the impact of the land reform on women's roles, we must underline a few basic differences between the two moieties existing in the village of Matapuquio. These differences are based first and foremost on the traditional life-style more present in Antaccasa than in Matapuquio. Here I have in mind specifically the greater flexibility in division of labour. Though it is most markedly the women of Antaccasa who arrange their chosas year after year together with their matrilineal kin, the men from Antaccasa have a greater role to play in maintaining the chosas. Men are present in the chosas of Antaccasa. Because the pasturelands are generally closer to home and because chosa life lasts for a greater part of the year for those

Antaccasa, the men have much easier access to this typically female domain. Because Antaccasa has a prolonged herding period and, generally speaking, more animals per family, men have a greater role to play simply to get the work done. Though probably all men in the village know how to spin, it is looked upon as a specifically female activity. When a woman dies, her spindle is buried with her. A man from the lower village would be embarrassed to be seen spinning, yet it was not uncommon to see an Antaccasa man sitting in front of his wife's chosa spinning away, seemingly undisturbed by our presence.

The traditional life-style present in Antaccasa is reinforced by the fact that men are away from home less. Antaccasa has more land per family as well as more animals. This means that there is simply more work to be done at home. There are several examples of families moving from Antaccasa to Matapuquio. Life in the lower village is considered to be easier. Fire wood does not have to be hauled up so far, and travelling distances to work are not so great. We should remember here the difference between the upper regions of Antaccasa and the lower regions of Matapuquio of about a thousand metres. When another thousand metres are added on to this to reach the valley bottom, it is a considerable climb. In the lower village the interplay between man and woman in doing a task is less evident simply because the men are not around as much. Women have much greater responsibility over the fields and take care of the animals almost exclusively. Work in Pincos has a much stronger draw on the men.

The greater attraction that Pincos has for the men of the lower village cannot be explained simply in terms of proximity. It is partially tied in with factors present under the hacienda system, and partially it is a manifestation of changes occurring within the village because of the land reform and the transformation of the hacienda Pincos into a co-operative.

The factors present under the hacienda system have been touched upon before. The haciendas in the valley of Pincos found it necessary, in order to ensure a steady work force, to acquire ownership over the otherwise useless pasturelands high up in the mountains far from the haciendas themselves. Access to pasturelands was exchanged for labour. If you did not work you had to pay, and no one had the money. In actuality the work force living in Matapuquio was split between the two haciendas of Pincos and Palmira. What is important here is that under the land reform the newly formed co-operatives both at Pincos and Palmira did not see fit to return the pasturelands to the village but perpetuated the hacienda system. All those wishing to pasture their animals on Pincos lands had to become members of the co-operative of Pincos and all those wishing to pasture their animals on lands belonging to Palmira had to become members of the co-operative of Palmira. This has meant that most men in Antaccasa are members of Palmira, and most men in Matapuquio are members of Pincos.

Under the land reform law the yearly profit is divided equally amongst the members - and I emphasize members. Pincos is the only co-operative with any profit to divide, and this has been quite considerable. Though members of the co-operative of Palmira are allowed to work at Pincos for a set wage equal to that of the members, they do not have rights to a cut in the profits. Unfortunately Palmira, since it was established as a co-operative in 1974, has had such financial difficulty that often it has not had the money even to pay wages, much less to provide any profit. Consequently the members of Pincos, largely living in Matapuquio, have the opportunity to bring home a large sum of money at the end of each fiscal year. This possibility is closed to all non-members, which includes most of the men from Antaccasa.

According to the philosophy of the land reform, the co-operative lands belong to the members. The administration and decision-making which takes place in the co-operative can only be carried out by the co-operative members. Thus, where a leadership vacuum existed before the reform, suddenly the member comuneros have been given a whole range of leadership possibilities and a power base within the co-operative which directly affects the situation in the village. It is not surprising then that many of the projects spearheaded and financially supported by the co-operative have greater benefit for those in the lower village, for those members with the vote.

The increased possibilities of leadership and the increased access to capital are ~~creating~~ creating a virtual woman's sphere in the lower village where the men are absent for weeks at a time. Before the land reform the women in the lower village had equal (though different) access to money. Now with their men able to earn large sums of money in a sphere in which they are not allowed to operate, and with the increased absence of the men from life in the lower village, these women are being tied more and more to the house and the fields. The purely female domain in the lower village is undergoing a shift of emphasis to the area of activity in the village. Whereas herding is a co-operative woman's activity in which women sit together in groups spinning while their animals graze, life in the village is a much more isolated affair in which the women are cut off from their neighbours by the surrounding fields. This new emphasis on the home as the woman's sole responsibility fits in all too well with the mestizo image of women as docile, invisible and secluded in the home. With their new political and economic base emerging in the mestizo world, men from the lower village are bound to tend to adopt this image of woman.

It would be a mistake, however, to envisage the upper village as untouched by such drastic changes as have occurred under the land reform. The changes here are more subtle though, more elusive, and something of a matter for speculation on my part. The most important part of the changing world for the Quechua women of the upper village is the increasing encroachment by the co-operative on their pasture-lands. One of three goals of the land reform was to increase agricultural production. With increasing demand from the coastal populations in Lima, the potato has now become a profitable crop to grow. With more and more of the upper lands being cultivated, it is becoming difficult for the women of Antaccasa to find sufficient pasture. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that cattle have become so important a part of the economy of the upper village that the women are allowing their herds to grow too big. Overgrazing is the obvious result, causing friction within the upper village but, more important, a sense of frustration over the intrusion of events from the outside which they cannot control.

Up to this point I have outlined the differing impact the land reform is having on women from the upper and lower village of Matapuquio. It is a picture in which some of the women are being more and more tied to the home and in which all of the women are having their traditional access to money threatened by the co-operative, whether directly or indirectly. There are, however, several other areas in which the land reform is having an impact on the woman's role in a general sense.

As the co-operative are part of the man's domain, the impact of the land reform on the woman's role is best explained by first discussing changes within the predominantly male life at Pincos and Palmira. What I have specifically in mind here are new systems of leadership. The Quechuas have a basically acephalous social organization with very little village-wide decision-making going on. Through the co-operative system of elected officers, individuals are made leaders, leaders that can influence the lives of many, both at the co-operative level and the village level. They are made

leaders for a term of office of from one to two years and shifting support has little effect on the power that they wield during their term of office. It is a completely new system, and one which certainly will have far-reaching consequences for village life all over Peru. What is of greatest interest for us here is the sudden exclusion of women from the decision-making process. Before the land reform, decisions made at the hacienda were law and they lay completely outside the sphere of Indian influence, even though they often had a great impact on Indian life. Village decisions were made in an open forum in which men and women together reached a consensus. Even when official decisions were taken, in which one vote was allowed for the head of each family, it was a vote cast in consultation with and with the approval of the women. The women had a definite part in deciding on how the vote would be cast. But as the norms of the mestizo world invade the village more and more, through the operation of the co-operatives, the women are losing their role in the decision-making process. It is the men who gain the experience on how to handle themselves in the election process, on how to debate an issue, on how best to present their candidate. The women are left more and more on the sidelines even in deciding village issues. Here the impact of the land reform is similar for women from the upper and lower villages. They are being pressured out of the political arena of village life.

I have attempted to present the Quechua Indian woman's domain in a spatial context, and then to examine how her role is being changed within this domain by the impact of the Peruvian land reform. I have tried to describe how the ecological setting on the slopes of the Andes can be seen as a spatial image of the actual social organization of the Quechua Indians. In discussing the impact of the land reform, I have sought to indicate how the balance and symmetry both within the spatial image and within the social organization of the village is being altered drastically. Where before men and women stood on an equal footing economically and politically, through the resources available after the land reform, the men have suddenly been given the upper hand. Where the spatial imagery once reflected a balance between man's domain and woman's domain, with a neutral meeting ground in the village proper, now the picture is unbalanced with the lower village becoming a woman's domain and the upper village becoming more and more isolated from the other moiety. Wolf summarizes the situation we have found in Matapuquio:

Confronted by the contrasts between the mobile and the traditional, the nation-oriented and the community-oriented, village life is riven by contradictions and conflicts, conflicts not only between class groups but also between individual families or entire neighbourhoods. Such a community will inevitably differentiate into a number of unstable groups with different orientations and interests (E.Wolf 1971).

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