

THE PERUVIAN LAND REFORM AND THE POSITION OF RURAL WOMEN¹

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1. Introduction

In this article I discuss the effects that the Peruvian land reform of 1969 had on the social and economic position of rural women. I do this on the basis both of my own research in an agrarian coastal cooperative in 1986 and 1987 and of a reinterpretation of earlier research on this question. Earlier researchers - Deere, Fernandez, Sara Lafosse, Lund Skar, Giron Schaefer and others - generally agree on the following analysis of the effects of the Peruvian land reform for rural women:

In Peru, they argue, rural women participate substantially in agricultural production, be this in Andean subsistence agriculture, on highland haciendas or on coastal plantations, but their role has been overlooked by prejudiced state functionaries. According to these prejudices about the role of women, the latter concern themselves only with domestic work, which does not include agricultural production. The agricultural role of women was therefore not taken into account when the Land-reform Law was formulated in its implementation. The legal requirements for selecting beneficiaries of the reform favored men over women. Lund Skar even suggests that many women were actually dispossessed of their traditional rights in land.

1 This article will be part of a dissertation on the role of law in the distribution of land in Peru.

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In my view, this analysis is based too much on general assumptions and too little on empirical data, and should therefore be re-examined. The role assigned to law and to bureaucrats in the process of change has been exaggerated. My criticisms can be summarized in the following points:

1. In the works of the authors mentioned, I miss a full description of the position of women vis-a-vis men before the land reform was implemented. The following crucial questions are rarely taken up systematically:

- How was access to resources and remunerated work regulated? Did such regulation differentiate between the sexes? Specifically, how was access to potential sources of income and political influence such as land, water, capital and work regulated in the case of agriculture?
- How did this distribution of resources and work in general and in agriculture in particular affect the division of labour, distribution of income, participation in decision-making between men and women, in the family context as well as in the community, and what did this mean for the division of tasks and responsibilities of child-rearing and the daily care for the household?
- Did the regulation of production and the household change during the life-cycle?
- What was in fact the division of resources, work, income and political power between men and women?
- What role did gender-ideologies play in the local division of roles between men and women?

Such a detailed description of the initial position of women relative to men is necessary, not only because it gives a baseline against which to measure improvement or deterioration, but also because it is a necessary condition of real insight into the specific ways in which implementation of the Land-reform Law affected the position of women. For instance, because of ethnic variation, there are various systems of gender-relations in Peru which help explain the different effects of the reform for women in different settings. The *machismo-marianismo* complex of the northern coast, for instance, is quite different from the Quetchua complementarity system, while western ideas about equality are also present in the Peruvian context. Finally, such an overview of the initial position of women makes it

possible to evaluate the effects of the reform in an integral way, not limited to the direct effects of the reform such as changes in access to land and work.

With the exception of Lund Skar, and to a lesser extent Deere, the researchers mentioned are very parsimonious in describing the position of women before the land reform. Fernandez, for instance, characterizes this position only in terms of official statistics about the percentage of women in the economically active population.²

2. Another problem that often does not receive sufficient attention is the fact that the position of women is a highly complex matter. Not only does it vary with class and ethnicity (and ethnicity is further complicated by extensive migration, especially of the Andean population) but a given position of a woman can also change quickly. Andean women seem to be very flexible in taking up new economic activities. They can be involved in agricultural production but also in handicraft, transformation of agricultural products at home, commerce or wage labour. Northern coastal women, on the other hand, are very much affected by changes in family life: widows and divorced women enjoy much more freedom of movement than unmarried women and wives. Evaluation of the effect of legal change is thus difficult, since change can affect women in different ways in different activities or situations. Where women's participation in production is flexible, some negative effects can be counteracted by a switch to another activity.

3. The - changing - position of women is also important in analysing the effects of the land reform because it structures the strategies open to women. The researchers mentioned not only seem to assume that women have interests opposed to those of men, but also that they can only pursue these interests with confrontational strategies. While this has a ring of truth, in my field work I found that the actual behaviour of women does not conform to the assumption. Especially Andean women often form strategic alliances with their husbands or other close male relatives. Indian (Quetchua) gender relations, for example, which according to Lund Skar are based on

² Fernandez herself casts doubt on the reliability of these statistics. She assumes - probably correctly - that they were produced by prejudiced officials who were blind to the productive work of women. See note 20.

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equality and complementarity,³ may explain this type of strategy. The question who gets most out of these alliances should of course be studied very carefully.

4. Insight into the local position of women is necessary when it comes to drawing conclusions. The writers mentioned seem to have their own model of ideal gender-relations in mind in evaluating reform measures. Deere, in particular, uses a model of uniform rights and opportunities for men and women in her assessment of the reform. I think one should take other acceptable models, such as the Quetchua equality but complementarity model described by Lund Skar, into account as well. This is especially important if it can be assumed that the women involved are trying to implement such a Quetchua-model! Considering various models can drastically change one's conclusions about the effects of land reform. When one finds that women do not participate in land reform, the cause can be attributed to (prejudiced) officials who implement a (biased) law, but one can also look for causes within the decision-making process of the local community and the women themselves. Did such participation fit within the existing division of work? Was there a risk-averting strategy adopted by husband and wife together, in which they took on different roles in the land-reform process, assuming that entering into a close relationship with the state involves some risks? Were the advantages of the reform received by the men later redistributed between men and women?

5. The role of law in the land-reform process has been little understood and generally exaggerated. To begin with, the text of the law was less biased against women than most researchers assume. Among other measures, the Land-reform Law required tenants to be household heads in order to qualify for ownership of their land. Obviously, this could have hindered application by female tenants. But Sara Lafosse (and other researchers citing her) understood this provision as a general requirement for participation in the land-reform programme. The law, however, actually does not contain any

³ There is much controversy about the practical existence of this Quetchua model of gender relations. Some researchers like Lund Skar maintain that in this model a power balance is achieved between men and women, but others, like Bourque and Warren (1981) and Harris (1978), while recognizing tendencies towards balance and acknowledging the existence of the prevailing ideology that claims equality between the sexes, point out ways in which the system nevertheless disadvantages women.

such limitation.⁴ Since most land rights were *not* given to individual farmers but to cooperatives formed by wage workers on the haciendas (among whom there were many women), the 'patriarchal' bias of the Land-reform Law may actually have been less relevant than Sara Lafosse feared.

Not only was the sexual bias in the text of the law exaggerated, law in its regulative capacities was overestimated as well. Its country-wide application was assumed and evasion of the legal prescription was seen as a situation that sooner or later would be redressed. The possibility of local variation in application was not systematically envisaged. The idea that within a bureaucracy and outside it there are many mechanisms through which the content of laws can be thoroughly transformed was not considered, nor was attention given to negotiation processes between the 'street-level' bureaucracy (Lipsky 1980) and its clients and between citizens themselves, processes that may contribute to legal practices different from what the text of the law might lead one to suppose.

Deere, for instance, in her analysis of the impact of various land reforms in Latin America on the position of women (1982, 1985, 1987), comes to conclusions about how the position of women was affected in practice by land-reform laws on the basis of the existence in the text of the law in some countries of legal constraints on the participation of women.

Lund Skar, who did anthropological fieldwork in an Andean community associated with a hacienda, makes the opposite mistake. She assumes from the behaviour of the land-reform officials whom she observed that the Land-reform Law dispossessed the women of the indigenous communities of their traditional land-rights. In fact, the law is gender-neutral in this case (see Estatuto de Comunidades Campesinas art. 23, Decreto Supremo No. 37-70-A).

My basic assumption is that, especially in the case of such a highly controversial issue as land reform, the content of the law tends to be continually negotiated at various levels of the bureaucracy. The parties to this negotiation process include all groups that can muster some political representation or can exploit a favourable political

4 Executive measures may have contained limitations on the participation of women who were considered economically dependent on men (see Deere 1977), but as we shall see, such limitations were in principle negotiable.

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situation. In Peru one has to think in this connection of different groups of landlords, plantation owners, workers unions, organisations of small and medium farmers, the political parties that control them, peasant communities and so forth. This means that the content of the law, and therefore its impact, not only varies from region to region, but also changes in the course of time according to the outcome of the political struggle. Effects produce new effects. Other factors than the land-reform process influence the distribution of and control over the means of production in rural areas. These changes produce changes in the government intervention itself (cf. Moore 1973, Long 1984, Von Benda-Beckmann 1989). Lower officials of the land-reform programme had (and needed) ample powers to negotiate the implementation of the reform with the local population. The local position of women therefore determined to a large extent the possibilities and modalities of women's participation in the reform.

6. A time-dimension is altogether missing in most studies. This is understandable, since most of them evaluated the land-reform process at its beginning. However, in the valley I studied, it took 3 years and a great deal of political mobilization in and outside the bureaucracy before land reform was even started. In the very early phases of its implementation the preferred outcome of the reform changed from family farms to workers' cooperatives, without any alteration of the law. Later, the increasing resistance which the ongoing process of the reform provoked, was countered by the government with an impressive number of decrees, which in the end brought the further implementation of the law virtually to an end. In the 1980s the prime beneficiaries of the reform, the workers' cooperatives, took a most daring initiative which the law-makers had not foreseen: they transformed themselves into service cooperatives and sold their land to their members, with hardly any legal or government backing at all. All these normative changes within the land-reform process continually produced new possibilities and limitations for women as well as for the other actors involved.

This article is an attempt to address the issues raised in the paragraphs above. In section 2 I give an outline of the Peruvian land reform and more specifically of its treatment of women's rights to land. In the third section I review the research already mentioned and elaborate upon the criticisms summarized above. Then, in section 4, I present my own case study of a quite common situation in which land-reform measures definitely had some positive influence on the position of women, because the local position of women was already strong, while cooperative structures offered new opportunities to

reinforce their political position. In section 5 I draw conclusions from my critique of existing research and from my own research.

2. The Peruvian land reform

2.1 *Background*

During the 1970s Peru underwent radical changes with respect to access to land. These changes had been the object of a prolonged political struggle. Closely connected with this struggle was the emancipation of the Indian peasants, who form the majority of the population. Most of them are Andean peasants and during this century their land-base diminished considerably because of rapid demographic growth. From the 1940s onwards, migration of Indians to the capital Lima and to the coast gained momentum and brought them into more direct contact with other parts of the Peruvian population and the dominant economic and political processes of Lima. In the hinterland, the peasants confronted the haciendas.⁵ These had been established by the Spaniards after the conquest, generally on the best land. But the haciendas had to compete for land with the Indian communities, which had been reorganized by the Spanish authorities in early colonial times and had since received legal protection. Peasants who worked on the haciendas were influenced by their urban contacts and began to form trade unions. These fought for the reduction of work obligations, monetary remuneration of their work

5 These haciendas varied greatly in size. They could be vast properties controlling hundreds of thousands of hectares owned by absentee national or international concerns or little more than family farms owned by impoverished members of the local Spanish or mestizo elite. Their common problem, however, was to obtain labour, for which they had to come to terms with the Indian population. Traditionally, haciendas, large or small, made 'land for work' arrangements: in exchange for the usufruct of a plot of land, the *colono* (this is the most common term used to describe a peasant who is party to a variety of specific contracts in specific regions) agreed to work a certain number of days per year on the land of the hacienda. There were two reasons for the landlords to seek to increase the amount of land they controlled: it could serve for their own production but also for plots to exchange for work. In the coastal region, however, most such 'precapitalistic' relations of production had since the 1950s been replaced by more modern labour-relations.

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for the landlords and greater security for their contracts. They found increasing political support for their claims, especially when a differentiation of interests within the agrarian elite emerged, related to changes in the agrarian economy. Some haciendas became export-oriented and were able to modernize their labour-relations. They formed alliances with the owners of mines and other urban-based economic interests. Most haciendas however, did not manage to transform themselves into capitalistic enterprises and lost their influence on the government. This made the way free for a number of legal reforms. In 1920 the inalienable and imprescriptible collective rights to land that the peasant communities had had under Spanish rule were returned and procedures to define the extent of these rights were established. Later, between 1947 and 1949,⁶ the tenant contract was regulated, with the main objective of protecting tenants from exploitation by their landlord. At the same time, the law also contained provisions enabling landlords to free themselves from their tenants; these loopholes were closed in later versions of the law. Labour legislation for rural workers was introduced in the 1950s and was successfully used by labour unions on coastal plantations, especially because of the labour scarcity in the coastal region at the time.

Violent peasant uprisings occurred in some parts of the Andean hinterland, because most of the legal reforms, although inspired by the plight of the Andean peasants, were not executed in that part of the country due to the opposition of local landlords. In accordance with international pressure (led by the United States with its 'Alliance for Progress' policy) land reform became the issue around which peasant protest centered and through which solutions were sought. Throughout the 1960s land-reform laws aimed at abolishing 'indirect' forms of possession of land (the land-for-work arrangements between landlords and peasants) and giving ownership rights to tenants. However, once again progress in the Andes was slow, resulting in renewed peasant unrest.

6 Law 10885, entitled 'Dispositivos relativos a los contratos de Yanacónaje,' promulgated on the 15th of March, 1947, was modified by the Law Decree 10922, promulgated in December, 1948, which prohibited termination of tenant contracts and was itself modified by Law Decree 11042, promulgated in June, 1949, which prohibited rent increases in tenant contracts.

2.2 *The land reform of the military*

In 1969, the military government of Velasco took power, justifying itself by the 'doctrine of the national security'.⁷ After some hesitation, it adopted a radical stance towards land-reform matters. The hacienda itself, even the capitalistic ones, had to disappear from the stage; otherwise, it was feared, hacienda owners would continue to obstruct the land-reform process with all sorts of legal and illegal manoeuvres and peasant unrest would continue.

The principal aims of the new land-reform law⁸ were very bold:

- to eradicate all 'antisocial forms' of access to land, for instance all contractual forms of access to land, which were deemed inequitable in terms of power and influence;
- to contribute to a new society characterized by solidarity and equality;
- to increase agricultural production.

Realisation of the last aim was expected to occur as a natural consequence of the emancipation of the peasants from the domination of the landlords, who were accused of underexploiting the land. To protect the peasants from the return of the landlords and to help them plan production, the military and their leftist intellectual advisors not only wanted to distribute land more equitably, they also introduced a reform of the rules of property law with the objective of transforming all tenure into *social* tenure, that is, tenure conditioned by social objectives. The distribution and use of land was to be controlled by the government and not left to the market and the existing inheritance system.

7 This doctrine consisted in the extension of the responsibility of the military to the containment of internal conflict situations such as peasant uprisings. Such situations were considered a threat to national unity and therefore a dangerous weakening of the defensive strength of the country.

8 My description of the land-reform law of 1969 is based on an official version entitled: *Texto Unico Concordado del Decreto Ley No 17716. Leyes ampliatorias y conexas*, Lima: Oficina de Asesoría Jurídica de Reforma Agraria y Asentamiento Rural. This text does not indicate a publication date. The text appears to have been updated until approximately 1980.

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expropriation rules

As a first step, the amount of land an individual person could own was limited to 150 ha of irrigated land (this was later reduced to 50 ha) and only persons who adequately used their land, worked on it themselves and treated their labourers according to the letter of the labour legislation would be allowed to retain ownership of their land (for the time being).

In those cases in which these conditions were not fulfilled the land was to be expropriated and redistributed. It was expected that all haciendas could be entirely expropriated by application of these rules. To be sure that landlords could not obstruct the reform process with legal procedures they had done in the past, special agrarian courts were created whose judges were to identify themselves with the interests of the peasants, acting on their behalf if necessary.

selection of the beneficiaries

Prospective beneficiaries of the land reform fell into two categories: individuals and collectivities. If a hacienda had been rented out to sharecroppers, they in principle had a priority right to become individual owners of the land they rented, up to a maximum of 15 ha. They had to fulfil the following conditions:

- 1) be over 18 years of age
- 2) be head of a household
- 3) be a '*campesino*' (peasant)
- 4) not already own more land than the so-called 'family unit' (3 ha. irrigated land or the equivalent).

When, on the other hand, a hacienda already had evolved into a modern plantation, sometimes with agro-industries attached to it, it was to be allocated to the workers collectively. They were invited to form agricultural production cooperatives according to government regulations and subject to government control. This meant they became owners of, but also their own employees on, the haciendas.

In the in-between situation, so common on the highland haciendas, where peasants worked for the hacienda but had their own plots as well, they were mostly defined as 'workers' and invited to form agricultural production cooperatives.

92.3% of the expropriated land was transferred to cooperatives constituted by the labourers of the expropriated haciendas (Kay 1982).

The law did not contain any criteria as to who qualified for membership of a cooperative and in fact this question was a hotly-debated issue. On the plantations with monocultures of cotton, for instance, there were sharp seasonal peaks of work, and there were both permanent and seasonal labourers.⁹ About the right of permanent workers to become members of the cooperative there was little discussion but the seasonal workers (mostly recent migrants and/or relatives of the permanent workers, among whom many women) constituted a problem. Central policy-makers advocated their inclusion in the cooperatives, but the economic base for such a solution often did not exist. Thus the cooperatives were stimulated to invest in agro-industry. In this way the labour demand could be spread over the year and a cooperative would gradually be able to incorporate the seasonal workers as well. The actual selection of members of the cooperatives, and the development of criteria for qualification as a member, was in practice left to the executive level of the bureaucracy, so that it could be adapted to the particular situation in each hacienda.

To deal with the question of membership the bureaucracy developed the criterion of the supportive capacity of a cooperative. This was the maximum number of members that a cooperative could support given the amount and quality of its land and the type of agricultural production. The criterion could be adjusted in the light of new activities undertaken by the cooperative. At the beginning of the land-reform process, however, there was in practice only one criterion to select beneficiaries: 'Put as many members into every cooperative as you can possibly make the local people accept'.¹⁰

9 The permanent labourers were protected by the progressive labour laws of the end of the 1950s, the seasonal labourers much less so. The status of permanent labourer (*permanente*) was, according to the law, achieved after 3 months of uninterrupted work for the hacienda. Seasonal labourers were always dismissed within the three months. But many permanent labourers were treated as seasonal labourers to evade labour legislation. On the hacienda of Caqui, for instance, I found that these labourers were given consecutive 3 month contracts.

10 Personal communication from Arturo Chavez, former head of the evaluation office of the *Dirección General de Reforma Agraria* of the Ministry of Agriculture. See also Cleaves and Scurrah (1980), who put emphasis on the fact that strict adherence to the rules was not demanded of land-reform officials and that local acceptance and speed were quite as important.

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priority for cooperatives

Once cooperatives were given priority in the land-reform process, all actions of the land-reform authorities were directed to that end. With the ample expropriation powers the officials had, they even began to exert pressure on ex-tenants who had received land through the reform to integrate their activities with a nearby cooperative. The maximum amount of land individuals could own was lowered and even indigenous communities, collective owners of their land that they distribute internally according to their own system, were exposed to attempts to enforce state regulation and to intervention regarding the internal distribution of land, or partially incorporated into other collective forms created by the land-reform programme.

increase of government control on land distribution and use

Although transfer of land via inheritance or the market was not eliminated, the land-reform law provided for a strict control of these mechanisms in order to prevent 'antisocial' distribution or use of land and to bar persons other than workers or peasants from land-ownership. Individually-owned land could only be transferred to heirs or buyers who worked on the land themselves, did not have other sources of income, and did not accumulate land above the prescribed level. Fragmentation of land was not allowed. The land market became virtually non-existent since half of the total supply of agricultural land had been reformed and was nearly impossible to transfer.¹¹ Furthermore, land-reform officials could exercise an intensive control over the distribution and use of land because they were entitled by law to monitor the administration of the cooperatives and the admission of new members.

parcellation of the cooperatives

Ten years later, however, it was apparent that not all the measures taken had produced the effects intended in 1969. Whereas the

¹¹ Debts owed to the government for the purchase of this land could only be transferred with government approval, which was very difficult to obtain.

redistribution of property had been a relative success,¹² production had not increased¹³ and the cooperatives had not been able to offer their members a better life, let alone fulfil their intended role as centres of development in the countryside. In time, government control and support of the cooperatives slackened. When a slight legislative change indicated that the authorities probably would not oppose initiatives to divide destitute cooperatives into individual parcels, this was the starting signal for a nationwide parcellation process. Especially in the coastal area cooperatives were split up, mostly into parcels of 3-8 hectares, creating a whole new middle class of agrarian producers that had enough political presence to oppose various attempts - from the right as well as from the left - to stop the parcellation process.

3. The impact of the land reform on the position of women: early analyses

How all these far-reaching changes affected women in their property rights and more generally in their economic position, is the focus of this article. Unfortunately, there are no reliable national data on the effects of the reform which give specific information concerning its effects on women. Some local studies have, however, been carried out. I treat these studies in the following paragraphs.

3.1 *Sara Lafosse*

When the land reform was proclaimed, Violetta Sara Lafosse (1969), a social scientist at the Catholic University of Lima, wrote an essay on the land-reform bill pointing out its male bias and the negative effects it would have on the land rights of women. The law required that a tenant be head of a household in order to benefit from the reform. According to her data at that time, only 33% of rural

¹² The reform redistributed the impressive total of half of Peru's agricultural land, but evidently could not redress regional differences in land distribution. Furthermore, the poorest strata in rural society, the seasonal wage workers on the coast and the smallholders in the Andes were not always reached because of the priority given to the permanent workers on the haciendas.

¹³ The landlords were not so inefficient as had been supposed. They did own vast amounts of land and did not exploit it intensively, but much of this land was only suitable for extensive pasturing.

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workers were household heads. Men as well as women would suffer from this selection mechanism, but women more than men as they were presumably less represented in the group of household heads. For instance, a female peasant married to a migrant man (a not uncommon situation in rural Peru) would not be able to benefit from the reform, whereas a male peasant in the reverse situation would. Sara Lafosse also considered the new regulation of inheritance of land to be patriarchal because land could in principle not be subdivided among the heirs while the requirements for inheritance would probably favor men over women.

However convincing at first glance,¹⁴ Sara Lafosse's conclusions about the effects to be expected from the land reform seem less relevant in retrospect. Most land was transferred not to individuals but to cooperatives and, as I have shown, the law did not specify criteria for membership of a cooperative. Furthermore, the inheritance rules, potentially dangerous to the position of women, in practice suffered from lack of implementation, which minimized their effect.

female participation in agriculture

Strangely enough, Sara Lafosse did not revise her conclusions in her book *Campesinas y Costureras* (1983). This book is based upon 1200 interviews of rural women divided over 6 different zones of Peru. The interviewed women were involved in peasant as well as in cooperative production. The interviews took place in 1979, some ten years after the land reform started.¹⁵

The data from the interviews give empirical support to Sara Lafosse's earlier assumption that women in Peru are heavily involved in agricultural production:

In the category of peasants and landless labourers, 22% of the women interviewed were heads of the family enterprise, 30% worked as agrarian wage labourers and the rest worked exclusively as 'wife of a peasant'. The agricultural labour of the latter

14 At the time of her article it was the general opinion that small and middle-sized individual ownership would be promoted by the land-reform authorities.

15 Sara Lafosse does not explain how she selected the regions where she carried out her research and the persons she interviewed and, consequently, how representative her findings are.

women, as she shows, is considerable. Ownership of land in this category is remarkably equally divided: 30% is owned by women, 37% by men and 33% by both.

- On the cooperatives, 20% of the women interviewed were members, 42% were wage labourers on the cooperative and 38% were 'wife of a cooperative member'.¹⁶
- The women interviewed worked on the average 11 hours per week in agriculture. Female cooperative workers worked 23 hours per week.¹⁷

effects of the land reform

Although her book was not meant to be an assessment of the Peruvian agrarian reform, Sara Lafosse nevertheless uses her results to make a few comments on its effects for women on the cooperatives. She acknowledges that female permanent agricultural workers had been *incorporated* into the reform enterprises (1983: 19), but she writes later on:

Comparison of the status of the female peasant on the small farm and on the cooperative enterprise shows that on the latter, the female peasant has seen her status restricted by the legal diminishment of the possibility of access to land and of the management of the agricultural enterprise. (1983: 39)¹⁸

Unfortunately, she does not explain what she means by *legal* diminishment of access to land and to management. We have seen that there were no barriers in the law to women as members of the cooperatives. If before the reform women were wage labourers on the haciendas, or wives of labourers, and continued to be so or even became members of a cooperative (20% of her own respondents were members of a cooperative!), what rights did they lose? The com-

16 These aggregate percentages say fairly little, as regional variation can be enormous. For instance, in Mantaro (in the central highland) 47% of the peasant women were heads of the family enterprise, and in Lambayeque (northern coast) only 20%. On the cooperatives in Lambayeque there were *no* female members, while in Cañete (southern coast) 42% of the women were members!

17 According to Sara Lafosse, the income of rural women is lower than that of men. It is not clear if the comparison concerns equal work, equal time, fringe benefits, etc.

18 All translations in this article are mine.

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parison of peasant and cooperative women is in any case not relevant to the question of the effects of the land reform since cooperatives were not constituted among small farmers but among hacienda workers.

Sara Lafosse also found a correlation between individual rights in land, and participation in decision-making on the family farm and in the community. She remarks: "[This] confirms my thesis about the negative effects of the reform law for the condition of female peasants, because it has restricted their rights on the land they work." (1983: 77) Apparently, she refers here to her earlier criticism of the bias in the law as regards distribution to tenants. Since she does not give empirical information about changes in the distribution of land rights between the sexes, it seems adventurous of her to come to this conclusion.

Thus, although Sara Lafosse gives some striking and very useful information about female participation in agricultural production, her approach to the study of the changing position of rural women has some serious weaknesses. Her description of this position does not compare it to the position of men. When she states that peasant women work on the average 11 hours per week in agriculture, this might seem rather little. But since it is common for Peruvian peasants to diversify their activities, this average might not be so very different from that of men (see, for example, Franco 1974: 38-41). She presents differentiated data about women in different regions from which striking differences in agricultural participation appear (see note 16). It is a pity that these variations are not further analysed. The role of the different gender-ideologies, which might reveal some of the causes of these differences, gets little attention. Her own material gives some indication that one must allow for variation in the application of the Land-reform Law, but she firmly maintains her earlier conclusions, which were based only on the text of the law and not on empirical data, which, once collected, seem to contradict her conclusions.

3.2 *Deere*

Deere is a prominent commentator on the Peruvian land reform and its impact on women. Especially interesting are her research data about female participation in agriculture in Cajamarca, a northern department of Peru, presented in an article (1977) and in her book together with León de Leal (1982). She also relies on these data in

her articles about the sexually discriminatory nature of the Peruvian agrarian reform (1982, 1985 and 1987).¹⁹

Deere informs us that rural women in Cajamarca, apart from their participation in peasant agriculture (see below), traditionally were obliged to do household work for the owners of the haciendas on which they lived. (Hacienda-agriculture was an important production-form in the region at the turn of the century.) Female involvement in production on the haciendas changed with modernization and the advance of capitalism. When dairy farming spread rapidly over the region in the 1950s and 1960s, haciendas sold their marginal land to their tenants but kept the land best suited for dairy production for themselves. For their dairy enterprises they needed a class of skilled permanent wage workers. Milkmaids formed an important category within this class. Thirty to fifty percent of the permanent labour force of dairy farms were women.

Although much land was in hands of the haciendas, smallholders were numerous. Deere defines them as 'semi-proletarians'. She cites Franco (1974: 38-41), who did a sample survey of two provinces of Cajamarca which shows that they derived only 15.8% of their total net income from agricultural and animal production and had to supplement this with, among other things, wage work (50% of total net income). Only a minority of these farmers had sufficient means to succeed in dairy farming. In 1972, census data on the involvement of women in agricultural production on smallholdings or medium-sized farms in Cajamarca indicated that only 2.6% of the economically active population were female agriculturalists. According to Deere, such outcomes are not to be trusted because of the well-known 'invisibility of women' in censuses.²⁰ Deere's own findings, based on a

19 In her paper of 1982, Deere, professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts, makes a comparative analysis of the impact of agrarian reform on women in three Latin American countries, one of them Peru. In the 1985 article she extends the comparison to 13 Latin American countries. The 1987 version of this latter article, 'The Latin American reform experience,' places land reform in the perspective of a comparison of different government intervention strategies. Deere's articles deal especially with Cuba, Nicaragua, Peru and Chili.

20 Explanations for the bias in the census of 1972 are: 1. women mostly define themselves as 'housewives', whatever their contribution to agriculture; 2. agriculture was too narrowly defined in the census forms and by officials and did not include animal care, processing and

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survey of 93 peasant farms, show that 21% of the field labour on these farms was done by women. Especially peasant women with migrant husbands were active in agriculture. Another indication of female involvement in agriculture was the high incidence of females in the group of former tenants who before the land reform had bought land from their landlords.

agrarian reform and women

Agrarian reform in Cajamarca had, according to Deere, mixed results for the position of women. As the land reform only directly affected the haciendas, she distinguishes between women directly related to the haciendas and women outside or on the fringe of them. The great majority of peasants fell in the latter category; these women shared with their male counterparts the disadvantage of not benefitting directly in the form of better access to land and work. Both men and women even suffered negative side-effects from the reform: the new cooperatives restricted access to resources such as land, pastures and wood for outsiders much more than the haciendas generally had done and were also more able to enforce these restrictions. More men than before had to migrate and their wives had to take on more tasks and responsibilities in farming. Deere speculates that because of this increased involvement, women gained in independence and prestige in their community, but at the cost of misery and more work.

transformation of dairy farms into cooperatives

To illustrate the situation in the hacienda context, Deere specifically describes the case of the transformation of dairy haciendas into 15 cooperatives. After the land reform, only 2% of the members of the 15 dairy cooperatives were women. This percentage is in sharp contrast to the provincial average of 30% of female permanent workers before the reform. From these data Deere draws the conclusion that in the land-reform process, milkmaids generally were not included as members of the cooperatives. According to her, these women, who ought to have been eligible to be beneficiaries as

selling activities; 3. labour of the household head (often male) was always registered while the rest of the labour on the family farm - most of the female labour - was only registered when it exceeded a certain number of hours (Deere 1982).

permanent workers, did not qualify because they were not household heads.

She illustrates this with the example of a cooperative where milkmaids *did* qualify. They presented themselves, in collusion with their male relatives in control of the cooperative, as 'heads of households' that is, as living independently from their parents and having dependent children, although in fact this was not true. According to Deere this was a strategic manoeuvre of the cooperative leadership to prevent the reform officials from including temporary workers in the membership of the cooperative, on the basis of its supportive capacity. In the course of time, as the milkmaids married, they transferred their membership rights to their husbands. The men also took over a successful vegetable-growing project the milkmaids had developed in order to give themselves full-time employment within the cooperative.

women as passive victims or active strategists?

Deere's conclusion is that women in the cooperative sphere were discriminated against, because only a few of them received the same benefits as men from the land reform. I think this conclusion is too rash. We need to know what the local system of gender-relations was in the smallholders' community as well as on the haciendas, to be able to assess how and to what extent the new situation affected the position of women. We do know, for instance, that before the reform there were differences between men and women. Men worked full-time as permanent workers and women only part-time, and possibly only young, unmarried women as milkmaids. The question is, had women been able to compensate this lesser involvement in the production process of the hacienda with other economic activities in the private sphere? Did women on haciendas have access to land, pastures or commerce? How were rights and duties in the household divided between men and women? Some facts which Deere mentions, for instance that it was common for peasant women in Cajamarca to own land and that the milkmaids apparently easily set up an economic activity for themselves within the cooperative, point in the direction of considerable economic independence. This makes it at least possible that the Quetchua complementarity model influenced gender-relations in the area.

Of course, Deere is right that the benefits of the reform in this case actually predominantly went to men, which must at least temporarily have put weight in the balance in favor of men. The question remains

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how women reacted to this unbalancing influence, given possible alternative economic and political opportunities. Were there ways in which women could increase their access to the resources of the cooperative, such as pastures?

room for manoeuvre

Another lesson which can be learnt from Deere's example concerns the way the land-reform law was implemented. On closer inspection, it does not seem to have been such a unilateral process, with dictates from above, after all.

For instance, in the case of the milkmaids it seems improbable that the officials involved did not know that the information presented was false. Moreover, the case indicates that there was much communication between leaders of the hacienda community and these officials about the implementation of the land reform, which helped the first to develop a successful compromise to fulfil local and official wishes. The leaders knew before-hand about an official plan to include the temporary workers and not the milkmaids into the membership of the cooperative and they knew how the milkmaids should present themselves in order to be acceptable to the officials as members of the cooperative. It seems probable that the officials in this case recognized certain local demands and even helped to get them presented in an acceptable way. Of course, this was only one out of fifteen cooperatives and Deere mentions some cases of milkmaids in other cooperatives who tried to become members but failed because of the 'head of household'-criterion.

We need to know much more about local negotiation processes between officials and leaders of communities, for instance about who could impose conditions on the selection process of the beneficiaries and how much freedom of action various actors involved in this negotiation process actually had. The law left room for manoeuvring and this room was used by officials and by politicians who filled the wide range of possibilities of the law in with administrative rules and directives, interpreted it in the light of their personal or group values and interests, but also adjusted themselves to a given power balance between themselves and their clients.

This same room for manoeuvre could also be used by prospective beneficiaries, competing to get the most out of the land reform for themselves or their own group. In this competition, help from the

officials, who knew the law and had considerable discretion in applying it, was a much-sought-after resource.

3.3 *Fernandez*

Fernandez, like Sara Lafosse a Peruvian social scientist, conducted two case studies in 1981 in another part of Peru, the northern coast, which according to indications in the data of Sara Lafosse can be regarded as a stronghold of patriarchy in the Peruvian countryside: it has the lowest figures for female-headed enterprises and female membership of cooperatives (see note 16). Fernandez describes two cooperatives which possessed rich, irrigated lands and cultivated rice, cotton and fruits among a variety of products. She does not give much information about the role of women in agriculture in this area prior to the land reform, stating only that 80% of the land was in the hands of plantation owners and 20% in those of smallholders. According to the agricultural census of 1972 7.1% of the economically-active population in the district of the two cooperatives studied were women. However, Fernandez shares Deere's opinion that little value can be attached to these data because of biases in the methodology, execution and interpretation of the Peruvian agricultural census of 1972.

machismo and *marianismo*

Fernandez focusses on the gender ideology of the population, which in this case is the *machismo-marianismo* complex of the dominant group, the mestizos. In this ideology, women are considered to be pure but vulnerable. They should not venture outside the home. They need men (fathers, brothers, husbands or other male relatives) to protect them against other men. Men are expected to behave aggressively toward men as well as toward women. They are often out of the house and pass most of their leisure time with other men, drinking and talking politics. Women's access to resources or work is limited as is their influence in decision-making. They concentrate on domestic activities like childrearing and house-keeping. Even domestic work like the fetching of water and fuel is done by men, as well as working on the family subsistence plot which all the cooperative members have. Only young unmarried women are allowed to do work outside the house, such as cotton picking, which is considered typically female. These women are jealously guarded by the men of their household and protected by the female workgroup itself. Otherwise, women can only resort to work outside the home in cases

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of utter necessity, for instance if they are widowed, abandoned or unmarried and have no close male kinsmen. If a man allows his wife to work, he is censured, and people conclude he must be very poor. The only way for a woman to have a bit of income is through shop-keeping or raising small animals, but she must be careful that such activity does not arouse the jealousy of her husband.

These very contrasting sex-roles of men and women, called respectively *machismo* and *marianismo*, entail a dominating position for the men in the public arena and economic dependence of women on men. Within the household the husband is also supposed to be the authoritative figure.

marginalization of women on the cooperatives: the difference between members and casual workers

Given such a local gender ideology it is not surprising that Fernandez found that in one cooperative only 2% of the members were women. In the other cooperative there were no female members at all. But she does not tell us how many women worked on the hacienda and under which conditions prior to the land reform. Nor do we know how negotiations on the cooperatives-to-be were conducted during the reform process.

The few women who became members of the cooperative were all abandoned women or widows and they received special treatment. They were given only light work but earned the same wage as men. However, they were given no extra work, nor work involving special responsibility, which would have meant an extra income. They did not participate actively in the meetings of the cooperative because they were afraid the men would laugh at them for their lack of education. But at the household level, contrary to the general situation, these women did take independent decisions even if they had a '*convivente*' (male partner sharing their daily life). Although they had not acquired total equality with the male cooperative members they thought this to be natural and they considered their situation to be very favorable because of the share they had received in the benefits of the reform: better wages, increased welfare, a considerably shorter working day and so on.

On the other hand, among the harvest- and other workers who had not qualified for membership, the situation was entirely different. In this category, after the reform 30% were women. Some of them were not recruited locally but were migrants from the highlands who had

come with their husbands or other relatives. They complained bitterly that the land reform had not given them the same benefits as the (female) members of the cooperative. When remunerations for men and women were brought to the same level - women had earned less before the reforms - women's access to work on the cooperative diminished. The cooperative gave the available work (except for cotton-picking) to the young men, 'who needed the jobs more'.

plurality of gender ideologies

To coastal female permanent workers who were household heads membership in the cooperative could, according to official policy, not be denied. Once inside, the 'macho' ideology worked in their favour: they received a preferential treatment, although the protective element in it may have crippled their full participation.

This contrasts sharply with the way in which the casual workers were treated, especially the women. They lost access to work after the reform. It is not clear if this was an element of the local reform policy of the officials concerned, or attributable to the attitude of cooperative leaders, disapproved of by the officials. The change was especially hard on migrant women coming from a Quetchua background where the economic independence and liberty of movement of women is taken for granted. They were the ones who protested most, but in vain. Nor could they fall back on the traditional access to resources which they probably had had in their home communities.

Hence, in this case, the dominant local gender ideology was an obstacle to the incorporation of most women in the agrarian reform. Apparently, agrarian reform officials could or would not do much to redress the situation.

3.4 *Lund Skar*²¹

Lund Skar describes a reform cooperative associated with an Indian community in the central highlands of Peru (1980). The cooperative received a hacienda with sugarcane plantations on the valley floor

²¹ Lund Skar is a Norwegian anthropologist who did the fieldwork for her doctoral thesis in Peru.

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and extensive pastures in the mountains. The community,²² situated between the valley floor and the pastures, had a mixed economy: it produced foodcrops and livestock, both for subsistence and for the market. Wage earnings at the nearby hacienda had supplemented the income of the male *comuneros* (members of the community). Lund Skar gives a very detailed account of the impact the land-reform process had on the position of women in this community, on the levels of ideology, social organization and economic activity. As the land reform had only just begun during her research, she could do no more than indicate some tendencies of the changes she observed.

gender ideology and economic roles

Lund Skar describes equality and complementarity as characteristic of Quetchua gender relations in the productive, ideological and political spheres. Equality governs the household sphere, in which both men and women share tasks and where no special task is attributed to one sex, not even childrearing. This includes subsistence production, as both men and women have individual rights to land which they work together. Complementarity can be found in the productive sphere, as women often specialize in herding their own and their husbands' animals on the high pastures, while men work on the enterprise in the valley, sometimes securing additional pasture rights for their women on the highlands of the enterprise. As a result, both sexes have access to money, the women by selling their animals, for instance, and the men in the form of the wages earned in the valley. Both men and women participate in the political decision-making of the community, each sex in its own way.

socio-economic organization of the community

Families were connected in different ways to the nearby hacienda and this was primarily due to their differentiated access to resources. Men in the lower half of the community, who did not have enough land in the community itself, were obliged to work regularly on the

22 The community had the legal form of *anexo*, which is a fairly autonomous part of an officially-recognized *comunidad*. These forms are often assumed by Indian communities because their collective land-rights are better protected that way and because they entail some administrative autonomy. Unlike the *comunidad*, the *anexo* cannot deal directly with the government.

hacienda in return for the usufruct of a parcel of hacienda land. The men of the upper half worked mostly at seasonal peaks of labour demand on the hacienda or not at all. These differences coincided with moiety divisions within the community.

agrarian reform: polarization of moiety divisions

Thus, agrarian reform affected the moieties in different ways. The regular workers from the lower half qualified as cooperative members, the others did not. The regular workers increased their access to resources, not only those of the former hacienda, but also government resources like credit, technical assistance and so forth. In contrast, for the other half of the community, access to the resources of the enterprise diminished. The cooperative reduced its use of seasonal labour, and access to pastures and other lands decreased for non-members. The reforms thus entailed a reversal of the existing power relations within the community.

changes in the division of work between the sexes: the lower half

For the women the effects of land reform took two forms as well. In the lower half of the community the men began to work more in the valley because of their increased access to resources. The burden of reproductive labour - before the reforms shared between the spouses - tended to fall more exclusively on the women. This in turn decreased their possibilities to gain an income out of productive labour and ultimately undermined their economic independence. Some women had already abandoned their subsistence plots and moved down to live on the valley floor. They made attempts to find new ways of preserving their economic independence and so to maintain the 'Quetchua balance', but according to Lund Skar it was doubtful whether these new initiatives would succeed. Their situation made these women more susceptible to the influence of the mestizo gender ideology, described above in the discussion of the work of Fernandez.

reinforcement of the traditional community and its gender-system: the upper half

In the upper half of the community, changes went in an opposite direction. The men were denied access to the resources of the former hacienda. They fell back on their own resources and this tended to reinforce their own organization and ideology. In the long run,

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however, these developments could mean that the men would be compelled to migrate, which could have disintegrating effects on the local community in another way.

loss of access to political life for women: both moieties

The political arena of the community as a whole diminished in importance because of the strong competition which the cooperative's arena offered. Lund Skar found this change detrimental for both groups of women because women participated in the political life of the community but were excluded from political life in the cooperative.

the role of law

As regards legal change, Lund Skar states that both groups of women had lost their individual land rights in the community through the land-reform legislation. She writes: "With a mere stroke of the pen the bureaucrats and politicians swept away centuries of tradition in which Quetchua women held individual rights in land." (1980: 169) Later she mitigates this statement when she writes: "According to the law,²³ land-ownership rights are vested in household units, ideally administered by a household head, who is assumed to be male. Admittedly, the mere signing of a law does not imply the immediate abandonment of Quetchua practice in this matter." (1980: 197) She apparently based her conclusions about the significance of the law for land-rights within the community on the activities of government officials who handled the application for official recognition of the *anexo* as an independent community.²⁴ Part of the procedure of recognition consisted in the inventory of lands in possession of *comuneros*. The officials held meetings with male household heads and carried out a census in which land was registered as belonging to the male household head instead of to the men and women in the household to whom it really belonged.

23 She is probably referring to the land-reform law.

24 The upper half of the community, supported by officials of another branch of government, had started this procedure to counter the growing influence of the *comuneros* of the cooperative in the political life of the *anexo*. Once recognized, the *comunidad* would be in a position to claim the lands of the cooperative and thus let it disappear.

Like the other writers discussed above, Lund Skar adopts a highly instrumentalist concept of law. From the behaviour of the officials she directly deduces the content of the law - and wrongly so. In fact, the military government had promulgated a statute regulating the peasant communities²⁵ according to which, men and women could be members of a 'recognized' community and as members have an equal right to land.²⁶

The aftermath of the attempt to secure recognition for the *anexo* is illuminating. The *anexo* soon dropped its request, according to Lund Skar because of the threat of the *comuneros* of the lower half, more involved in the cooperative, that they would separate themselves from the upper half. The failure of the officials to recognize the land-rights of women, however, might have been another reason for this decision.

time

Lund Skar studied her community only a few years after the reform was initiated. She therefore could not study the ongoing effects of the reform. Conscious of this, she limits herself to pointing to some apparent tendencies, but even so she does not sufficiently take into account the weaknesses of the government's position in trying to impose the new productive structures, and the ability of *comuneros* to implement their own strategies. In the course of time most reform cooperatives in fact succumbed to a variety of disintegrating external and internal influences.²⁷ The cooperative studied by Lund Skar probably underwent similar changes. In that case, the *anexo* may have regained its economic and political importance for the local community and this would have stimulated the return to previous productive and political gender arrangements.

25 Estatuto Especial de Comunidades Campesinas. D.S. No 37-70-A, 1974.

26 Long and Winder (1975), for instance, writing about government policy during the agrarian reform towards Indian communities in general, cite the example of a community where the majority of the members were women, without even calling special attention to this fact.

27 The most important influences were: internal organisational difficulties and lack of economic and technical support from the government. See Figallo 1987.

cause of discrimination

Nevertheless, Lund Skar provides important insight into the original impulses of the reform which in this case no doubt were potentially harmful for the position of women. However, this cannot be attributed to discriminatory qualification criteria for beneficiaries. Whatever the mode of selection of the beneficiaries, it is difficult to imagine that women would have wanted to join the cooperative: they were no part of it. It was also difficult for officials to be aware of this problem, as they focussed on the hacienda, not on the community. The only way of making women join the reform would have been to allocate the hacienda to the *anexo*, which is what part of the *anexo* tried in vain to accomplish. Thus, women in this case were discriminated against not because they were women, but because they were part of a production system and a way of life which were not recognized by the land-reform officials.

3.5 *Giron Schaefer and others*

A comparable situation of local communities associated with a hacienda, where the land-reform law was implemented in a different way, is reported by Giron Schaefer and others (1978).

female participation in the cooperative

About 50% of the *comuneros* from different communities in the neighbourhood had successfully applied for membership in the cooperative established on the land of the hacienda. The applicants in this case were the poorer *comuneros* who before the land reform had had the least access to land and for that reason had had to work on the lands of the landlord in exchange for the usufruct of a parcel. However, in contrast to Lund Skars' case, these poorer *comuneros* were not concentrated in a well-defined part of the communities but had been recruited from all over the locality and were male as well as female. Men and women had mobilized to oust the landlord from the hacienda, and thus both sexes had been included in the membership of the cooperative which consisted of 106 women and 151 men.²⁸

28 The hacienda described by Giron Schaefer cultivated corn on the valley floor and bred cattle on the high pastures. Thus it had extensive property rights on both low and high geographical levels. This had obliged both sexes and a geographically fairly evenly

sex-differentiation within the cooperative

Although the introduction of the cooperative did not lead to a reenforcement of antagonistic structures within the local community, favouring poor over rich and men over women, within the cooperative itself a differentiation did appear. Only 70 out of the 257 members received full membership rights: permanent work, good pay and social security. Ten of these were women and sixty, men. The other members were given work 8 months of the year for lower wages and few additional benefits. Most female members belonged to this latter group and received only half a man's full wage. Whether women were discriminated against in this respect is not clear, because no information is given about working hours of women or the type of work they did. Female participation in the meetings of the cooperative was high but there were no female officers. The educational level of women was traditionally much lower than that of men. Giron Schaefer also reports decreasing female participation in the full membership of the cooperative. The cooperative decided no longer to accept married women as full-time members, but only widows and unmarried women with or without children. Married women were considered to be less productive because of their family obligations.²⁹ Only the wives of the leaders of the cooperative seem to have suffered in a manner comparable to what Lund Skar describes: without the help of their very busy husbands, they had to neglect the family plot, were less able to engage in commerce, and became more dependent on their husbands for an income. But in general, Giron Schaefer c.s. conclude that there was not much change in the overall economic position of women. Just as before the land reform, and apart from their domestic activities, they gained an income through the marketing of the products of the family plot and as wage workers.

distributed part of the population to establish a relationship with the hacienda to increase access to land and cash. Furthermore, the products the hacienda cultivated (like corn) were considered in Quetchua culture much more 'woman-like' than sugarcane, cultivated on the hacienda described by Lund Skar. This made it easier for women to establish a work relation with the hacienda. (This last statement is based on a personal communication from Lund Skar.)

29 Deere (1982) mentions that according to Chambeu (1981), who studied the same cooperative as Giron Schaefer, four women resigned as cooperative members because of this decision and transferred their rights to their husbands.

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Although all this is useful and interesting information, we are to a great extent left in the dark as to the overall economic, social and political position of women and the local model of gender-relations. Nor do we know how negotiations about the implementation of the land reform between officials and local leaders actually developed. We therefore can only guess why the cooperative introduced two types of membership (deviating considerably thereby from the official cooperative model) and how we should interpret the changes which took place in the position of women. We can fairly safely assume that the pre-existing local situation must have something to do with this outcome and that the local population had considerable influence in the negotiation process concerning the constitution of the cooperative. As a result, fewer women than men were incorporated on advantageous terms in the cooperative and some women resigned their advantageous position afterwards in favour of their husbands. But without knowing more about the local situation, we can not make out if this is the result of gender skewing or just another way of deviding tasks, income, power, etc., 'equally' between the sexes. We can also wonder how important and how durable this apparently discriminative influence in fact was, a matter which would depend on the economic flexibility of the women concerned and the durability of the cooperative structure.

The authors whose analysis of the land reform I have discussed so far all present cases with which they illustrate their judgement that the land-reform law in general had a negative influence on the position of women. As I have argued, they thereby neglect the importance of the pre-existing situation of gender-relations in determining the outcome of the land-reform process for women. Women in the cases described benefitted less from the reform than men, not so much because of the discriminatory nature of the legal norms, nor because of *machista* values of officials but essentially because of the local division of work, which either severely restricted women's economic participation (North Coast) or divided access to forms of production in such a way that the land reform benefitted men more than women (the Andes).

Given the variation in gender relations in Peru, one wonders how far the representativeness of the cases described can be stretched. I think that at least one important type of case is missing and that is the case of haciendas on the central coast, an important agricultural area in Peru, where women prior to the land reform were incorporated in a more or less equal way in the production process. This was the case in Caqui, where I did fieldwork in 1986-1987.

4. The case of Caqui in the coastal valley of Huaral

4.1 *The population of Caqui and its background*³⁰

Caqui is a former hacienda which was converted into a cooperative. It is situated in the central coastal valley of Huaral near Lima, the capital of Peru. Before the land reform, the valley was dominated by landlords specializing, since the beginning of the century, in cotton and more recently also in fruit-growing. Cotton was first grown via a system of sharecropping³¹ but in the 1950s most landlords changed gradually to a plantation organisation. The initial labor shortage at the beginning of this change soon was relieved by spontaneous migration by Indians from the highlands. Single men and women from the age of thirteen or fourteen onward and young couples arrived, often following a relative who had moved to the region earlier. First they came only for the cotton harvest, but after one or more seasons some of them took the opportunity to stay. In Caqui many of them settled down by the end of the 1950s, when labour unions were finally allowed and labour legislation gave a right to a permanent labour contract after a certain period as well as other prerogatives.

The inhabitants of Caqui fall into different categories. Nearly all of them find their occupation and source of income in agriculture, although their access to resources is differently structured.³²

30 More detailed information about the history of Caqui and its land-rights system can be found in Huber 1988.

31 The sharecropping contract - in principle of indefinite duration and inheritable, according to custom, but between 1947 and 1949 codified in Law 10885 and its modifications (see note 6) - was called *yanacónaje*. The landlord administered land and credit. The latter was in the form of inputs and money to pay wage-workers during the cotton harvest. The sharecropper (*yanacóna*) was obliged to cultivate cotton, to follow the directives of the landlord, and sell the harvest to the latter until his debt was covered. The debt consisted of the rent for the land and the credit plus interest. When the *yanacóna* committed himself to clear new land, he received it for some years rent-free and had the freedom to cultivate what he wanted on it (often foodstuffs for subsistence and the market). In this way, much land was cleared for agriculture.

32 The count is from 1986-1987 and is approximate.

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First, there was the cooperative. The people involved were:

1. Members (30 women and 70 men). Many of them were immigrants, mostly from the Andes, and more specifically from the departments of Ayacucho and Ancash. They lived in the little alleys of the settlement of the cooperative, often grouped together according to region of origin.

2. Permanent labourers of the cooperative (2 women and 28 men). Most of them were children of the cooperative members. They also lived in the houses of the settlement of the cooperative.

3. Seasonal workers. Their numbers or gender were difficult to pin down. During the cotton harvest, the cooperative could contract a work-gang of about twenty so called *golondrinos*.³³ Usually they stayed for a short period and were replaced by other groups or by seasonal workers of the locality itself (wives, schoolchildren). Nevertheless, about ten of them had settled in the desert (government land) on the border of Caqui, forming its 'bidonville'. They lived as casual wage workers and worked throughout the valley.

4. Wives and a few husbands of the members and of permanent labourers (60 persons, mostly women). There was considerable overlap with category 3 and 5.

5. Petty artisans, shopowners, teachers, pensioners of the cooperative and persons working outside of Caqui (mostly children of members and permanent labourers). They all lived in the settlement. This group overlapped with other categories and was relatively small.³⁴

33 *Golondrinos* ('swallows') are landless labourers from the north coast of Peru who during the year work their way down the Peruvian coast, participating in the successive cotton harvests.

34 The hacienda owner and his representatives had always been very restrictive in allowing people who 'had nothing to do in Caqui' to settle there, because of the use of its facilities and the loss of control over the population this would have involved. The cooperative did not change this policy. This has meant that generally speaking children have had to migrate out of Caqui. Thus, although Caqui's birthrate is high, the growth of the population has been relatively slow. Recently, however, Caqui has applied for the status of municipality, which means that its population policy probably will change. In fact, such change has already begun, since the cooperative has had increasing difficulty in enforcing its restrictive settlement

The inhabitants not directly related to the cooperative were:

1. Smallholders (30, mostly men). Most of them had come as sharecroppers to Caqui in the twenties and thirties of this century and are of coastal origin. By an earlier land reform of 1964 they obtained ownership rights to their parcels, which were grouped together at quite a distance from the hacienda-settlement. They lived dispersed, on their land.

2. Spouses (mostly women) and children of the smallholders.

With respect to the most important of the above categories I shall analyse the changing position of women, especially as regards their participation in and control over agriculture. The first question is how relevant agricultural production is for these women in the pursuit of their interests. Once the role of agriculture in their economic behaviour is established, questions of access to land, work and other important resources for agriculture become significant. What advantages or disadvantages do different categories of women have in the struggle for membership of the cooperative or for land, as compared to men in the same conditions? How does the type and amount of work they can get compare to men's opportunities in this regard? Is there really equal pay for equal work or do the official or unofficial fringe-benefits differ between men and women? If changes in the relations of production occur, or if they are decided upon, can women influence the decisions affecting their position as well as men can? Which strategies do women use to defend their interests? How does their position in the household influence their agricultural opportunities?

The focus of the analysis is upon understanding whether and how changes in the position of women relate to the land-reform process.

4.2 *The cooperative*

4.2.1 *Before the land reform*

The landlord in Caqui did not discriminate against the women who came to work or accompanied their migrant husbands. On the contrary, policy was to encourage the latter to work as well. One

policy.

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informant, now a member of the cooperative, who had eloped with her husband from the highlands of Cajamarca, told me:

I never used to do agricultural work in my home community because my father was a merchant and I only herded the animals. But when I came to Caqui and stayed all day in our room, the headman spoke to my husband and said that it was not good for me to stay at home and not have anything to do, mourning the death of my firstborn son. He said it was better for me to go out and work. So that's why I got out and learned the agricultural chores of Caqui.

As a matter of fact, the hacienda had a day-care centre for children of the working women of Caqui.

This policy of incorporating wives of workers into the labour force of the hacienda was by no means an exception in the valley. Women were incorporated on all levels: they were also eligible for the higher ranks in the hierarchy of workers, such as work in the office. The Andean origin of most of the workers and their wives made them in principle open to these policies of female participation in the work of the hacienda.

By the time land reform reached the valley at the beginning of the 1970s - in Caqui as well as in the other haciendas of the valley - women were not thus only participating as temporary migrants in the cotton harvest but also as semi-permanent³⁵ and unionized labourers with permanent labour contracts, alongside their husbands. In 1972, land-reform officials counted 29 women among the 101 unionized labourers. They did not specify the number of women among the 46 semi-permanent labourers, but it must have been considerable. Two years later, women constituted 34% of this category (14 out of 41). Together with the youngsters who still were not strong enough to join the men, they formed special work groups with shorter working hours and were paid accordingly. These reduced working hours not only allowed women to fulfil their tasks in the household (cooking the mid-day meal), but also gave them time for all sorts of activities such as small animal breeding, cultivating the family plot, shopkeeping, commercial knitting, etc., the products of which were partly sold on the market. Men also engaged in this sort of work, but less so than women, as they often worked extra shifts. As union members, the role of women was modest but not negligible. They attended meetings, participated in strikes, and occupied leading

35 This is the term I use for so-called *eventuales permanentes* (permanent seasonal labourers) who were given successive 3 month-contracts (see note 9).

functions such as secretary of social affairs or secretary of propaganda and press.

Female participation in the labour force of the enterprise was not entirely limited to immigrant women. A minority of the workers came originally from the valley and some of them were women, working under the same conditions as the Andean women. But one can discern among these women a different attitude toward working outside the home. In interviews, Andean women manifest pride in their achievements. They seize the opportunity to work whenever they can and have few prejudices concerning the kind of work 'suitable for women'; nor do they feel much hindered by domestic obligations. Coastal women, on the other hand, find it necessary to give special reasons to justify their work as agricultural labourers and tend to give it up for more housebound activities such as cooking meals for paying guests, combining housekeeping with shopkeeping, etc.

Short life histories of two women workers with different cultural backgrounds (highland and coastal) illustrate these different attitudes, influenced by respectively Quetchua and coastal gender ideologies.

Concepcion Aguila came down from the Andes some 30 years ago with her baby and her husband, who had found work in Caqui. She was sixteen then. The next year she started to work too. She told me that she had worked since she was very young and did not like to be idle. She acquired a permanent job on the hacienda and therefore could become an active union member although she left it to her husband to fulfil leadership tasks in it (like many older highland women she is illiterate). At the time of the land reform, she, as well as her husband, became members of the cooperative. Through her work at the enterprise she had learned all the different agricultural tasks and she now felt very competent to work the parcel she got from the cooperative together with her husband and to make decisions regarding it jointly with him.

Yolanda Baran is the daughter of a smallholder (ex-tenant of the hacienda), who married a labourer of the hacienda. She did not inherit land from her father as her brothers did, although she also had helped her father on his land, even after her marriage. After her father died she took up work at the cooperative, where her husband belonged to the leadership group. She never applied for membership in the cooperative and after eight years she stopped working at the cooperative. Now that her husband has received land from the cooperative, she helps him on the land. She can 'give ideas' as to what should be done on the land or how to spend the family income

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but her husband makes the decisions. Socially she is quite isolated, only maintaining contact with her brothers and their families.

4.2.2 *Land reform and change in the modes of access to resources*

membership

In 1972, after the seasonal workers of the cotton harvest had gone, land-reform authorities arrived at Caqui. The file they made of the Caqui case gives some idea as to how the hacienda was transformed into a cooperative and how its members were selected. The file begins with many letters from the Caqui's union denouncing the landlord and giving many reasons why the hacienda should be expropriated and what should be done with the land. At first, the union proposed to distribute the land in individual parcels among its members (that is, all permanent workers, but not the semi-permanent workers!). When it appeared that the reform policy would give priority to cooperatives, they changed their wishes accordingly and asked for expropriation on behalf of the cooperative they had organised in the 1960s³⁶ which was willing to include all unionized workers.

Reform authorities however, wanted to include all workers on the hacienda. They therefore insisted that a new cooperative should be formed among beneficiaries to be selected by them, which would be subject to government control. They invited all workers on the cooperative to apply for 'qualification as a beneficiary'. They took care, however, to issue the invitation in November, well out of the harvest season, so as not to include the mass of seasonal harvest workers. Not everyone applied. A few of the higher administrative personnel were too identified with the landlord and left Caqui. Some tenants abandoned their plots for the same reason. The persons who did apply were subject to selection by the officials. Their most important criterion was whether a person could be considered a 'stable worker'. Some Caqui inhabitants who failed in their application and whom I have been able to interview, confirmed the importance of

36 The elite of the union had organized a cooperative with the aim of collectively colonizing new land. More or less in the same period the landlord had made an offer to some union leaders to give them land elsewhere, hoping that their absence would make the yearly salary negotiations easier. Although the offer was indignantly declined, the cooperative was maintained.

this criterion. These cases concerned men who had worked for a long time on the hacienda but at the moment of the formation of the cooperative had happened to be on a long journey to their community of origin. In such cases one normally cancelled one's labour contract with the hacienda but expected to get one's position back upon return.

The influence of the union on the selection of the beneficiaries should not be underestimated. Application of undesired persons was strongly discouraged with social sanctions or the prospect thereof, while the selection criterion of the authorities could be manipulated by the inhabitants of Caqui. One union leader who had lost his influence³⁷ was denounced to the authorities and accused of criminal acts by the union (sabotage of the land reform). Some women also seem to have been discouraged, for reasons which are not clear. The union also successfully recommended certain desired people as members to the reform authorities even though they did not meet criteria for beneficiaries.

In 1974, two years after the first selection, the cooperative had 131 members. At least 30 non-unionized workers had been included in the cooperative: evidently the insistence of the officials on including the semi-permanent workers had had some success. Women were not treated differently from men: had there been 29 unionized women, now there were 35 female cooperative workers. This brought the percentage of female members of the cooperative to 26%, slightly lower than the percentage of female unionized workers (29%).

The cooperative form thoroughly changed the way access to resources for the inhabitants of Caqui was regulated. The selection of beneficiaries and the bargaining between officials, unions and individuals that surrounded it, was only the beginning of this change. After the initial constitution of the cooperative it became very difficult to become a member. Rather quickly, the cooperative's members became highly conscious of the enormous prerogatives they had received and were anxious to keep these for themselves. They felt threatened from several sides, beginning with the people who, for one reason or another, had not been able to become members of the cooperative. Then there was the government, which had kept the

³⁷ In the opinion of the other union leaders, he was not quick enough to adapt himself to the policies of the day and had compromised himself too much with the earlier proposals of the union to divide the land among the elite of the union.

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right, under the terms of the sales contract with the cooperative, to admit more people to the cooperative as soon as possible. The ex-landlord also represented a potential threat, should there be a political change.³⁸ Although cooperatives were much criticized for their 'egoistic' behaviour, there were sound reasons for this. Government officials made plans to diversify the activities of the cooperative and to create new employment for the children of the members, but there were no means to implement these plans.

Although Caqui maintained very high barriers to membership, 'special cases' were admitted, among them some women. But more members were pensioned, died, retired or were excluded than were accepted as new members. In the course of time the membership of the cooperative steadily declined from the original 131 in 1974 to 101 in 1985. Women increased their relative participation, numbering 34 in 1985 (34%).

The 'closing up' of the cooperative especially affected wives of members who were not members themselves: the most numerous group of outsiders of the cooperative in Caqui. They were excluded from the direct benefits of the reform because at the time of the constitution of the cooperative they were not involved actively in work on the plantation. Some of them may well have had good reasons not to be involved in agriculture, such as other economic activities. Or they may have been in a stage of their life-cycle in which there was little time to spare for work outside the house, save now and then as a casual labourer, and would have liked to resume work on the plantation on a permanent basis later on. Others may have been of coastal origin, and have been influenced by coastal ideas about the division of labour between men and women. Whatever their situation, however, there was little opportunity for redress later on, as the possibility to become a member or even a permanent worker on the cooperative diminished in the course of the years (contrary to the plans of the reform officials).

38 A cooperative leader told me about his meeting with General Velasco, the leader of the military junta which had promulgated the land-reform law. The General had said to him: "I have given you the land, but now you have to defend it yourselves, because I will not be able to hold out much longer for you."

workers/non-members

As in other coastal areas, the position of the semi-permanent labourers of Caqui deteriorated after an initial tremendous improvement thanks to the land-reform officials, who had the task of abolishing the categories of semi-permanent and permanent workers on the cooperatives. In 1972 the officials made most of them (men and women) members of the cooperative, but within two years there were even more semi-permanent labourers than before. Many were children of cooperative members, a third of them women (14 of the 41). Their position within the enterprise did not improve, however, now that it was owned by their fellow workers or parents. On the contrary, access to higher levels of the workers' hierarchy, such as becoming a permanent worker or a cooperative member, became more difficult than before. Fernandez (1981) observed similar negative effects of the land reform for non-members of the cooperatives.

The following case illustrates the new relations between the different groups of workers in the cooperative:

In 1973, only a year after the cooperative had received the hacienda, 12 semi-permanent workers lodged a complaint against the cooperative with the Ministry of Work, maintaining that they were not receiving all their workers' benefits and that they had a right to a permanent labour contract. Probably their ultimate intention was to obtain cooperative membership. After years of legal struggle, the cooperative finally lost its case, and was ordered by the authorities to give permanent contracts to the 'youngsters', now numbering 30. They were, however, never able to obtain membership. Both the land-reform authorities and the Institute for the Cooperative Movement claimed competence. In the course of time they both had lost power. Thus they could only exercise light pressure on the cooperative leadership. (This may also have been due to the deteriorating economic situation of the cooperative itself).

Only two of these semi-permanent labourers who became permanent labourers were women, 28 were men. This outcome is surprising, if one takes into account the initial presence of women in the semi-permanent labour force (14 out of 41 in 1974) and if we compare this percentage with the percentage of the unionized women who had become members of the cooperative some years before. Some of the female semi-permanent labourers must have managed to become cooperative members, but later on most of the remaining women evidently did not join the men in the struggle to attain a better

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labour position in the cooperative and must have dropped out of agriculture or continued working on a more casual basis.

Lamentably, I can only speculate why this happened to the younger generation of women. Did gender relations on the cooperative gradually change because of the influence of coastal gender ideology? Did the absence of the landlord make a difference? Did the officials or lawyers involved discriminate against women? Did the decision of the Ministry simply come at a time in the life-cycle of these women when they worked on a less regular basis? Or did women now have more choices available to them for economic activities, among them migration?³⁹

loss of membership: retirement

There can be gender-skewing not only in the acquisition but also in the loss of rights. The most important cause of loss of membership was the obligatory retirement at a certain age, to which cooperative members did not look forward. Pensions of the cooperative of Caqui were meagre and seemed, in view of the bad economic perspectives of the cooperative, not very secure. Retirement also meant that one ceased to be a member of the cooperative, without any real compensation for the loss of access to the property of the cooperative. And lastly it had as a consequence, that it became more difficult to participate in the local political process, which was dominated by the cooperative.

Although the cooperative decided to retire women 5 years earlier than men (55), in view of the above-mentioned negative aspects of retirement, one wonders if this should be considered preferential treatment or the opposite. The pensioning of women was based on a decision of the cooperative, not on national legislation. Women's pensions were thus not insured with the national social security system, and therefore were even less secure than men's pensions.

³⁹ I do not know how women compete in the migration process. Girls as well as boys were urged to do their best at school, to facilitate the move to Lima and not to be 'stuck' in Caqui.

labour conditions

According to the official land-reform policy, there should have been no distinction between the members of the cooperative in terms of rights and obligations, nor between members and workers as regards labour conditions.

In Caqui, differentiation in economic remuneration on the cooperative was not marked. Between the hierarchical levels it was less than before. Although female members earned on an average 72% of the income of the men, they worked shorter hours. I found no indication that the semi-permanent and permanent female workers were paid less than female cooperative members. Their shorter working day allowed women, as in the time of the hacienda, to cook the midday meal and attend to their little businesses.

Distinctions were made, however, although these were structured differently than in the time of the hacienda. Welfare services increased considerably with the cooperative system (with private medical services in the capital, better housing, loans, food for special prices, study grants for children etc.) but were susceptible to manipulation by the leadership, which led to differentiation among the cooperative membership. Favouritism also increased in the distribution of the better jobs such as office work, working in the garage or getting agricultural training. Participation in the governing board of the cooperative and in its specialized committees offered not only a way to gain influence and power, in certain crucial functions there were additional advantages such as travel allowances and material inducements to take the 'right' decisions. In this process of differentiation women managed to get their share of welfare services. They were less successful in getting the better jobs: no women received agricultural or technical training but some did work in the office, in accounting and secretarial jobs. As we will see, although they participated in the government of the cooperative, they were not at all successful in getting the 'crucial' jobs.

political participation

The democratic structure of the cooperative, like that of the union before the land reform, made it possible for women to advance their interests. The most important bodies of the cooperative were the assembly of the members of the cooperative (the *asamblea*), the executive committee (the *consejo directivo* or *junta directiva*), and the security committee (the *consejo de vigilancia*). Other important

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committees were the sales committee, the social services committee and the election committee. Legally, the *asamblea* had the highest authority within the cooperative. In practice, however, it was often not well informed or even misled, or its decisions were not executed. Nevertheless, it was the central political forum of the community and met whenever an important decision had to be taken or collective action had to be organized. The *consejo directivo* shared responsibility for the daily activities of the cooperative with the manager, who, in the case of Caqui, was by government regulation a university-trained agronomist and the only outsider in the cooperative. The *consejo de vigilancia* was supposed to ensure a correct functioning of the cooperative and to denounce irregularities. In Caqui, as elsewhere, it was very seldom operative. Either its members were left in the dark by the *consejo directivo* and could not control anything or they were well informed, but 'forgot' to exercise control. The sales committee took care of negotiations about cotton sales, the social services committee dealt with the distribution of social services, especially medical care, and the election committee was in charge of organizing elections.

Slowly, women made progress in this organisation. Assembly meetings were always attended by a surprisingly large number of women as compared to men and though women spoke less (even if one takes into account that there were fewer female members), they talked less about trifles or technicalities and were especially interested in administrative and legal questions with moral overtones, such as work discipline in the cooperative, the payment of debts, corruption and the like. Among them there were at least three women who were often chosen for official functions and who could be considered leaders. One of them was appointed president of the cooperative at an especially difficult time when important decisions about the future of the cooperative had to be taken.

The family and community levels were subtly interwoven in the politics of the cooperative. This worked to the advantage of women: although they formed a minority in the assembly, they could often overcome this disadvantage. Roughly one third of the members were female, and roughly one third of the members were their husbands. Thus, if women could point out to their husbands the advantage of acting together, they could muster a majority in the assembly.

This does not mean that competition between the sexes was not keenly felt. When, in 1987, an election committee was chosen with

only female members, the standard joke was that this move prevented them from being chosen in the *consejo directivo*.⁴⁰

Also, there were some surprising barriers to the participation of women in the cooperative organisation. According to the local gender ideology, women were considered to be morally of a higher quality than men, and therefore less corruptible. For instance, when the cooperative chose a female president during an economic crisis of the cooperative, it was the general opinion that she as a woman would not continue plundering the cooperative like the men before her who had thought this more or less their due. This higher moral quality attributed to women did not always work in their favour. Women were barred from positions where giving and receiving 'presents' to lubricate business relations was considered essential, as for instance the cotton sales committee. The membership of this important committee definitely was a male occupation.

squatting

Although access to the cooperative as a member or as a permanent worker became more difficult, other forms of access to resources and work opened up. Claiming small pieces of unused land was one of these alternatives. In their inventory of the hacienda, land-reform officials had encountered quite a few persons who had taken, or to whom the landlord had given, such pieces of land in forlorn corners of the hacienda without any clear title. Some of them were industrious workers on the hacienda who claimed that the pieces were a recompense for their hard work, others were guards who lived at the borders of the hacienda and had plots near their houses as a tolerated side benefit. Some pensioners of the hacienda had also been allowed to supplement their meagre allowances with a little plot. And finally a number of persons who were spouses or relatives of hacienda workers were, for unclear reasons, also tolerated on small, unobtrusive plots. The officials simply ignored the existence of these plots, and handed the problem, with the sale of the ex-hacienda land, over to the cooperative.

After the establishment of the cooperative, the number of 'squatters' grew. At the end of the 1970s, there were 28 squatters, mostly men. The cooperative leaders, convinced that the cooperative, as owner,

40 To guard against fraud, the members of the election committee could not themselves be candidates.

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could easily get rid of the squatters sought legal advice about how to proceed. However, according to the land-reform authority in the valley, squatters who were members of the cooperative could not be evicted without compensation. If they had less than one hectare and lived on it, the cooperative had to give them a new house as compensation; if they had more, they could choose if they would like to join the cooperative or be an individual beneficiary, in which case two additional hectares often had to be found somewhere to give them, because the minimum amount of land to be distributed was 3 hectares.

The leadership opted nevertheless for the hard line. After stern letters and the exercise of personal pressure, the cooperative petitioned the agrarian court to evict all 28 squatters without offering compensation. This tactic was not successful. In one procedure a female squatter even seized the opportunity to obtain property rights to her plot. She was the unmarried daughter of a pensioner of the hacienda, who had been allowed to retain his parcel and house after retirement. He always took care to sweep the hacienda-office: unobliged, but nevertheless obligingly. The plot was favorably situated near the settlement and had a good supply of water for irrigation. On the death of her mother, the daughter had returned from Lima to take care of her father. After his death, she decided to stay, making a living from the sale and exchange of vegetables from her garden and supplementing this by acting as a self-made nurse. Although she had many friends and even *compadres*⁴¹ within the cooperative, they could not help her in an outright struggle against it. Her most influential *compadre* could do no more than warn the leaders in the cooperative assembly not to go too far in measures against her. She therefore had to look for outside help. Her brother in Lima, who had done well for himself as a manager in a Japanese earthenware factory, found her a lawyer and mobilised his contacts within the Ministry of Agriculture. When the cooperative claimed that her irrigation water belonged to the cooperative and cut her off, she found support from the water authorities in the valley, who gave her an independent right to water as an emergency measure. Confronted with the eviction suit of the cooperative, she in turn asked the judge to declare her property rights. Her successful plea was based on prescription, the terms of which the agrarian reform law, to help peasants against landlords (not thinking of cooperatives!), had shortened to five years.

41 A *compadre* is a ritual co-parent. The relationship is used to reinforce friendship or family ties.

In other cases the legal suits dragged on, while informal pressure of the cooperative worked, but only to a certain extent. A female member retired from the cooperative to preserve her parcel while her husband stayed on as a cooperative member. He maintained that he had no say over the parcel since it was his wife's. In another case it was the man who gave up his membership for the parcel and his wife who remained a member. But one way or another, squatters were there to stay. Although squatting was predominantly a male occupation, women could opt for this alternative as well or make use of the reform legislation to defend their 'squatting rights'.

ten years later: the parcellation of the cooperative

Although the cooperative had done relatively well at the beginning of the land reform and had had a motivated leadership, nevertheless the enterprise started on a downward course due to a heavy burden of welfare obligations, a diminishing productivity because of mismanagement, free riding and corruption, combined with problems in the larger Peruvian agrarian economy.

The government bank stopped giving credit and the cooperative began to lack the liquidity to pay wages or to cultivate the fields. Squatting, which opened the possibility of subsistence agriculture to overcome bad periods, became a necessity instead of a nuisance. To regain control over the squatting phenomenon, the cooperative leaders planned to parcel part of the cotton land of the cooperative to give every family a plot of one hectare. Shortly afterwards, in 1981, it appeared that the government would allow cooperatives to divide their land among their members and many cooperatives in financial difficulties made use of this solution, setting the example for the Caqui cooperative.

The first parcellation plan, designed for the cooperative by former agrarian reform officials who had set up a non-governmental development agency financed with foreign funds, was based on the idea of 'family parcels': all families would receive equal parcels. This plan was immediately rejected by the female members, supported by their husbands, who together formed a majority in the cooperative assembly, which had to approve the plans. The women declared they wanted equal treatment. Some even demanded a parcel of their own (as had been granted in the neighbouring cooperative), but this proposal did not gain a majority.

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The advisors adjusted the plan in light of the position of the assembly. They had reserved some land for collective ownership, to enable the cooperative to continue to give work to the *permanentes*. Their new proposals required more land, leaving less for the collectivity. They did not like the differentiation between families which was introduced with the plan of the women. They tried to persuade the assembly to accept giving each woman one hectare in addition to her husband's plot, but finally the assembly decided to distribute two types of parcels: 'family' parcels of 7 hectares if husband and wife were both members of the cooperative and 'personal' parcels of 4 hectares if only one of them (man or woman) was a member. On the cooperative this decision was widely interpreted as meaning that of the 7 hectares 4 were the property of the husband and 3 of the wife, but the following case shows that rights to land were divided equally in the case of divorce.

The woman who had felt most strongly about having an individual parcel in the end got what she wanted. She separated from her husband, and they split the 7 hectares they had between them: now she has an individual parcel of 3½ hectares. She explained to me that she had been quarrelling with her husband (who was of coastal origin, she being from the highlands) about the inheritance of the parcel. He had maintained that the parcel was his, for his son to inherit. But as she had children from a former marriage, whom she wanted to inherit some land, she had had to establish beyond doubt her individual property rights.

The *permanentes* did not accept the proposal of the officials to continue working for the cooperative, because they wanted to have their parcels as well. They had to fight another prolonged legal battle against the cooperative with some backing from political brokers and officials from the capital, to obtain what they wanted. They formed their own cooperative and succeeded in getting part of the land assigned to it. They immediately proceeded to divide the land among themselves. Their parcels, unfortunately, could only be very small: only 1½ hectares. The two women among them, both married to *permanentes*, received equal shares. Especially in this group, squatting was common and provided some extra land.

4.2.3 *The present situation*

As a consequence of the parcellation the structure of the local community has changed radically. The cooperative did not cease to exist, but it now plays a more modest role, trying to survive mainly

by the selling of pesticides and the hiring out of machinery. Caqui can now best be characterized as a community of smallholders. The different groups of women are faced with the new structure and must drastically revise their strategies if they want to maintain their independence.

The position of the women who were members or permanent workers of the cooperative is strong, since their rights to land have been formally recognized. As I illustrated above in the case of Concepcion Aguila (page 36), they now play an active part in the work and the direction of their family farms. To illustrate this point I mention a case in which an ex-official entered into a sharecropping contract with a couple of *parceleros* (cooperative members of a parcelled cooperative).

The ex-official and agricultural engineer was an old friend of the family and *compadre* of one of the couple's children. He supplied inputs and technical knowledge to cultivate corn on the couples' land, while the couple provided the labour. The proceeds were split. This is a customary sharecropping contract called '*a medias*' or '*al partir*'. The first harvest produced a good result. Nevertheless, it was the woman who told the engineer, that the following season would be the last, and it was her criteria that dominated the decision of the couple. The technical directives of the engineer conflicted with the organisation of her work and she was prepared to accept a lower production if it meant she could do things her way.

Parcellation also changed the opportunities of the women in the other categories in the cooperative: wives and daughters now have new possibilities to become involved in agriculture, their husbands, parents, and a lot of their friends and relatives being *parceleros*, they have to solicit casual work and other favours from them instead of from the cooperative.

4.3 *From sharecroppers to independent small property owners: the yanacunas of Caqui*

4.3.1 *Before the land reform*

For the 17 sharecroppers of Caqui and their families living on their small parcels in a remote part of the hacienda the land reform constituted a quite different affair, although the *parceleros* ended up in a similar position. But the sharecroppers, called *yanacunas* after an old Inca word for personal servant, were nearly all of coastal

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origin, having received their parcels as early as 1964, some twenty years before the *parceleros* of Caqui. Only two of them were women at the time of the reform. They were also better prepared for the change as they already had experience in managing a small farm. The comparison between these different groups is nevertheless useful, as it makes clear how important the local situation was for the outcome of the reform.

Coastal gender ideology, as described by Fernandez, was prevalent among them, which meant that agriculture in general was not considered a suitable occupation for women, save for special tasks (cotton picking) or in special situations (widowhood). Wives and daughters probably had relatively little opportunity to compensate for their lack of access to agriculture in other ways such as shopkeeping and other housebound jobs, since their living circumstances were quite isolated. These limitations on economic participation made them very dependent on their men and this was reflected in their position in the household and in the community. Only once a year, at the feast of the patron saint of the old hacienda, did they play an important role.

Access to land was organized by the landlord through the customary *yanacónaje* contract, since 1947 regulated by law 10885 (see notes 6 and 31). This law tried to modernize a paternalistic relationship between the landlord and the *yanacóna* in which the landlord prescribed the production behaviour of the *yanacónas* in exchange for economic and social protection. Landlords in general did not contract with women, but through inheritance women obtained access to land. When a *yanacóna* died, his wife inherited the contract in the expectation that one of her children (a son) would take over after some time or that she would remarry. Thus, of the two female *yanacónas* mentioned above one was the widow of a *yanacóna*, the other was the daughter of a *yanacóna* who claimed the inheritance of his contract.

4.3.2 *The land reform*

Although the land reform of 1964 was not considered very effective on a national scale, it worked very well for the *yanacónas* in the Huaral valley. They were enabled to buy their land in easy instalments over 20 years from the government, after previous expropriation of the landlord. Control over access to land thus changed hands from the landlord to the government, the latter bound by the criteria for the selection of beneficiaries mentioned at the beginning of this

article. The discriminatory element which these criteria contained as regards female individual beneficiaries - they had to be 'head of the household' - had little if any effect in the only two cases of female applicants mentioned above. The widow was readily accepted as a beneficiary, which was only natural since she fulfilled the selection criteria.

The daughter of the *yanacona* experienced far more difficulty in getting her claim honored, although her status in the household apparently was not disputed. Her father, a Japanese immigrant, had cleared much land to add to the parcel he had received from the landlord. At the time of the land reform his parcel measured 17 hectares, more than the limit of 15 hectares that beneficiaries could get. His children, however, had found other economic alternatives in the little town nearby, and after his death only one daughter was actually still living on the farm, while her married sister helped her to manage the plot. Reform officials, looking for land with which to supplement the land of other tenants who had parcels smaller than the required size (3 hectares), decided that the parcel was neglected and declared the whole plot abandoned. Only after various administrative appeals was it established that the young woman really lived on the plot and for that reason had beneficiary rights. She was given the minimum of 3 hectares, fortunately situated on the best land of the plot. The rest of the land was divided among the other tenants. Soon, she married the son of her neighbour farmer.

Although in this last case it is a woman whose claim was initially not recognized, other reasons than her status in the household seem to have influenced the negative attitude of the officials. In the archive which I found on the case her household status is not mentioned as an argument against her. However, she was obviously considered an easy victim to expropriate. I wonder, for instance, if she would have been able to hold on to her plot if she had not had plans to marry her neighbour; it is in fact doubtful if in that case she would have been interested in the land at all.

4.3.3. *After the land reform*

Buying and selling of the reformed land was restricted in the new land-rights system and rental was officially forbidden, so inheritance became one of the most important means of acquiring land. The inheritance provisions of the land-reform law were in their probable implementation biased against women (see Sara Lafosse 1969). Under the new legislation a widow of a deceased beneficiary and her

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children would be exonerated from the remainder of the debt to the government for the purchase of the land and together receive full property rights over the land. When the youngest child reached 18, the condominium was to be liquidated and the land transferred to the person who in fact was working it or was most apt to do so. In view of the 'invisibility' or non-existence of women's work on the land this in most cases would be a son instead of the widow. The land could not be divided.

What happened in practice, however, is something else. In the devolution of land between the generations one can discern two phases. Before the parents die, it gradually becomes clear which of the children will permanently stay on the land, helping his parents. Often this is a negative choice, meaning that the person implied has not been successful at one of the alternatives (marriage, education, migration, commerce, renting other land or a combination of these). Those who stay gradually make more formal agreements with their parents. They receive a plot for their own exploitation, or, when their parents cannot work any more, they exploit the whole plot and split the proceeds with their parents.

After the death of the parents, there seldom is a formal division of the inheritance. All children maintain their rights in the undivided inheritance, and the absent children receive some token rent payment for the land as an indication that they have not given up their inheritance rights. The land is seen as an ultimate recourse to fall back on for food and a place to live. The descendants of a smallholder, even if they are successful economically or socially in other areas than agriculture, are very reluctant to give up this 'right to subsistence'. Of course, when the heir who cultivates the land wants to free himself of his obligations to the others, or when after many years an heir who has left the family plot wants to exercise this 'right to subsistence', trouble is afoot, and the situation can be quite violent. But even so, the local practice described is very common and so far little use has been made of the legal solution offered by the law, although half of the original beneficiaries of the reform have in the meantime died.⁴²

Under the new inheritance practices, women's access to land seems to have improved a little. The influence of the landlord on inheritance

42 It is doubtful if use of the state system would make much difference, given the pace of the local judicial system and the way it works: see Huber 1991.

has disappeared, and inheritance now has become a complicated process in the family, drawn out over many years. The position of the widow, however, seems to have remained much the same. The equal right of daughters to inherit the land of their parents is now in principle recognized locally. But as women are still not agriculturalists, or at least not considered as such, it is difficult for them to actually gain use rights unless they have a man at their side. Sons have advantages here because they have better access to loans, commercial transactions and so on. Also, legal regulation is not unknown, and although it is not often used to establish the inheritance of a farm in the prescribed way, in the actual inheritance process legal rules can be used to support male over female claims.

In one case, a woman had separated from her husband in Lima and had returned to the farm that now was managed by her aged mother. She obtained from her mother the right to work it for five years and share the harvest. But her brother, who had become *parcelero* of the cooperative and had just acquired a good plot of 4 hectares, would not let her have her way. He stole her harvest and even threw her out of their mother's house. Now she operates a foodstand in the settlement of Caqui. One reason for this harshness of the brother allegedly was that his sister had a new friend, whom he suspected of wanting to help his sister lay an exclusive claim to the land.

Apart from this slight shift in the access to land, little changed in the position of the wives and daughters of the ex-sharecroppers because of the land reform, apart from a more general deterioration of the conditions of production.⁴³

5. Some conclusions

At the beginning of this article I summed up a number of aspects that should be looked at when studying the impact of land reform on the position of women. Applying these criteria to cases, located in different regions of Peru, studied by others as well as in my own

⁴³ For instance, although landlords were always criticized - and in many cases rightly so - for exploiting the dependency of their sharecroppers on their services, the government did not succeed in replacing some of the economic functions they had performed.

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research, shows how varied this impact was. Basically, the impact of the land reform on women depended on two groups of variables:

1. How much room for manoeuvre was there for the various actors involved in the process of implementation?
2. How was the position of women in a particular locality structured and what did this mean for the possibilities the land reform offered to women?

To get a clearer insight into the room for manoeuvre which the law offered, we must distinguish between the law and administrative regulations of all types through which the law was implemented, and the behaviour of the implementing officials in interaction with the would-be beneficiaries of the reform. The law and the rules based on it were less biased against women than generally supposed, especially in the case of the cooperatives. If there was a rule requiring one to be a household head to benefit from the reform, this could easily be ignored, as the cases of Caqui and Cuzco illustrate. One wonders if the case of strict application which Deere mentions was not an exception to the rule.

The interaction between officials, peasants and labourers on the haciendas must have shown much variation. Officials as well as the local population had many different sets of norms they could refer to: coastal or Quetchua gender ideologies, land reform equality ideology, different bodies of administrative regulation, etc. Equally important was the power balance between the officials and their clients. In many cases, the hacienda had already been occupied by the peasants before the officials arrived. And besides, the officials were in a hurry, a circumstances that favoured the peasants in their negotiations. Furthermore, there was the effect of time. After some years, land reform had lost its magic charm and government intervention in this field became much less intense. This meant that local powers began to get more control over the new structures that had been introduced.

As the cases show, the initial position of women varied markedly. Especially the difference between coastal (*mestizo*) and Quetchua women is very pronounced.

In the cases reported by the other authors whose work I have discussed, the legal variable is stressed, but not the room for manoeuvre that officials and peasants had in the implementation of the land reform. The conclusions these authors draw are therefore

too negative. They describe situations in which most women, because of their position before the reform, were excluded from the cooperatives or were only admitted on disadvantaged terms.

If one gives attention to such local factors, a quite different picture emerges in which the local system of gender relations, not law and its official implementation, seems primarily to determine what happened. I have illustrated this proposition with the case of Caqui.

When the land reform started in Caqui in 1972 women were participating in important numbers in the productive and political life of the hacienda. This was due to various factors:

- an explicit policy of the landlord, who could economize in this way on investments made in attracting and keeping labour;
- the gender ideology of the predominantly Quetchua immigrant population, which welcomed the opportunity (child-care facilities, adapted working hours, etc.) given to women to have their own source of income;
- the progressive labour laws of the 1950s, which did not discriminate much between the sexes as regards labour prerogatives, such as the right to a permanent contract after a trial period or the right to be a member of a labour union.

Only the women of coastal origin seemed largely confined to the household and without many economic or political activities. Most of them were wives of tenants.

Implementing the land reform in Caqui, officials recognized the economic and political role of women and made them members of the cooperative on a par with the men. The numeric participation of women on the different levels of the cooperative remained at the level it had been: 30% in 1974. Only at the end of the 1970s did young men begin to predominate among the few permanent workers of the cooperative, but I have too few data to be able to interpret the significance of this situation for the position of women.

Women in the cooperative made full use of their membership status to participate in the administration of the cooperative and to ensure 'equal treatment' in labour conditions and work opportunities. Nevertheless, small differences between men and women in vocational and educational opportunities did exist, but it is difficult to interpret them. When the cooperative broke up because of financial difficulties female members managed to get their share of its land and other possessions. The resulting private parcels, many of them common property of a husband and wife, are now managed jointly and women have maintained their participation at all levels in agriculture.

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The position of women in the tenant class changed little because of the land reform. Since the reform gave tenants the property of their land, inheritance was now formally regulated by law instead of by custom and by the landlord. The law in fact continued to favor men over women but inheritance practices in the shadow of the law have improved female access to land a little, while other barriers preventing women to take up agriculture continue to exist.

These are just a few indications concerning the position of some classes of women in Caqui and how it changed through land reform. Lamentably, my study suffers from some of the weaknesses I have criticized in other research. While gathering my data, I concentrated on what happened to that half of the women in the former hacienda settlement who were - incidentally or not - full-time workers on the hacienda at the time of the reform. Especially if one takes account of the possibility of a Quechua complementarity-model of gender relations, this leads to an incomplete picture of the position of women. Thus questions such as: 'Why did only half of the women belong to the permanent work-force of the hacienda at the time of the land reform?' remain unanswered.

Nevertheless, this case, representative for the central coast of Peru, together with the other cases discussed, illustrates that it is difficult to maintain in general that officials overlooked the actual participation of women in agricultural production. Officials and other leaders of the reform were not only aware of the existing differences of position of hacienda workers and peasants, which were reproduced by the reform, they tried to apply remedies, for instance by treating semi-permanent labourers as permanent labourers or by planning the growth of cooperatives to enable them to absorb the seasonal workers. Although there was little specific attention to the position of women in those categories, in which they may have been over-represented, women as well as men benefitted from these concerns. What the officials did overlook, of course, was the way the position of women was structured, and thus how measures meant to promote equality actually negatively affected the position of women, especially of Indian women.

Roughly, one could say that the way women quantitatively and qualitatively participated in the hacienda system before the land reform determined their participation in the reform as well. Furthermore, how the reform in the end affected the position of women depended in some cases on the extent to which women could make up for the unequal distribution of the benefits of the reform, developing their own strategies to counteract it. Especially Andean

women seem to have the confidence and the flexibility for an adequate response. By now, time will have acted in their favour as well. The cooperatives were not an economic success, government intervention has slackened to nearly zero, and gradually more indigenous forms of regulation have come to predominate in the organisation of agricultural production.

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