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Book Review

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Alessandra Pellegrini Calderon. 2016 *Beyond Indigeneity: Coca Growing and the Emergence of a New Middle Class in Bolivia*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

In this ethnography, Alessandra Pellegrini Calderon writes about the self-construction of identity in Bolivia using the so-called traditional coca-growing region in the Yungas of La Paz Province. The Yungas coca growers employ the "traditional" zone in contrast to the Chapare region in Bolivia's Amazonian lowlands, which the Yungas growers depict as an illegitimate coca growing area. Using the people and town of Piñapata as her case study, Pellegrini Calderon argues that the construction of identity is both class- and race-inflected, and is accomplished through a peasant identity explicitly and strategically cultivated to ensure the protection of coca production and marketing as a livelihood. Thus, the coca growers do not choose an indigenous identity for themselves—though outsiders might label them as such—and instead choose to identify as peasants. These peasant coca-growers from the "traditional" coca-growing areas avoid identification as "middle-class" and reject filling an "indigenous slot" in the pluricultural political schema dominant in Bolivia.

Identity in *Beyond Indigeneity* operates on three levels: as viewed by outsiders, as viewed by the Bolivian government, and as viewed by community members within the Yungas. Within the community, the power of acquisition and the potential to accumulate is highly valued among Yungueños despite the disavowal of the middle-class identity. In the Yungas, coca production functions year-round, and the expansion of individual fields coincides with the life cycle of the family cultivating it. Thus in the ideal-type family unit, production expands as the family expands, and production is at its height when it is most necessary, declining as the older generation enters its golden years. However, the decline in production also coincides with the increasing prestige and experience of the adults within that family. The accumulation of resources over the course of the lifetime enables the adults of the family unit to take on politically and socially important roles within the community. Thus, as people age, they take larger roles in the community festivals and the political structures within the community. Coca production and the ability to market coca provide a

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sense of authenticity and identity in way that differs from other populations within Bolivia and between the Yungas and Chapare Coca-growing regions.

Pellegrini Calderon focuses on the Yungas coca-growing region during the period of the renewed emphasis on indigeneity in the aftermath of Evo Morales's triumph —as Latin America's first indigenous president—within the national, regional, and local contexts. The author demonstrates how within Bolivia, indigenous peoples and indigeneity become vessels for a discourse of "living well," which in turn serves as a vessel for anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric.

At first glance and from an outsider's perspective, the indigenous identity would fit the Yungas coca-growers. In this ethnography, the author deconstructs the notion of indigeneity on a national level and shows how Yungueños reject the notion of "filling the indigenous slot," but tie specific means and political projects to the "traditional" or "historical" or "millenarian" coca regions within Bolivia. Thus, the coca growers themselves reconfigure discourses in the "in-between spaces" to build and assert their identity.

Class identity is similarly reconfigured. By deploying the traditional and peasant labels, Yungas coca growers attempt to protect the privilege of growing and marketing coca AND evade questions of profits, capital accumulation, and class differentiation. In the coca-growing region of Bolivia, claiming a peasant identity serves as an ideal for all coca growers. Claiming this identity enables accumulation and bypasses the idea that coca growers might be middle- or upper-class because of their economic activities. The author argues that earlier scholarship associated the peasant identity with a "subsistence ethic." Similar to the Otavalo indigenous peoples studied by Colloredo-Mansfield (1999), the Yungas coca growers "fill" their preferred peasant identity with seemingly contradictory ideals. The peasant identity in the Yungas is closely tied to the land and to coca production, thus for coca-growers tying the peasant identity to accumulation and market participation is not contradictory, but essential. Tying peasant identity to coca production enables the masking of wealth accumulation and works to continue to privilege the Yungas as a traditional coca-growing region. Thus, peasant identity obfuscates differentiation and allows Yungueños to claim the identity while enabling accumulation and class and social mobility for some Yungas-based coca growers.

Beyond Indigeneity thus addresses a phenomenon of interstitial identities. It addresses the imbalance of scholarship on rural identities that do not hinge on indigenous identities. This literature has generally focused on the highlands and urban populations. Pellegrini Calderon's work, however, refocuses on a rural population existing on the margins. The author knits a complete picture of the class, race, and regional identities at play and weaves a complex tapestry of community structures in this town. Likewise, the author provides the reader with a thorough understanding of the importance of articulating particular aspects of peasant and "traditional" coca growing regions together in the Bolivian social and political context.

Beyond Indigeneity stands in contrast to other ethnographic and social scientific studies focusing on the participants in agricultural and rural production. Yet, the work opens up several avenues for further research. For example, Pellegrini Calderon paints a fascinating portrait of a

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Yungas community dedicated to coca production and marketing. It shows how coca in the international and Bolivian national imaginary is highly fraught and contested. The author also shows how coca is metonymic in some Bolivian circles of lower socioeconomic status and rural identities. Yet coca remains a product intimately tied to both legal markets and its illegal trade. Therefore, a question arose for this reader about coca's specificity and its unique market position. Is this product the only one that enables communities to assert an in-between identity? Do other types of production and marketing enable these in-between identities? The case of Otavaleños, by contrast, moves in the opposite direction: they use their production to assert an indigenous identity; however, they too rely on authentication and material culture. As result, I wonder if such a discourse might be developed using a product other than coca?

Second, it would be fascinating to know how history will remember and recover this self-identification. This phenomenon would be a historian's dream. Historians rely upon documents, often those created by state bureaucracies, to understand people's self-identification. Much like Daniel Goldstein's work on Cochabamba (2004), Pellegrini Calderon provides strong evidence of multi-layered communities, coca-growers' political and social participation on a local and national level, and rich understandings of identity and its construction.

Third, researchers might examine earlier migration patterns and the ways in which coca and its production differs from other forms of production. In *Beyond Indigeneity* the community is relatively young and it is unclear what the future holds for the children of these coca growers. Will they rush off to the university and attempt to blend into the urban middle class? In addition, it would be fascinating to know what happened to previous migrants to the area. Where did they go? Have those earlier migrants to the Yungas migrated to urban centers or other communities?

Finally, in addition to these questions, researchers might investigate how singular coca and its production is when compared to other form of extractive or agricultural processes. Coca is not directly a capitalist and environmental resource that engages international groups and NGOs in the same way that oil, mineral, and other resources have done in the past. Would the discourses around coca and its production change if the natural resource being exploited were a different one? For example, several Amazonian indigenous movements of the late 1990s employed a discourse about oil extraction that galvanized national and international support for saving the "authentic" indigenous communities and the Amazon. More specific to the Bolivian context one might ask: what does the interstitial identity employed by Yungas coca growers mean for long-term political discourses and political participation in national politics? What might an exclusive right to grow and market coca in the Yungas mean for Bolivia? Would legal capital or even the illegal cocaine trade attempt to corner the market in coca growing?

Pellegrini Calderon's analysis of coca and its growers occupies a rather unique niche within the broader literature on identities, social and political activism, and the participation in market activities, and it opens fascinating lines of inquiry for scholars of identities, economic production, and rural and urban spaces. The work's value for all researchers far outweighs its limitations.

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