

ETHNICITY, CULTURAL
CONTINUITY, AND
SOCIOECONOMIC PROCESSES:
Recent Works in Ecuadorian Ethnology and Ethnography

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INCOME DISTRIBUTION AND POVERTY IN RURAL ECUADOR, 1950–1979.

By CARLOS LUZURIAGA C. and CLARENCE ZUVEKAS, JR. (Tempe: Center for Latin American Studies, Arizona State University, 1983. Pp. 243. \$37.95.)

POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF ECUADOR: PERSPECTIVES FROM INDIGENOUS CULTURES. Edited by JEFFREY EHRENREICH. (Albany: Society for Latin American Anthropology and Center for the Caribbean and Latin America, State University of New York at Albany, 1985. Pp. 256. \$10.00.)

SICUANGA RUNA: THE OTHER SIDE OF DEVELOPMENT IN AMAZONIAN ECUADOR. By NORMAN E. WHITTEN, JR. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985. Pp. 294. \$17.95.)

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND ETHNICITY IN MODERN ECUADOR. Edited by NORMAN E. WHITTEN, JR. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1981. Pp. 850. \$33.95.)

The books considered in this review essay represent a variety of theoretical perspectives, including political anthropology, ethnicity, cultural ecology, cultural persistence and change, and socioeconomics. The contributors represented in the two collective works comprise a virtual who's who of contemporary anthropologists working in Ecuador, and the authors of the two other books are also well known for their work on Ecuadorian topics. Norman Whitten has conducted extensive research as an ethnologist in Ecuador and has authored several detailed ethnographic accounts on ethnic relations in the coastal and jungle lowland regions of Ecuador. Both Carlos Luzuriaga and Clarence Zuvekas have written studies on the social situation and economic development in Ecuador and elsewhere in Latin America.

Luzuriaga and Zuvekas's *Income Distribution and Poverty in Rural Ecuador, 1950–1979* is an exhaustive critical review of the literature on

the economy and living conditions in Ecuador over a thirty-year period. This study brings together information from a variety of sources, including social and economic studies carried out by Ecuadorian and international institutions, statistical reports, theoretical works on the socioeconomics of Latin America, and ethnographies discussing the social situation in specific sites throughout Ecuador.

The first five chapters present economic and social data by region, province, and canton. Most of the statistical information is presented in tables and diagrams of the sort that might please economists. Luzuriaga and Zuvekas are careful to interpret the data for noneconomists, however, showing their importance for illustrating the social and economic trends that have affected the rural population of Ecuador. The data are discussed within the Ecuadorian context and are also compared with similar data from other Latin American and Caribbean countries to provide an idea of Ecuador's relative well-being in contrast with other countries of the continent. The authors caution the reader about the reliability and limitations of the data. Where possible, they attempt to cross-reference and even out the information found in their often disparate sources. They propose a useful method for indexing the indicators of well-being (such as income, landholding size, mortality, and literacy) for the provinces by using a "scalogram" (pp. 87–88). This method allows comparison of the relative well-being of the Ecuadorian provinces, and the system could be adapted for wider use.

Chapter 6 reviews seminal descriptive works, mostly ethnographic, by province within the three geographic regions of Ecuador. Each work is discussed in terms of its own merits and its contribution to understanding income distribution in rural Ecuador. Chapter 7 discusses governmental policies that would affect the income distribution of the country, and Chapter 8 offers the authors' conclusions from the materials consulted in the study. Luzuriaga and Zuvekas conclude that the lack of effective income redistribution in Ecuador has resulted from historic social and political factors that can be overcome only through sweeping policy reforms that would include rural development plans, increased infrastructure, and education reform. The authors conclude the study by presenting concrete recommendations for further research into the income distribution and social and economic status of rural Ecuadorians. The variety of data presented and the thoughtful discussion of trends within international, national, and provincial contexts make this book a useful source of general and specific information on income distribution and the living conditions of rural Ecuador.

Political Anthropology of Ecuador: Perspectives from Indigenous Cultures, edited by Jeffrey Ehrenreich, is a well-organized collective work of concise articles on various aspects of indigenous political organization. The book is divided into three areas of focus: the politics of con-

tact, the politics of shamanism and curing, and the politics of internal order. In all three sections, the authors show how indigenous cultures control their internal order through political means.

The first part of the book, "Strategies and Responses to Encroachment: Politics of Contact," includes three case studies that delineate actions taken by indigenous people whose way of life is being challenged by contact with dominant outsider groups. Luisa Stark's contribution traces the history of sex roles and men's and women's participation in economics and political organization over time in the Cotacachi region of northern Ecuador. She observes that although official tributes and institutions of forced labor (such as the *mita*, the *encomienda*, and the *hacienda*) were levied on men, these mechanisms severely penalized the female population left behind to organize and carry out the home economy. Stark applies James Scott's theory of exploitation and the peasant's right to subsistence, concluding that the threat to subsistence security brought on by additional taxes prompted women to take an active role in the peasant uprising described in her essay. The marginal role of women in Indian-Spanish relations and their history of stepping into leadership roles in indigenous societies are presented as other factors influencing women's participation in political actions.

Jeffrey Ehrenreich's essay discusses the importance of secrecy as a strategy for manipulating outsiders' comprehension of the Coiquer, an indigenous group of the western Pacific lowlands. As contact with the Ecuadorian government has increased, especially since the 1970s, when governmental policies encouraging development in previously marginal areas were instituted, the Coiquer have employed secrecy and "dissembling behavior" (image management and information manipulation) as formal means of projecting an image of themselves that conceals, and thus protects, key aspects of their society. This strategy has proven to be an effective indigenous method for buffering the effects of contact and for lessening outsiders' control of Coiquer society.

John Huddleson shows how Indians utilize cultural differences as a means of distinguishing themselves from the dominant group. Through a process that the author calls "Quichuaization," the lowland Quichua identify themselves as a conceptual group indigenous to the area and as the group that logically has rights to the land resources of the lowlands. Identifying these rights has proven especially important in the face of spontaneous and government-sponsored incursions into the region for purposes of economic development.

The second part of *Political Anthropology of Ecuador* discusses the ways in which shamanism and curing rituals are integrated into the indigenous political process. Frank Salomon discusses shamanism as a means of accomplishing political change in colonial Ecuador. He uses

ethnohistoric documents related to the eighteenth-century trial of a famous and feared shaman, Andrés Arévalo, who controlled others by instilling fear of his fury in them. Although Arévalo's fury was directed at specific individuals, Salomon shows how, metaphorically speaking, the shaman's acts were a means of dealing with cultural change and the introduction of new institutions, particularly cattle ranching and the colonization of the western foothills region of the Andes.

In "The Politics of Curing among the Coiquier Indians," Judith Kempf examines the role of illness and curing from the perspective of "medicine as a culture system." She demonstrates how traditional classification and treatment of illness function as an informal political system among the Coiquier, who consider illness a direct response to disorder and deviant behavior. Specifically, Kempf shows that in this group without any formal political system, the context of curing reinforces and legitimizes values and norms that are basic to the social system.

E. Jean Langdon surveys Siona political process since the conquest. She focuses on the shaman as an important leader and authority figure in traditional society and on the new political role of the shaman in contemporary society, including the way in which contemporary governmental leaders have stepped into traditional roles as a means of gaining political control. She also discusses the demise of Siona shamans as a result of governmental authority encroaching on the traditional religious and political leadership roles of shamans.

The final section of this collection deals with ideology, traditionalism, responses to change, and economics as political means of establishing and maintaining internal order. Leo Chávez analyzes the relationship of culture to political participation and change for Otavalo commercial weavers through examining their entrepreneurial ethic. This ethic emphasizes rationality, honesty, innovation, independence, and self-reliance, values that contrast markedly with the functioning of the Ecuadorian political system. Chávez shows how these conflicting social values hinder Indians' identification with and full participation in the Ecuadorian political system.

Looking at a neighboring village in the Otavalo region, Barbara Butler examines the process of attaining adult status in Saraloma, where one prerequisite is participation in political positions that reflect community standing. She demonstrates that participation in the political hierarchy requires a balance of traditional processes and ideology along with the need for innovating, especially when dealing with the larger Ecuadorian society.

Finally, Pita Kelekna discusses the importance of trading partnerships and long-distance exchange in Achuara culture. She identifies the relationship between specialization in manufacture of trade products and the social, political, and ritual implications of trade relationships.

The social and political aspects of long-distance trade are discussed in depth from the vantage point of networking and alliance theory.

Political Anthropology of Ecuador provides valuable information on the indigenous political process in a variety of times and locations. It includes groups exhibiting different forms of organization, all of whom find themselves at different stages in the process of assimilation. The theories and approaches used to discuss the Ecuadorian case, however, should be applicable to the study of politically motivated action in indigenous groups and small-scale societies anywhere. Editor Ehrenreich has done a fine job of selecting articles for inclusion, organizing the material in a logical order and editing the contributions so that they read evenly.

Norman Whitten's *Sicuanga Runa: The Other Side of Development in Amazonian Ecuador* is a confusing attempt to describe and interpret the process of cultural continuity and transformation in the Puyo region of the Ecuadorian Amazon Basin. Whitten focuses on a Puyo outlying village called Nueva Esperanza (sometimes referred to as "New Hope"). This case study site is presented as a microcosm that reveals the influence and effects of nationalist-sponsored change and development capitalism on small communities. The village is said to be a typical traditional community in the process of change, yet one that is able to maintain cultural continuity through effective use of economy, ecology, and tradition.

Whitten uses the creation myth of the *sicuanga* (toucan) as the framework for describing the process of development in the Oriente. Much of this "ethnography" is narrated through the eyes of the villager "Sicuanga Runa," the feisty toucan-person who embodies the key symbolic elements of the indigenous people of the region—beauty and the control of power. *Sicuanga* the person is presented as the real-life metaphor for cultural continuity in the Canelos Quichua culture area because he confronts and takes advantage of change by interpreting it through traditional ideology.

But most of Whitten's characters are composites of real individuals who react to change and development in a village that is itself a composite of locations. I question the validity of using composites of persons and locations in the manner Whitten does—by creating a site with the exact characteristics he seeks to interpret. Does the Ecuadorian Oriente really contain a village that is a "microcosm" of cultural continuity and adaptation in the face of outside development plans? If so, why does Whitten not present it rather than combining elements of the three sites he worked in? It would be more enlightening to see how real individuals react in real situations, and the resulting work would be real ethnography.

On a theoretical level, Whitten envisions all relations in Ecuador as tripartite (p. 41), and he imposes that paradigm on all aspects of his data. He plots social organization, power relationships, and ethnic-cultural affiliation on triangular patterns throughout the book. Thus it appears that Whitten has replaced the "bipolar myopia" that he condemns (p. 278) with a tripartite structuralist approach that seems not particularly useful in explaining social relationships in either Nueva Esperanza or Ecuador.

Whitten's extensive use of Quichua and Spanish terms is confusing, and in many cases unwarranted. He employs words from these languages freely, apparently to convey the multi-ethnic character of Nueva Esperanza. But many of these terms are neither translated in the text nor listed in the glossary. Also confusing are an inordinate amount of anthropological jargon and strange wordings, which make it difficult to discern the author's insights into the process of cultural continuity and change in the hamlet. To cite only one example:

As a result of the ongoing bipolar (native Runa [including Achuar in some contexts]/national [oriental/blanco]) indigenous debate, the concept of *mestizaje* in all of its multifaceted dimensions (ranging from processes of *blanqueamiento* to those of *cholficación*) is becoming crystallized at a very salient level of public discourse by those previously dichotomized as *blanco* versus *indio* (in Spanish), *Runa* versus *mashca pupu*, *ahua llacta*, or *ahualta* (in Quichua) or *Achuar* versus *apachi* (in Achuar or Shuar). . . . (P. 178)

Whitten's ethnography functions best when he is describing traditional ceramic production as a plastic expression of Canelos Quichua cosmology. In this context, his argument that power and beauty are the most important elements of Canelos Quichua social organization emerges most clearly. Here too Whitten's genuine affinity for the women and their work is evident. A very useful bibliographic essay concludes the *Sicuanqa Runa*. This essay further explains the processes of development approached in the book and also guides readers to relevant readings on Ecuadorian ethnology and ethnography.

The final work under consideration here, *Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador*, is a collective work by twenty-six respected Ecuadorianists, edited by Norman Whitten. Research for the book was sponsored by the Quito-based Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, which coordinated the fieldwork presented in the book. The volume is divided into four sections. The first provides overview information, placing cultural transformation and ethnicity within their theoretical context. Section 2 presents information on the socio-economic processes affecting the indigenous cultures of Ecuador. The final two sections focus on adaptation by presenting specific case studies conducted in the sierra, littoral, and the Oriente or lowland region.

Although the book is divided into thematic sections, some themes cross the divisional boundaries. In fact, because many authors refer the reader to other articles in the volume for comparative or additional information, one gets the impression that this book was truly a cooperative effort.

A thoughtful introduction by Whitten provides an excellent background on the geographical, historic, and ethnic diversity of Ecuador as well as the distinctive flavor of the Ecuadorian countryside. The introduction prepares the reader for the ensuing discussions of "the facets, dimensions, and dynamics of ethnicity, cultural continuity and cultural change as they converge and diverge within the boundaries of a Third World nation undergoing processes of radical transformation" (p. 22).

Whitten's selection of contributions reflects his interest in the Geertzian-inspired "critical anthropology" that depends on contextual, processual, and descriptive approaches to theory building. The essays address a wide range of current theoretical issues related to the retention of ethnic identity in a rapidly modernizing society, including ethnicity, nationalism, economics, ecology, and adaptation. Although most of the contributions are theoretical, even the most theoretical essays depend on detailed ethnographic description of specific groups as they react to contact and the processes of cultural continuation or assimilation.

Major themes recurring in the essays are the history and results of programs undertaken by capitalist, governmental, and spiritual decree; the role of ethnicity; and the maintenance of ethnic identity in the context of government-sponsored programs. The effects of "modernization" on ethnicity (illustrated by the transition to capitalism, to missionized spirituality, and to membership in the nation-state) are discussed in almost every piece.

Two essays are reprinted here: "Weavers of Otavalo" by Frank Salomon (originally published in 1973) and "Strategies for Survival: The Indians of Highland Ecuador" by Joseph Casagrande (originally published in 1974). Each has left its mark on anthropology in general, and more specifically, on Ecuadorian ethnology. Salomon's article provides an overview of Otavalo weaving traditions, the special treatment that Otavaleños received during the colonial period, and the Otavaleños' participation in national and international markets over time. The Otavalo Indians are shown to be adaptive in their production and marketing strategies, making the most of the outside influences that they deem useful and, indeed, turning them to personal advantage.

Casagrande shows how six highland indigenous groups, each possessing unique cultural and historical backgrounds but living within the same stratified system, have reacted differently to pressures from the dominant society. The essay reviews the differences between vari-

ous highland indigenous groups in terms of the "strategies for survival" that they employ in confronting external domination.

Space limitations do not allow comments on all the contributions, but several especially interesting essays deserve mention. Three of them deal with the importance of manifestations of expressive culture as carriers of deep-rooted ideas on ethnic identity and identification. These essays are notable because they treat a topic that is rarely found in theoretical anthropology publications of this kind, and also because they are extremely well written.

Constance García-Barrio discusses the image of blacks as portrayed in Ecuadorian literature and society. This largely descriptive article presents the history of blacks in Ecuador and their portrayal by both blacks and mestizos in Ecuadorian literature. Several aspects of Afro-Ecuadorian coastal culture are discussed in terms of folklore, customs, culture conflict, commercial exploitation, racial identification, and prejudice, all themes prevailing in the literature. I found this essay significant because García-Barrio used Esmeraldeño literature as a data base and corroborated those data through interviews with authors and natives and participant observation of the treatment of blacks in Esmeraldas today (the author is herself black). She concludes that the prejudice against black people reflected in Ecuadorian literature is also prevalent in daily relations in Esmeraldas, and she predicts increasing marginalization of the black population of Esmeraldas as the town modernizes.

William Belzner's insightful discussion of music, modernization, and Westernization of the Macuma Shuar is based on an analysis of the nature and role of music for that group. Belzner argues that Shuar music is organized according to the same structural principles as other aspects of society and therefore mirrors society and embodies key elements of cultural continuity. Belzner shows how Protestant evangelicals have attempted to use music to spread their message, even utilizing native texts to this end. Music is a primary means of expression for the Shuar as well as an important means of social control and cultural continuity. Because Western music obscured important structural principles of the group, Western music (which was accepted with interest initially) has been rejected almost entirely in favor of reemphasizing native forms.

Finally, Dorothea Whitten's article on the cultural meaning and symbolic significance of ceramic manufacture among the Canelos Quichua is intriguing. Whitten provides an ethnographic background of the Canelos Quichua, describes the Canelos spirit world in general and as it relates to expressive culture, and offers a processual discussion and an exegetical analysis of Canelos ceramic production and the aesthetic criteria that guide it. She discusses the integration of motifs reflecting the intrusion of the dominant culture into the Oriente. Whitten

argues that through ceramics, which carry cultural information and symbolize important aspects of culture, the Canelos Quichua are able to incorporate aspects of change while working through a traditional medium.

Norman Whitten has endeavored to represent the major geographic zones of Ecuador in this collective work. The Amazonian Oriente region is best represented, with eleven of the twenty-seven papers describing strategies for maintaining ethnic identity of lowland Indian groups (including the Shuar, Achuar, Waorani, and Secoya) in the face of repeated foreign incursions into their territory. Ethnicity in the highlands is discussed primarily in terms of the effects of Catholicism on family, social, and economic organization. Works on the littoral are the scarcest despite, or perhaps because of, the complex ethnic admixtures present there.

The inclusion of articles that discuss ethnicity, cultural continuity and change, and modernization from a variety of perspectives—including culture history, nationalism, integration, economics, ecology, and aesthetics—makes *Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador* an important reader for understanding of the nature of contemporary Ecuadorian ethnicity. This work and Ehrenreich's *Political Anthropology of Ecuador* should become required reading for students and investigators interested in the process of cultural continuity and change as well as for those interested in Ecuadorian ethnography and ethnology. The contributions in the two volumes cover a wide range of ethnic groups and address the urgent problem of neocolonialism. Although the essays describe Ecuadorian cases in great ethnographic detail, readers will be able to discern significant theoretical parallels with other geographic areas undergoing similar processes of modernization.

The number and quality of essays dealing with the Amazon in *Cultural Transformations* would warrant publication in a separate volume. The other contributions could be presented in a second volume focusing specifically on theoretical issues and case studies from the coastal and highland regions. *Political Anthropology* addresses the Pacific lowlands more fully. For this reason and because of the theoretical approaches employed, the two books complement each other well. I might add that Zuvekas and Luzuriaga's *Income Distribution and Poverty in Rural Ecuador* provides additional quantitative and qualitative information that serves as a critical backdrop for measuring and understanding the history of those processes described in the ethnographic contributions.

The Center for Latin American Studies, an academic department at Arizona State University, and the Society for Latin American Anthropology, the Latin Americanist division of the American Anthropological

Association, are to be congratulated for undertaking the publication of works on contemporary Latin American topics. Likewise, the University of Illinois Press and editor Norman Whitten should be complimented for publishing a major volume on topics of vital interest to contemporary anthropological theory.