

Chapter Twenty-One
Agrarian Reform and “Development”
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INTRODUCTION

Land struggles generated political conflict across the Andes for much of the twentieth century. Indigenous communities had suffered the steady encroachment of their land under both colonial and republican rule and, in many cases, were forced to retreat to the most inhospitable highland territory. Large amounts of land were concentrated in the hands of a small number of large estates, known as *latifundios*, while huge numbers of peasants survived through subsistence farming of small plots, known as *minifundios*. Unequal access to land formed the basis for broader social inequalities as landowning elites used their economic power to dictate the terms of trade, water access, labour rights and political representation.

From the mid-twentieth century onwards, the status quo was challenged from various directions. Governments of different political persuasions engaged in innovative projects of agrarian reform to modernise their economies and respond to peasant movements. While many agrarian reforms fell short of realising their modernising objectives, they had long-lasting consequences for the distribution of political power and the citizenship status of indigenous and peasant populations.

THE LAND PROBLEM

Postcolonial legacies of land inequality

During the pre-Hispanic era, diverse regional cultures developed in what is now Peru. These cultures generally combined family occupation of the land with collective tenancy and labour, albeit with important regional variations. Resources were distributed to allow local self-sufficiency and the accumulation of a surplus that could be used as tribute for local chiefs. The expansion of the Inca Empire during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries led to the development of agriculture and the centralisation of tribute, a system that the Spanish sought to appropriate (Matos Mar and Mejía, 1980, p.17). As a reward for participating in the 1532 invasion, some early settlers were granted an *encomienda* by the Spanish Crown, which gave them rights to the tribute and labour of the subjects of certain indigenous chiefs, or *caciques*. Access to labour and tribute was more valuable to the settlers than land ownership at this point. However, the *encomienda* system collapsed around thirty years after the Spanish invasion due to massive demographic decline in the indigenous population and a simultaneous increase in the settler population and its consumption needs. By the late sixteenth century, the conquest society that lived off tribute from indigenous producers had shifted to a colonial society that was directly involved in the production process (Keith, 1976). The central productive unit in this new colonial society was the hacienda, an agricultural estate producing goods that could be traded on local and international markets. With the emergence of the hacienda, land ownership became much more significant since the land itself formed the basis of the settlers' wealth.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the lands occupied by indigenous communities (known as *ayllus* in the Andean region) were increasingly absorbed by the haciendas, which were consolidating their position in the colonial economy as they expanded. Spanish settlers used a combination of coercion, negotiation and force to extend their territorial reach. As Brooke Larson (1998, p.76) comments in the case of the Cochabamba valley (in what is now Bolivia), “Often hidden from the public eye and from royal scrutiny, a host of land transactions took place in the 1560s, amounting to a piecemeal, de facto, and often ostensibly peaceful territorial advance.” While Spanish settlers commonly provided explanations for natives’ willingness to sell their land, it is difficult to know the extent to which indigenous landowners actively chose to sell as part of an economic strategy, such as investing in pack animals (Larson, 1998, p.76). Former communal lands also became vacant because of the disintegration and dislocation of indigenous communities due to disease and political breakdown, as well as the colonial reorganisation of dispersed indigenous populations into *reducciones* (concentrated settlements) as part of the Toledan reforms that began in 1567 (Matos Mar and Mejía, 1980, p.19).

By the eighteenth century, the dominance of the hacienda within Andean rural economies meant that many indigenous populations were dependent on the large landowners for their livelihood and were subjected to conditions of servitude, particularly in the traditional highland regions of Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru. Despite peasant protests, this situation persisted and in some cases worsened throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The contract signed by the tenants of the Hacienda Huyro in La Convención (Cusco, Peru) in 1900 is illustrative in this regard. Among other conditions, the contract obliged the tenant to pay rent in both cash and labour; maintain his tenancy for a compulsory five years; work on the hacienda for one month out of every three in return for 40 cents per day in wages; consume only items produced by the hacienda, such as sugar and *aguardiente* (an alcoholic beverage) or face a fine; and give preference to the hacienda in selling goods produced on his plot of land.ⁱ

The human cost of this highly unequal balance of power is made clear in the personal testimony of individuals such as Saturnino Huilca, a Quechua-speaking peasant who was born in the department of Cusco and endured decades of abuse at the hands of hacendados before becoming a prominent peasant leader. In the 1970s he recalled “they have made us work without compassion. Because they did not consider whether I had strength. Whether I was fed or not. The important thing for them was for me to work even in that situation. And they worked me like a beast” (Neira Samanez, 1975, pp.14-15).ⁱⁱ

Winds of change

By the mid-twentieth century a variety of circumstances coincided to make the status quo seem untenable. Beginning in the 1930s, peasants in Peru’s southern highlands organised peasant

unions to contest their labour conditions and used land occupations to force landowners to negotiate. In the early 1960s these protests grew in scale and impact. Writing in 1964 as a special correspondent for the national newspaper *Expreso*, Hugo Neira observed that the land occupations sweeping across the southern highlands were neither the result of spontaneous protests nor the work of the “usual suspects”—communist, Trotskyite agitators. “Let us not fool ourselves,” wrote Neira, “beneath the old poncho, amid an apparently traditional or routine picture, these people have learned and they have changed. [Peasant] unionism is a mutation. The spark that can ignite all of the sierra” (Neira, 2008, p.79).

In response to the growth in peasant activism, even traditionally conservative newspapers such as *La Prensa* called for greater attention to the land question and the implementation of agrarian reform. Following the occupation of Hacienda Chaupimayo in Cusco in 1962—which brought the hacienda’s economic activities to a halt and made national headlines—an editorial in *La Prensa* commented: “[T]he solution has to consist in the immediate expropriation of the latifundio, at a just price according to the existing law, and in the execution of an exemplary agrarian programme that not only distributes land among the *campesinos* [peasants] but that also orientates them and helps them to free themselves from the misery and ignorance in which communism prospers.”ⁱⁱⁱ In the case of Bolivia, the strength of peasant activism forced the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) to make agrarian reform a central part of its government programme when previously it had only been discussed in vague, general terms (Dunkerley, 1984, p. 65).

Rural inequality was also catapulted onto the political agenda by the emergence of Cuban-inspired guerrilla organisations. In 1965 three distinct political organisations (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria and Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria) attempted to initiate armed struggle against the Peruvian state using guerrilla tactics, such as attacking police posts and blowing up bridges and communications lines. Following the unexpected success of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, it was felt across Latin America that contrary to traditional Marxist doctrine, the rural poor could form the basis of a political revolution against the capitalist state. Peru’s guerrilla organisations were drawn primarily from middle class university students who were filled with idealism but lacked practical knowledge of the *sierra* and the peasant communities that they sought to mobilise. All three organisations suffered a resounding defeat at the hands of the armed forces and were disbanded following widespread arrests and loss of life (Béjar, 1970). Nevertheless, the fact that Cuban tactics of armed struggle had been adopted within Peru was a cause of grave concern for the government and reinforced the argument that the threat of rural insurgency could only be defeated in the long term through fundamental social and economic reform.

This argument received substantial support from the U.S. government, which was keen to restrict the growth of communism and promote the development of capitalist economic systems

within its immediate sphere of influence. President John F. Kennedy established a policy known as the Alliance for Progress, which provided aid to Latin American nations for the implementation of land reform, agricultural credit and the introduction of new technology. Among the aims agreed by the Alliance members was a commitment “to encourage, in accordance with the characteristics of each country, programmes of comprehensive agrarian reform” (Sklar and Hagen, 1972).

From an economic standpoint, by the early 1960s it was apparent that in most of the Andean nations the agricultural sector was in desperate need of modernisation. High levels of poverty in rural areas and low levels of agricultural productivity were key factors used to explain the region’s slow progress in reaching the levels of industrialisation already achieved in “the West.” In the case of Peru, agricultural production failed to keep pace with the country’s rapid demographic growth and the development occurring in other economic sectors. The annual growth rate of Peruvian agriculture fell from an average of 3.8% between 1950 and 1963, to just 1.9% between 1964 and 1968. This situation gave rise to high levels of unemployment in rural areas (in 1969 just 33.8% of the agricultural labour force was in permanent employment) and widespread migration from rural to urban areas. Unable to accommodate the sudden influx of people, many cities saw the rapid development of shanty towns and so-called poverty belts (*cinturones de pobreza*) (Matos Mar and Mejía, 1980, pp.54-56). This overall picture of agricultural decline contained within it important differences between the traditional, semi-capitalist haciendas of the highlands and the modern coastal plantations, which had high levels of mechanisation and served global export markets. The greater productivity levels achieved by the latter indicated that Peruvian agriculture could be improved substantially through agrarian reform and greater use of technology such as fertilisers, machinery, and pesticides.^{iv}

EXPERIMENTS WITH DEVELOPMENT AND AGRARIAN REFORM

Changing notions of “development”

The agrarian reform programmes that proliferated across the Andes from the mid-twentieth century onwards were driven by a desire to modernise the countryside and accelerate economic development. As Javier Ávila Molero (2009, p.415) observes in relation to the applied anthropology projects that emerged during the same period, “these programmes began by understanding development as a process of unilinear evolution valid for all the cultures and societies of the world.” From this perspective, rural development required the adoption of modern technology that was necessarily foreign in nature and a change in values and aspirations among rural populations. In short, “traditional” ways of life and cultural traditions were seen as a barrier to development that needed to be overcome.

As Javier Ávila (2009, p.417) notes, the problem with this concept of development was that it was oriented towards a series of ideals about rural life that frequently did not take into account

the structural economic inequalities faced by rural communities and tended to subordinate the practices and viewpoints of those communities in favour of “western” ideas regarding social and cultural change. The parliamentary debates that took place in Colombia in 1960 regarding the introduction of agrarian reform reveal the tendency among representatives of all political colours to view the rural population in terms of the “campesino other” who required guidance and instruction in order to modernise. The Reforma Social Agraria (Agrarian Social Reform) which was passed in December 1961 made provisions for state-backed producers’ associations or cooperatives that would provide campesinos with technical, financial and social support. The associations were designed to intervene in all aspects of peasant life and address the perceived cultural deficiencies of the campesino. For example, Senator Velásquez Paláu argued that the cooperative would have a highly positive effect on the character of the campesino: “This will mean that a prosperous peasant population develops a human type of greater physical resistance, greater estimation of their own individual value, better awareness of their capabilities and limitations, with a broad sense of human solidarity, more patient and constant, better disciplined in the struggle for life.”^v

The central thrust of Bolivia’s 1953 agrarian reform was to provide “land for those who work it” by expropriating land from the latifundios and redistributing it as small plots for individual peasant ownership. However, comments made by President Victor Paz Estenssoro indicate that the country’s peasants were viewed as passive recipients of the development agenda, rather than active participants in the revolution. In an interview with American historian James Wilkie in 1966, Paz Estenssoro stated that although his regime had made land reform a priority, “we could not acquire, overnight, the miraculous power to bring the peasants up to the cultural level of the other social sectors.”^{vi}

This tutelary approach to rural development came into question across the Andean region during the 1960s and 70s because of the practical experience of implementing agrarian reform. Far from behaving as the passive populations imagined by government legislators, many rural communities challenged official narratives and policy agendas by mobilising politically and pushing for the representation of their interests. In Peru, for example, the system of agricultural cooperatives established by the 1969 Agrarian Reform initially placed decision-making power in the hands of managers and technical staff. However, following trade union protests on the large sugar estates in the north of the country, the government was forced to amend the law to allow proportional representation for different categories of worker within the administrative organs of the cooperatives (Zaldívar, 1974, pp.25-69). As will be discussed in greater detail below, the active participation of peasant and indigenous communities in processes of land reform fundamentally changed ideas about development in the Andean region.



Figure 21.1 “The land is for he who works it”. Poster produced by the local office of the Sistema Nacional de Apoyo a la Movilización Social (National System of Support for Social Mobilisation, SINAMOS), in Azángaro (Puno, Peru), c. 1975

Courtesy of the National Library of Peru, Special Collections

“Revolutionary” versus “technical” agrarian reform

While all the agrarian reform programmes implemented in the Andean region were broadly directed towards alleviating rural poverty and generating economic development, there was considerable variation in approach. There was also intense debate within countries over what agrarian reform should mean in practice. In Colombia, for example, parliamentary debates between November 1960 and December 1961 on the proposed Social Agrarian Reform centred on whether major land redistribution was necessary to break up the latifundios and improve campesinos’ quality of life or whether in fact sufficient change could be achieved through the promotion of technical reforms to agriculture and the use of colonisation to make more land available for agriculture (Montenegro Helfer, 2016). In the case of Bolivia, the MNR’s initial plans for land reform did not include a redistributive element. Rather, the government was increasingly pushed into expropriating land and giving it to peasant farmers and indigenous communities to appease their demands (Dunkerley, 1984, pp.38-82). Peru’s 1969 agrarian reform was among the most radical in the region, expropriating large areas of land from the latifundios and redistributing it among peasant cooperatives at an accelerated rate. The reform was introduced by Juan Velasco Alvarado’s military government as a central plank of its revolution. In fact, the need for comprehensive agrarian reform was a key motivation for the 1968 coup in which army

general Velasco Alvarado and a small circle of associates seized power and expelled the democratically elected government of Fernando Belaúnde Terry. Velasco argued that Peru's so-called democracy was mired in corruption and vested interests, and that meaningful social reform would only be achieved through a military-led revolution (Cant, 2015, pp.34-38). The agrarian reform was to act as a platform for broader social change, accompanied by educational reform and greater respect for indigenous languages and culture.

Peru had already experienced two previous attempts at land reform, in 1962 under the Pérez Godoy government and again in 1964 under the Belaúnde government. Both were limited in scope and contained substantial loopholes that allowed the latifundios to evade expropriation. The 1969 Agrarian Reform Law (Legal Decree 17716) was drafted by a special commission that included the Minister of Agriculture and five advisors. As well as previous experiences of land reform, the commission drew on the growing body of research on rural issues that had emerged since the late 1950s in the fields of anthropology, sociology and economics. Both Peruvian and foreign researchers had addressed questions such as the nature of power relations in rural communities, systems of land tenure, the factors determining agricultural productivity and the prospects for social change (Matos Mar, 1958; Bouricaud, 1967; Hobsbawm, 1969). Benjamín Samanez Concha, one of the government advisers involved in the drafting of the reform, described the guiding principles of the law as follows: "We wanted to carry out a structural agrarian reform. Not a conventional reform like that created by Law 15037 [Belaúnde's agrarian reform] and like those which existed in other countries. An advanced law that proposed an agrarian reform that could be massive, rapid and drastic" (Del Pilar Tello, 1981, p.8).

Unlike land reforms in Mexico and Bolivia, the Peruvian agrarian reform expropriated land according to the priorities identified by government officials, rather than responding to petitions for land. That meant it could be implemented with greater speed than previous reforms, and under conditions that were favourable to the peasantry. Local administration of the reform was undertaken by the offices established in each agrarian reform zone. Once an agrarian reform zone had been declared, all landowners within the zone were requested to present their land titles for review by government administrators. Land that exceeded the "unaffectable" limit (variable according to geography and land type^{vii}) was expropriated. While the expropriations were compulsory, landowners received payment for their land in the form of industrial bonds and/or cash.

Once expropriation was complete, the process of adjudication could begin. It was at this point that peasants could present their case for receiving the expropriated land, which was often the most contentious part of the reform process (Seligmann, 1995, pp.93-104). Land claims were processed by newly established "Land Judges", who were in turn accountable to a national Agrarian Tribunal. This new land court system was largely independent of the civil courts—which had tended to favour the landowners over the peasantry—and permitted oral hear-

ings, including the use of Quechua (Seligmann, 1995, pp.62-69). In receiving the land, the awardees agreed to pay for it over the course of twenty years, in what became known as the “agrarian debt”. The primary form of adjudication was to Cooperativas Agrarias de Producción (Agricultural Production Cooperatives, CAPs) and Sociedades Agrícolas de Interés Social (Agricultural Societies of Social Interest, SAIS). The Agrarian Reform Law also permitted adjudication to indigenous communities—which were to be renamed “peasant communities”—and groups of peasants who agreed to form a cooperative in the future.^{viii} In addition, peasants could receive land on an individual basis in the form of a family agricultural unit. However, the government preferred the associative model on the grounds that it produced economies of scale and a more rational use of resources. This is reflected in the fact that 65.3% of the total land adjudicated by the reform went to cooperatives, rather than to communities or individual peasants (Alvarez and Caballero, 1980, p.25).^{ix}

Cooperatives of one kind or another were a common feature of agrarian reforms across the Andes: in Bolivia land was adjudicated to peasant unions (which became important vehicles of collective action); in Chile peasants were organised into Centros de Reforma Agraria (Agrarian Reform Centres, CERA), which grouped together smaller plots of land and employed all labourers on an equal basis. The Velasco government saw the cooperatives created by its agrarian reform as a means to remodel Peruvian society: members (known as *socios*) gained access to health and social services, and had the power to vote on decisions made in the general assembly. They could also vote for representatives on the cooperative’s decision-making bodies, the vigilance and administrative councils. For many peasants, these cooperative elections were their first experience of voting. The reform was therefore not just about addressing land inequalities; it was designed also to promote the political inclusion of campesinos at the local and national levels through a network of cooperatives, agrarian leagues and a national body, the Confederación Nacional Agraria (National Agrarian Confederation, CNA).

However, the revolutionary credentials of the Peruvian agrarian reform were consistently challenged by leftist organisations, which accused the Velasco government of installing a pro-capitalist agrarian reform that was driven by the demands of “U.S. imperialism”. For example, in a flyer bearing the headline “Let us crush the hacendados, let us expel the yankees,” the political party Vanguardia Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Vanguard) claimed that the reform was designed to strengthen medium and small property owners and foster a capitalist mentality that would act as a barrier to the working class movement.^x The reform was also criticised for its policy of compensating landowners for their land (seen as unwarranted given the poverty suffered by the landless), its creation of cooperatives (perceived as supplanting existing forms of political association and promoting authoritarian control) and the marginalisation of indigenous land claims in favour of the cooperative system (Cant, 2015, pp.39-41). The actions and rhetoric of radical leftist organisations would become a major obstacle to the successful implementation of the reform, which relied considerably on grassroots support.

Similar political struggles took place in Chile during its agrarian reform process, particularly under the presidency of Salvador Allende (1970-73). In common with Peru's agrarian reform, the Chilean government expropriated land from the latifundios and redistributed it to agrarian reform centres. These centres were to act as a vehicle for achieving the "Chilean road to socialism" in the countryside, offering education and social services in addition to their role in organising labour and agricultural production. However, the slow rate of expropriation meant that organisations such as the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) took matters into their own hands by organising land occupations and demanding that the reform be implemented. At the other end of the political spectrum, the agrarian reform and the grassroots mobilisation that it gave rise to were fiercely criticised by the country's largest landowners' association, the Sociedad Nacional de Agricultura (National Agriculture Society, SNA). It adopted a confrontational strategy towards Allende's Popular Unity government and portrayed the peasant-led land occupations as the actions of dangerous terrorists, ultimately contributing to the right-wing backlash that allowed General Augusto Pinochet to seize power in 1973 (Robles, 2016). One of Pinochet's first acts as president was to return over one third of expropriated land to former owners and dissolve numerous agrarian reform centres and settlements established during the agrarian reform (Tinsman, 2002, p.289).

POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF AGRARIAN REFORM

Limitations of reform

Some forty years after it was introduced, opinion remains extremely divided on the Peruvian agrarian reform. The Velasco government came to an abrupt end in 1975, following a coup led by General Morales Bermúdez, whose conservative regime (1975-80) reversed many of the Velasco government's reforms and began to withdraw state support for the agrarian reform. Nevertheless, the reform had achieved a remarkable level of land redistribution within a short space of time. Between 1969 and 1976 the agrarian reform transferred 7 million hectares to 1,500 collective units of various types (Cleaves and Scurrah, 1980, p.274). In total some 38.8% of agricultural land was affected by the reform (Alvarez and Caballero, 1980, p.20). In effect, the agrarian reform succeeded in dismantling the hacienda system which had dominated the Peruvian countryside for centuries. Campesinos who received land from the reform, either as individuals or as cooperative members, were able to pursue alternative livelihoods and educate their children to a degree that was previously unthinkable.

However, the economic benefits of the reform were not equally distributed. According to Cynthia McClintock (1984, pp.64-66), only about one-quarter to one-third of all farm families benefited from the reform materially and some types of farmers benefited a great deal more than others: the average value of the property transferred to each cooperative member was approximately 75,000 soles (about \$1,900), compared to 2,000 soles (\$50) per beneficiary among peas-

ant communities. In many cases the best pasture lands were allocated for cooperative use while the marginal lands of lower quality were left for the use of peasant communities. This created tensions between peasant communities and cooperatives that erupted in the 1980s with a series of *tomas de tierra* in which peasant communities occupied cooperative lands. One of those involved in the land occupations in Cusco recalled: “I saw that the campesino worked, [the cooperative] told him the land is yours. But in what way was it his, the land? ...Just like the hacienda there appeared the cooperative, the president, his directive council, and the workers were the ones who were exploited... So therefore absolutely nothing changed, with the cooperative.”^{xi}

At the macro-economic level, the cooperative model established by the Peruvian agrarian reform did not prove to be the engine of industrial growth envisioned by the Velasco government. Caballero and Alvarez (1980, pp.83-84) found that in 1977, cooperatives were only the majority producer for four crops: cotton, sorghum, grape vines and sugarcane. Non-associative agricultural units of more than 5 hectares produced around half of total agricultural production and controlled more than 60% of products for direct consumption and around one-third of agroindustrial/export products. Moreover, they found no evidence that the agrarian reform boosted production. After the return to civilian government in 1980 many cooperatives chose to dissolve, dividing up their land as smallholdings for individual ownership. These factors have frequently been cited (particularly by conservative critics) as evidence that the Peruvian agrarian reform was a failure that did little to improve the lives of peasants. However, it is important to recognise that the agrarian reform was cut short by the change in regime. It might well have achieved greater redistribution and economic success if it had been allowed to continue. Supporters of the agrarian reform also argue that it should be judged on its own terms, as an act of social justice whose objectives centred primarily on the incorporation of the peasantry into national economic and political life, rather than agricultural productivity. In common with agrarian reforms in other Andean nations, the Peruvian agrarian reform opened up new opportunities for political participation and social movements that have in turn produced lasting political change.

Indigenous and peasant mobilisation

Agrarian reforms provided an important focal point around which indigenous and peasant groups could mobilise. As Linda Seligmann (1995) showed in the case of Cusco, peasants who had previously been marginalised by the landowning elites were able to make themselves heard and represent their interests via the Agrarian Tribunal and the process of land adjudication. Similarly, in Bolivia, Indian communities and peasant unions consistently petitioned the president for attention to their particular land problems and were ultimately successful in changing the terms on which land could be adjudicated, to recognise communal land rights alongside other types of land claim (Soliz Urrutia, 2014).

The creation of peasant associations and representative organisations was a feature of several agrarian reforms in the region. Even in countries where land redistribution did not reach signifi-

cant levels, peasant organisations gained an important political profile. In Colombia, for example, the Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos de Colombia (National Association of Peasant Smallholders, ANUC) was set up by President Carlos Lleras Restrepo in 1967 as a network through which to promote agricultural development. Although conceived in somewhat paternalistic terms, the organisation developed its own political path and became a centre of left-wing activism during the 1970s (Rivera Cusicanqui, 1987). In Peru, the congresses of the government-sponsored CNA (National Agrarian Confederation) and the independent Confederación de Campesinos del Perú (Peasant Confederation of Peru, CCP) encouraged the development of peasant networks and strengthened peasants' ability to represent their own interests. Whereas critics of the agrarian reform portray the agricultural cooperatives as a model imposed from above that was rejected by the peasantry, my interviews with former cooperative members indicate that the cooperatives provided an important basis for peasant-led development. For example, even after state support for the cooperatives had been withdrawn in the 1980s, the Cooperativa Agraria de Producción Negri Ulloa in Piura continued to develop new systems of member participation and collectivised the marketing of produce, despite opposition from the private sector (Cant, 2015, pp.129-30).

As well as increasing the profile of peasant activism on rural issues, the Peruvian agrarian reform produced a wider shift in the citizenship rights afforded to campesinos. This was largely due to the political terms in which the reform was conceived and implemented. Government propaganda stressed the idea that the reform heralded the liberation of the campesinos from the hacienda system and the chance to participate actively in local and national politics. Within the cooperatives, peasants were encouraged to take part in general meetings and take up positions within the administrative councils. Both the 1972 education reform and government-sponsored education programmes within the cooperatives aimed to increase literacy among peasants and establish a more inclusive education system. Whereas low levels of education among the peasantry had previously been used as an argument for delaying the transfer of land, the Velasco government took the view that it was necessary to proceed with fundamental structural change and fill the educational gaps as required. If one waited until the population had been educated to the required extent, major change might never happen. Alongside government-led training programmes, cooperatives were encouraged to set up their own education committees and organise educational initiatives for their members (Cant, 2015, pp. 87-132).

The Peruvian government's attention to the progress of the agrarian reform meant that rural issues consistently featured in the national media, while the government also invested in innovative projects such as peasant-led radio programmes and the first Quechua language national newspaper. As debates over the implementation of the agrarian reform at the local level intensified, the government and left-wing activists competed for peasant support and viewed the peasantry as a significant political base. An important consequence of the public profile achieved by peasants during the agrarian reform was that when Peru returned to democratic rule in 1980,

the country's illiterate population—the vast majority of whom were peasants—were granted the right to vote in national elections for the first time. The political engagement demonstrated by peasants during the course of the agrarian reform made it difficult to return to the status quo ante, in which national politics were dominated by the landowning elites and peasants were denied suffrage.

The demise of agrarian reform programmes and the ascendancy of neoliberalism across Latin America since the late 1970s pose new questions about the relationship between agriculture and development. Policy agendas promoted by figures such as President Alberto Fujimori in Peru (1990-2000) and President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in Bolivia (1993-97; 2002-03) led to severe cuts in state spending and the promotion of big business as “wealth generators” across all economic sectors. As part of this trend, Peru has seen dramatic increases in the concentration of land ownership since the early 1990s. This corresponds to a combination of factors: the withdrawal of constitutional protections for land owned by peasant communities (previously defined as inalienable and nontransferable to third parties); the limited availability of credit facilities for small landowners; and, neoliberal economic policies that provide favourable conditions for large agroindustrial enterprises (lower taxes, reduced labour protections, international trade agreements). As Fernando Eguren (2014) notes, the concentration of land ownership has been particularly marked in the productive coastal areas that were once at the centre of Velasco's agrarian reform. In 2012 some 30 percent of coastal agricultural land was directly controlled by 18 conglomerates and 20 independent companies, each of which owned more than 1,000 hectares. This figure was set to rise to 40% by the end of the decade (Eguren, 2014, p.179). At the same time, the dissolution of the agricultural cooperatives and the decline of agricultural trade unions has placed small landowners in a precarious economic position, unable to compete with large agricultural enterprises and often forced to sell their produce to intermediary companies at below-market rates (Eguren, 2014, pp.182-5). Social movements have emerged to challenge the narrative of economic growth powered by big business, highlighting the long-term environmental threats posed by industrialised agriculture and the extractive industries. However, as Eguren (2014, p.189) comments, “The social movements, which are episodic and decentralised, although occasionally very intense, have not managed to articulate themselves nor construct an alternative discourse capable of orienting vast sectors of the population that, despite the sustained economic growth, or perhaps because of it, feel that they continue to be excluded from its benefits.”

CONCLUSION

This chapter began by describing the land problem that affected the whole of the Andean region to varying degrees: huge inequalities in access to land that resulted in the latifundio/minifundio complex. A legacy of the hacienda system that grew up during the colonial era, the latifundio/minifundio complex meant that a small proportion of landowners controlled vast areas of terri-

tory and were able to dictate the terms of labour, trade and water access for subsistence farmers and hacienda workers. By the mid-twentieth century this situation was being challenged as both socially unjust and economically backward; agrarian reforms that sought to modernise property relations and agricultural methods were given strong support by the U.S. government via the Alliance for Progress. At the same time, the growth in communist insurgency and the success of the Cuban Revolution highlighted the need to redistribute land and wealth to minimise the appeal of communism among rural communities. The agrarian reforms introduced in different Andean countries from the early 1950s onwards typically included some element of land redistribution, technical assistance for agriculturalists and the creation of cooperatives or collective bodies to represent peasants' interests. Agrarian reforms nevertheless varied considerably in the speed and manner in which they were implemented, and their political orientation. While Bolivia's Víctor Paz Estenssoro described his government's agrarian reform as a means of bringing peasants up to the same cultural level as the urban population, Peru's Juan Velasco Alvarado declared his agrarian reform was a historic moment in which peasants would throw off the legacy of centuries of oppression and take a leading role in the country's economic development.

Andean agrarian reforms often reflected a tutelary approach to development that saw peasants as passive recipients of state assistance, who needed to be modernised through education and cultural change. However, the legal processes and political contexts created as part of agrarian reform enabled peasant movements to chart their own independent course, often challenging the assumptions that underpinned "western" development models. In the case of Peru, the option to participate in cooperative management and national peasant organisations helped propel a new generation of peasant leaders into the public sphere. They continued to shape Peruvian politics long after the collapse of the agrarian reform. While opinion remains divided on whether agrarian reform worked as a response to land inequalities, it had an undeniable impact in dismantling the hacienda system and raising the profile of rural communities within national political discourse.

The current political and economic climate presents a series of new challenges, such as the position of small agricultural producers in an increasingly globalised economy, the balance between agricultural productivity and biodiversity, and the expansion of extractive industries that promise immense wealth but which often threaten the lives and livelihoods of peasant communities. Rural populations across the Andean region are once again being forced to mobilise in order to articulate their own vision of agricultural development and defend their interests at local, national and international levels.

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Notes

i Contract signed by Benjamín de La Torre (landlord) and Francisco Micaura (tenant), 1 January 1907, reproduced in CENCIRA, 1972.

ii All translations from Spanish to English are the author's own.

iii "La Reforma Agraria es Urgente", *La Prensa*, 9 May 1962, p.8.

iv In reality, this idea turned out to rely on a series of false assumptions about the transferability of "modern" agricultural techniques and did not give due consideration to the diversity of tenure, labour conditions and ecologies in different areas of the country. See Harding, 1974; Guillet, 1979; Scott, 1979.

v Senado de la República, *Historia de las Leyes*, I:465 and 468. Cited in Montenegro Helfer, 2016, p.41.

vi Wilkie, J., 1974. *Measuring Land Reform*. Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, University of California, p.28, cited in Soliz Urrutia, 2014, p.87.

vii The limit was 200 hectares on the coast and between 5 and 50 hectares in the sierra. See D.L. 17716, title 3, Chapter 1.

viii See D.L 17716, Title 6, Art. 77 and Title X, Art. 117.

ix Note that this figure refers to all types of land and does not take into account degrees of irrigation etc.

x “Aplastemos a los hacendados, expulsemos a los yanquis. Declaración de Vanguardia Revolucionaria.” Lima, 7 July 1969. Senate House Library, Contemporary Archive on Latin America, K 320, Pam Box 2.

xi Sixto Villavicencio Castillo, Comunidad de Tambo Real (Cusco). Interview conducted by the Centro Andino de Educación y Promoción José María Arguedas. Accessed on 29 January 2017 at: http://www.ivoox.com/audios-cholonautas_sa_f231555_p2_1.html?o=all