

in the South, however, a substantial proportion of lone mothers head extended households containing female and male relatives who can share labor burdens (see Chant 1997a).

5. Women's disproportionate concentration in informal employment seems to be becoming more marked over time. In Mexico, for example, official documentation connected with the National Women's Programme (*Programa Nacional de la Mujer 1995-2000*) noted that in the context of ongoing increase in women's workforce participation in the 1990s, those in informal income-generating activities (here described as "nonwaged" work), rose from 38 percent to 42 percent of the national female labor force between 1991 and 1995 (Secretaría de Gobernación 1996, 27-8).

6. In 1995, the UNDP estimated that the combined value of the unpaid work of women and men, together with the underpayment of women's work in the market, was in the order of US\$16 trillion, or about 70 percent of global output. Of the \$16 trillion identified, approximately \$11 trillion was constituted by the "non-monetised, invisible contribution of women" (UNDP 1995, 6).

7. Building on a point made earlier in the chapter, it is also important to note that households are not "bounded entities" and may receive injections of income from external sources, such as migrant members and transfer payments from absent fathers or state organizations (see Bibars 2001; Bruce and Lloyd 1992; Chant 1997b, 1999).

8. It should also be noted that, although government assistance for female-headed households is often strongly motivated by concerns to better the position of women and children, another important agenda has been the aim of neoliberal economic policy to effect reduction in public expenditure on universal social programs in favor of targeted schemes for poverty alleviation (see Budowski and Guzmán 1998; Chant 2002).

## What Is Justice? Indigenous Women in Andean Development Projects

Maruja Barrig

As a consultant to development projects for various international cooperation agencies, I have seen the sincere efforts of many NGOs and public and private donors to pursue gender equity. But at the same time I have also observed the barriers that impede progress toward this goal within some of the organizations working in the rural Andean zones of Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. I have shared with colleagues in the North and the South the sense of uneasiness and discouragement I feel in discussions with some directors and staff of rural NGOs who resist what they see as the imposition of a Western way of doing things and openly reject what is evident to even the least sensitive observer: the enormous gaps in resources and power between men and women in rural Andean communities.

Saying that this situation is a result of sexism does not really illuminate the underlying issues of a problem that is often seen as a cultural gap. Thirty years ago, those of us who became feminist activists were urban, educated middle-class *Limeños*. Our silence with respect to the Andean women was full of signifiers. Lima, the capital city, is situated in a narrow desert strip that runs along the Pacific coast of Peru. Proud of its Spanish heritage, it has always looked to the ocean and the many possibilities abroad, rather than looking at the reality and complexity in the tall Andes that rise behind Lima or to the vast Amazonian region beyond.<sup>1</sup>

Thinking about why those working in rural projects often reject the concept of gender aroused my curiosity about the discourses that project officials and urban feminists from the capital have constructed about indigenous women. Those in charge of projects claim the purity of indigenous lives and customs, while the feminists—products of a *criollo* tradition, unable to grasp Andean cultural codes, and not even speaking Quechua or Aymara—have simply evaded the issue.

In 1999, I received a grant to study the social representations of indigenous women from the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The fellowship allowed me to review a number of essays on “The Indian Problem,” including colonial accounts and fictional histories, and to interview a dozen feminist leaders from the 1970s along with eighteen men and women who made up the staffs of four NGOs based in Cuzco. The capital of the Inca Empire until the arrival of the Spanish in the sixteenth century, Cuzco is symbolic because the majority of its inhabitants exhibit a strong loyalty to the region and a pride that comes from considering themselves the direct descendants of the Incas. This essay includes some of the opinions of directors and staff members I interviewed in April 2000.<sup>2</sup>

Since that time, I have tried to deepen my understanding of my original question: why has the idea of using gender analysis been so firmly rejected in rural Andean zones? In July 2001 and March 2002, I had two further opportunities to explore these concerns when I evaluated projects for various NGOs in Cuzco and in the departments of Ayacucho and Huancavelica in the southern Andes. With the help of translators I was also able to talk with some of the rural women who were the focus of their projects. Nevertheless, I should emphasize that this study is based primarily on conversations with NGO staffs and on my analysis of ethnographic studies, that is, not on indigenous women themselves but on those who describe them. Changing the images of Andean women in a way that could make them the protagonists of their own lives is part of a future agenda and a debt that needs to be paid.

I believe that there are at least three areas of tension when gender is introduced into development practice in the Andes. The first is the social representation of “the Andean,” which rejects all outside influences. The second is an ongoing debate between indigenous rights, which are conceived of as collective, and individual rights, such as those implied in most human rights discourse. The third is the institutional policies of international development and the relations between donor groups and Southern NGOs.

Even ethnographic studies that do not embody a gender perspective acknowledge the gaps between “the Andean worldview” and concrete practices. The images constructed by those inside and outside peasant communities seem to correspond to what psychologists call social representation: the categorization of circumstances, events, and people to create a set of meanings shared by a certain group. A social representation suggests a subject position, so the same events and relationships can be represented in quite different ways, depending on who is speaking. Some coastal *criollos* revile Andean peasant traditions, considering them an obstacle to modernization, but those working in rural projects often argue that if indigenous communities had not been contaminated by urban habits, there would be gender equity within them.

This view, strongly held by some today in ways that influence the implementation of gender guidelines, can easily be traced back to the first colonial chronicles. Many NGO staff members believe that ethnographic studies support their position that gender equity is natural to indigenous communities but that colonialism beginning in the sixteenth century and capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries destroyed the perfection of a harmonious Inca world. Anything that mars this idealization they attribute to contamination from the outside, to “invasions” both symbolic and real. Although NGO staffs are committed to human rights, in some cases they use this ecstatic vision of Andean culture to justify failing to implement programs that promote gender equality on the grounds that this “Western” viewpoint ignores the natural complementarity of the Andean couple. When contemporary practices fall short of this ideal, such lapses are seen as the result of the way modern institutions and the penetration of modern communications and trade have distorted the natural equilibrium.

This essay will argue that this social construction is not fully convincing. First, there is evidence that gender inequalities existed before modernizing projects were introduced into the rural Andes. In addition, whatever their source, entitlements and symbols of power are inequitably distributed between men and women today: women are less literate, have less access to public positions, have fewer opportunities to learn Spanish, and do not enjoy freedom of physical and social movement. The unequal treatment of Andean women has been described by some as cultural resistance, just as veiling among Muslim women can be interpreted as a rejection of Westernization. But to call the treatment of Andean women “cultural resistance” when they are monolingual in their native language, censured for using Western clothing, largely illiterate, and confined to their com-

munity lest they be "taken advantage of" outside, ignores women's lack of choices and distorts reality.

This is not to argue that the attempt to defend indigenous rights is wrong. There is a kind of violence in the way that indigenous Peruvians are forced to begin the process of acquiring rights and citizenship by fleeing from themselves, because to be an Andean peasant from the highlands is to be relegated to the lowest rung of the social stratification ladder. As Sinesio López points out, indigenous people are seen as citizens only at the cost of their identity. In Peru, this has meant that Indians must transform themselves into *cholos* (*mestizos*), giving up their language, dress, and customs. Citizenship has been constructed through forced homogenization, not by recognizing cultural differences (López 1997, 442).

Collective rights, which were historically denied in the name of national integration, suggest a second tension with regard to women. In peasant communities, customary law is endorsed by the Peruvian constitution, except when it denies the fundamental rights of individuals. But the legal norms that protect women, many recently strengthened due to efforts of urban feminists, are rarely considered in this category. Customary law tends to be used as an excuse to leave untouched a long list of patriarchal practices that restrict women's freedom. When they are confronted with women's inequality, development organizations can argue that they are simply respecting local culture.

A third tension is found in the institutional policies of international development agencies, mostly private, and their relations with Southern NGOs. Most international agencies have specific mandates requiring them to promote gender equality for sustained development. But most local NGOs engage in both open and covert resistance to what they see as the imposition of "external agendas," resistance that may be further deepened by the gender relations both male and female staff experience in their daily lives, in NGO offices as well as in the field.

#### SOCIAL REPRESENTATION: BETWEEN IMAGE AND REALITY

An important segment of the Peruvian population shares a particular social representation of the Andean world, a perspective reinforced by some ethnographic studies that claim that alien cultural practices have destroyed the harmonic equilibrium between the community and the family and between husband and wife that used to exist in the Andean world. Other researchers have questioned this idealization of Andean life.

#### The Reimvented Past

Despite the contemporary bias against "Indians," the Inca Empire (which extended from Cuzco in Peru north to Ecuador and parts of Colombia, and south to Bolivia and northern Chile between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) is seen by a majority of Peruvians as the period of greatest splendor and glory in Peruvian national history, a Golden Age of harmony, justice, and abundance that ended with the Spanish conquest and that contrasts sharply with the present weakness and poverty of the country. Studies show that many students and professors at the secondary as well as the university level believe the Inca Empire was benevolent, its power legitimized by its concern for the welfare of its subjects (Portocarrero and Oliart 1989; Oboler 1996).

One of the most important sources of this representation is the *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, written in the seventeenth century by Garcilaso de la Vega, son of a Spanish captain and an Inca princess who lived in Cuzco. When the book was published in Europe in 1607, it offered a novelistic account of the Inca Empire that ignored important local traditions of those who had preceded the Inca and the revolts of those in regions the Inca had conquered. Pre-Inca history was erased, and advances in agriculture and social and political organization were attributed to the Inca, and to their gods. In Garcilaso's portrayal, the Inca did not repress the peoples it conquered but persuaded them to submit. A century after its publication, the *Royal Commentaries* were already being used by the native elites in their efforts to restore their rights and create support for indigenous revolts against the Spanish viceroyalty (Rowe 1976, 25–35; Burga 1988, 299; Spalding 1974, 187–89).

A few years after the publication of the *Royal Commentaries*, around 1612, an indigenous writer, Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, produced a chronicle of the abuses and humiliations to which the natives had been subjected. He sent it to the king of Spain, claiming to reveal the truth that had been hidden by the king's representatives in the New World. Guamán Poma feared that "the Indian could vanish" and, as he traveled throughout Peru, he became increasingly upset by the racial mixing he saw among Indians, Spanish, and African slaves, blaming women—i.e., the "worst Indian whores from this kingdom"—for the accelerating miscegenation (Barrig 2001).

For Guamán Poma, the multiplication of *mestizos* and *mulattos* threatened to ruin any hope of a pre-Hispanic restoration that would be able to return control

of their land to the native Peruvians. His answer was that each racial group should live and reign in its own country: "the Spanish in Spain, the Africans in Guinea, and the Peruvians in Peru." But, facing the fact of racial mixing and in need of a more immediate solution, Guamán Poma suggested that the whites, *mestizos*, blacks, and mulattos should stay in the cities and that only the indigenous be allowed to live in the countryside, to maintain their native purity (Guamán Poma de Ayala 1980; Ossio 1973; Vargas Llosa 1996, 245). For Guamán Poma and scores of his later followers, racial mixture was a form of disorder. Order implied a restriction, a limited selection of elements; disorder and the lack of limits meant the destruction of the symbolic configuration of a society. As Douglas argues, sexual contamination is a sign of fear that the clear internal structure of a system cannot be maintained (Douglas 1991, 106, 164–65).

Flores Galindo argues that the timeless ideal of the "Andean man" represents a composite harmony of desired characteristics but not the reality of a very fragmented world. The fragmentation of Peru generated an Andean utopia: the desire to return to an Inca society with the "Andean man" as a solution to the problem of Indian identity. This is how Flores Galindo interprets the fact that, between 1953 and 1972, in various rural towns in the Peruvian Andes, researchers found fifteen versions of the story of "Incarri" (the Inca king). Incarrí refers to Tupac Amaru I, the rebel Indian leader beheaded by Viceroy Toledo in 1572. According to these accounts, the buried head of the Inca king is reconstituting itself and reconnecting with the rest of his body. When this process is finished, the Inca will emerge to put an end to the current epoch of confusion (Flores Galindo 1987, 18).

In addition to these older interpretive propositions, pro-Indian intellectual and political currents appeared at the early twentieth century and celebrated the native population of the Andes. These emerged in reaction to the virtual enslavement of the Indian population that had occurred under the hacienda regime of the nineteenth century. The "Indian" of this intellectual movement was an abstraction, timeless and outside any specific social context. Although the intellectuals were themselves *mestizos*, these *indigenista* narrators divided the world between those who were "Indians" and those who weren't, assigning all positive characteristics to the Indians and all negative traits to whites and *mestizos*. In some of the stories and novels, the moral qualities of the characters are attributed ethnically in a way that suggests a kind of racism (Flores Galindo 1992, 18–19; Vargas Llosa 1996, 271–73).

This literature suggested the need to restore the pre-Hispanic rights of the Indians, and Indian women are responsible for maintaining the purity of the indigenous race. They must be chaste and resist men who are not members of their own ethnic group. As one writer asserts, "The impure Indian woman goes to the city to become meat for the whorehouse; one day she will rot in a hospital" (Valcárcel 1970, 84–85).

How do oral traditions, *indigenista* writings, and chronicles written centuries ago help us understand the contemporary views of the people who are carrying out development projects in the Andean rural areas? By helping us locate what Jean Claude Abric describes as the central nucleus of the Andean social representation. A social representation is built around a figurative core that is stable, concrete, and simple and resonates with the values of the individual who uses it. The representation is seen as objective truth; the object represented is converted into reality itself. A social representation restructures reality and provides a unitary vision of the object. Because the subject invests the representation with his or her experiences and system of values, the object so represented must be made consistent with those values (Abric 1994, 12–22; Jodelet 1988, 472–75).

Two sets of complementary ideas are fundamental to the Andean social representation. The first set includes the designation of a physical and symbolic territory; in this case the Andean Eden pictured by Garcilaso de la Vega combines with the positive image of the Andean *social system* that all Peruvians learn in school. The second set of ideas interprets anything "bad" in current social practices—anything that departs from the ideal—as the result of external contamination. In this way, the representation closes the cognitive circle and is able to fend off alternative views.

#### *Andean Ethnography and the Issue of External Contamination*

Several contemporary ethnographic investigations reinforce the idealized image presented above, helping to keep the "Andean" social representation alive. One example is the seminal and widely read work of Billie Jean Isbell on sexual equality and complementarity in the Andes. Isbell did her fieldwork in the community of Chuschi in the southern Andes at the end of the 1960s. She argued that the Andean worldview is based on a notion of symmetrical duality, the principle of "the essential other half" by which the man and the woman form a whole, each incomplete without the other. In her view, as industrialization and modernization penetrated the Andes, the principle of complementary sexual equality would

be lost. "The traditional women of Chuschi will probably lose status, dignity and independence, and their position of power in the procreative process," she warned, "to the degree that Spanish society, dominated by men, continues to displace the Andean order which is basically, dual, complementary and egalitarian" (Isbell 1976, 55). Some years later, Isbell (1997) revised her conclusions, but her initial propositions—that complementarity and sexual equality are equivalent among Andean peasants and that this ideal has eroded as rural communities became more connected to the urban system—have endured as points of reference for other researchers and activists.

A second study that emphasizes "original harmony" and sees departures from that state as the result of "external degradation" is Florence Babb's analysis of the archives of the Vicos project. From 1952 to 1962, scholars from Cornell University, under contract with the Peruvian government, carried out research and modernization interventions at Vicos, a hacienda in the central highlands, introducing new agricultural technologies, eliminating the near-serf status of the peasants under the hacienda system, and developing new leadership. Decades later, drawing on the field notes and interviews of the project anthropologists, Babb analyzed what had happened to the women of Vicos. Although she claimed that she did not want to idealize the past or deny preexisting gender inequalities, Babb concluded that the project had introduced "relatively greater inequalities" for women (Babb 1999, 96).

Before the Cornell project, Babb's study shows, the men of Vicos owned more land and animals than women. Men were recognized as heads of families; the public status of women was less than their status at home; and, in spite of expectations that both spouses would be faithful, men enjoyed greater freedom. Babb describes this initial condition as "a general pattern of mutual respect." The only exception she notes is that alcohol (also an "external" factor?) made men "sexually aggressive." She concludes that women may not have been exactly equal to men, but their public roles were less important than their status within the family, where they were nearly equal (98–99).

Babb identified several reasons why women lost power under the Vicos project. Productivity was increased on lands owned by men, who received training in new agricultural techniques that was not extended to women. The monetarization of the economy marginalized women, and sending children to school reduced their role as the socializers of children. Women resisted these changes. Babb concludes that the capitalist economy devalued the contribution of women to the

family economy while the diffusion of the ideology of the dominant class judged women inferior (114). To explain cases of violence against women (evidence that did not fit the idealized social representation), Babb blames external influences, attributing it to *mestizos* or those *vecinos* who had the most contacts outside the community. In general she notes an "absence of machismo among the men of Vicos." To explain the occurrence of sexual rape, Babb concluded that "as men of Vicos expand their sphere of displacement and bring the manner of acting of the dominant culture to their community, it is probable that women will increasingly suffer the kind of violence that was exercised in the past by men from the class that oppressed them, but now will be exercised by the peasant men themselves" (109–10).

For Babb and other researchers, violence against women is alien to indigenous traditions and therefore must have its source in the degradation of pre-Hispanic customs as a consequence of the violent introduction of European practices and colonial abuses. Similarly, in her analysis of the chronicle of Guamán Poma de Ayala, Irene Silverblatt explains alcoholism and violence against women as evidence of the deterioration of indigenous culture produced by outside factors (Silverblatt 1990, 107). In these interpretations, outsiders—the Spanish conquistadors and later the *mestizos*—introduce violence and pervert the traditional customs of mutual respect between the Andean husband and wife.

Although less widely known than Isbell's theory or Babb's analysis of the Vicos archives, Carol Andreas's monograph of life in the Andes complements this idealized, atavistic vision of the Andean world. For Andreas, "In the Andean mountain regions bordering the Peruvian jungle, the regions least affected by *mestizo* or foreign influence, the balance between men and women in complementary work roles can be seen in its purest form" (Andreas 1985, 173). She acknowledges the existence of sexual violence and abuse, but their causes are alien to the idyllic picture she paints of Andean society: the influence of *mestizos* and the negative effects of market forces. "What does seem to be true is that domestic violence is more common where *mestizo* influence is greatest. Rape, especially, is identified with Spanish-style machismo. . . . Male violence toward women is a product of colonial and present government policy, for it gives men effective power over women by making women economically dependent. . . . Loss of self-esteem among women is produced largely by their weak position in the money economy" (65–67).

In Andreas's view, modernization separates men from women, and the market

even affects their health differently: "The diet of Indians has changed with the introduction of a money economy and government subsidies that make available manufactured products such as soda pop, noodles and refined sugar. . . . As the consumption of refined products has weakened peasant women physically, their daily work has become harder" (64). Without presenting any data to support her assertion about the effects of noodles and sugar, Andreas goes on to condemn the devastating impact of another product: beer. "Men have taken to drinking more bottled beer than homemade *chicha* . . . The beer men drink regularly comes from the city; it must be bought with money, and it makes them lethargic and sometimes violent" (65).

These brief summaries cannot do justice to the fieldwork and analysis that have gone into the study of Andean life, but they are sufficient to suggest the effects these studies produce. Seeking to preserve an idealized world, these researchers emphasize the dichotomies between the Andean and *mestizo* worlds and suggest that the degradation of Andean society has been caused by modernization, industrialization, and the penetration of capitalist markets. Yet, as I try to suggest below, these studies never question why "external contamination" is bad for women's status and power, but not for men's, or why external contact alters gender power relations in ways that are bad for women but not for men.

The Andean social construction was clearly present in the thinking of the NGO staff members I interviewed in Cuzco in 2000. Although they showed their concern for peasant women and "questions of gender," they were much more prone to discuss how hard life is in the highlands and how adversity maintains the purity of community values. A comment from a Cuzqueñan field technician is illustrative: *There are communities located at the headwaters area [more than 3,500 m (11,483 ft) above sea level] that keep the traditions. They are more natural; there everything is pure. A couple in these communities is more innocent, more ingenious and honest, more responsible because they have not come into contact with urban people. These people go to the city only rarely, but the woman does not go, only the man, because the woman belongs in the house, the wife is not supposed to go out. If she does it is for a special occasion. The women say, "Ay, I am afraid; what will happen? I am happy here." Therefore we are talking about a couple that still maintains the traditions proper to these communities; they live happily as they are: the husband is the messenger; the one who goes to the city and does the talking.*

For this NGO staff member, honesty, ingenuousness, innocence, and responsibility are traits that are possible only in the most remote villages. Women ought

to stay home and be happy because they have a man who will speak for them — necessary because these women can only speak Quechua, one of the native languages in Peruvian Andes. They are afraid to venture out: how can they interact with people from outside the family and the local community, or enter into transactions in Spanish in order to sell livestock, if they don't have the skills to do so? The message is, don't disturb this natural harmony; they are happy as they are.

#### *The Symbols of Power*

Based on her reading of Guaman Poma, Irene Silverblatt challenges the view that the Inca were benign rulers, concluding that the Inca conquerors used the dualism of pre-Inca social and economic organization to reinforce their power. The way they disguised their imperial domination is also relevant: the myth that the Inca, a warrior male, was the son of a god changed what Silverblatt sees as a pre-Inca power balance between men and women by emphasizing the primacy of the male gods. The empire established a tribute system based on households, which transformed complementary gender relations into gendered hierarchies in the Andean regions that came under Inca control (Silverblatt 1990, xxiii–xxiv).

Silverblatt suggests that gender equality existed in pre-Inca society because the work done by both sexes was equally valued. The contributions of both sexes were indispensable to the maintenance of rural life and to the fulfillment of labor obligations to the Empire; this rather than the customs of the Inca provided the basis for the Andean ideal of gender complementarity. When the colonial regime was established in the sixteenth century, paying tribute and labor service was no longer obligatory for the household, but only for male commoners (not the Inca nobility) from the ages of eighteen to fifty. This further devalued women's work, as women were excused from this obligation. The colonial system of taxation undermined one of the fundamental institutions on which the Inca Empire had extended its power and enriched itself. But, in Silverblatt's opinion, it made women more vulnerable, not only because their work was made invisible, but because the men tried to escape forced labor in the fields and the mines by abandoning their communities and leaving the women responsible for meeting the demands of the Crown. Guaman Poma had observed that rural men were fleeing to the cities, cutting their hair in the Spanish style and using Western clothes to appear *mestizo* in order to evade the virtual slavery they would suffer as natives. Thus, European institutions eroded Andean values and strongly exploited women's labor (101).



Although Silverblatt contests the origins of gender complementarity, she agrees that Western institutions undermine it as the basis of the family, while eroding communal solidarity and devaluing Andean women. If we accept that moral enclaves did exist where complementarity between men and women had cultural as well as instrumental value in reproducing the family economy—that gender complementarity was an integral part of the Andean worldview—why did the men abandon their wives and their kinship groups? And what advantages did men enjoy and women lack that enabled men to abandon their families and their communal responsibilities?

Today it is possible to argue that men have advantages not unlike those that allowed Andean men to leave their rural communities under severe economic and cultural pressure in the colonial era. For example, Olivia Harris shows that men have asymmetrical advantages over women in Andean communities. “The couple” is the unit of analysis that identifies the roles of husband and wife, and it is a normative and organizational element of community life. But the focus on the couple fails to look at the relations between men and women as distinct social groups. If we look at gender relations the way we look at class or race relations, the asymmetries are clear: it is the men who have the power and authority in the community. There is a structural contradiction between the representation of “the couple” as egalitarian and the hierarchical relations between men and women in other social spaces (Harris 1985; J. Anderson 1990, 86).

As noted earlier, citizenship in Peru has been constructed at the cost of loss of identity of the diverse ethnic groups that inhabit it; men and women must adopt customs and Western clothes and use Spanish to be able to exercise their basic rights. The native populations are the victims of what Taylor calls “false recognition.” The hegemonic social and political discourse gives them a degrading picture of themselves that is internalized and becomes an instrument of their oppression. Within highland Andean communities, those with more power are those who are “less Indian” because they have access to the urban codes and more physical and social mobility (Taylor 2001; de la Cadena 1992).

The power of men as a social group within rural Andean communities is a reflection of these external symbols of identity. Men practically monopolize the symbols of modernization: speaking Spanish, wearing Western clothing without being criticized for doing so, and taking on active leadership roles. Gender inequality is so evident that those who wish to preserve the “ideal Andean” social representation are forced to argue that modern civil responsibilities have intro-

duced *machismo*, disrupting the gender equilibrium that formerly existed in the Andean zones (Lapiedra 1985, 54; Andreas 1985, 58).

Despite the pressure to idealize, many ethnographic studies provide evidence of gender asymmetries in Andean communities. In community assemblies, for example, male leaders use Spanish to discuss the “important” issues and only use Quechua for “private” or domestic issues. In highland communities, female literacy is over 50 percent; in their own language women assert that they are “blind” and “mute” because they do not know how to read or speak Spanish, and therefore they cannot talk or deal with foreigners, much less aspire to community leadership. A Bolivian man, describing his wife who speaks only Aymara, says that when she leaves the village for the city, she is like “a dog,” because she doesn’t know anything. The evidence suggests that the subjection of women in Andean communities preceded the greater presence of the state, new forms of political and economic organization, and modern communication networks. Some argue that these have not produced the differences that exist between men and women but have simply exacerbated them (de la Cadena 1992, 1997a; Harvey 1989; Ruiz Bravo et al. 1998; Canessa 1997, 242–43).

In my interviews, women staff members of the NGOs based in Cuzco described the constant ridicule women suffer from men when the women want to say something in a community meeting. And even a male expert from one of the NGOs I visited practically denied them the right to speak, commenting that, in the community meetings, there is a gap in participation, bearing in mind that for hundreds of years educational levels for men and women have been so different. For various reasons there is more illiteracy among women than men, so despite the efforts of the NGOs or the gender requirements of the donors, this gap persists. Although we might think that women should play a role in community assemblies, they do not have the background or capacity to speak or debate.

Another important social marker is clothing and, in the case of indigenous women, it is directly correlated with geographical and social mobility. When women go to the cities, their traditional dress becomes an unmistakable sign that they belong to a group regarded as inferior and backward. Just as the ability to speak Spanish is a tool that can increase the power of those who have it, Western dress, like other signs of urban life, can represent a sign of upward mobility<sup>3</sup> and recognition within their communities (de la Cadena 1997a, 25).

In Peru, the *pollera* (traditional skirt) is a sign of backwardness, a sign of being “Indian” and therefore “inferior.” Corroborating what Penelope Harvey found

in the 1980s in her fieldwork in a highland community in Cuzco, the female NGO staff members I interviewed pointed out that women who abandon traditional clothing experience constant social censure. Within the community, and even in a wider scale, there is a marked differentiation between indigenous men, who may adopt *mestizo* clothing and language, and women, who are considered symbols of Indian identity. Radcliffe points out that "Under the cultural politics of the indigenous movement . . . indigenous femininity stands in for indigenous resistance to the urban, national, mestizo nation-state." From the perspective of the indigenous communities, becoming a *mestizo* is a more ambiguous and frightening process for women than for men. In Ecuador, the men of the highlands can adopt cultural markers like blue jeans or short hair without losing their indigenous identity, but women cannot move away from the well-established categories of what is considered "Indian" and "white" without being accused of inappropriate sexual conduct (Radcliffe 1998, 10). A fieldworker from an NGO in Cuzco put this graphically: *The women from the communities migrate to the cities and when they return they are rebellious, starting with wearing different clothes; they have a different approach, a different kind of development. Then men's power begins to decline.*

Social representations can incorporate various readings of the same object, depending on the views and values of the interpreter. Some researchers think Andean women are restrained by an invisible barrier of sarcasm and social sanction—barriers that indigenous men do not face. But others see women's self-restraint as voluntary and positive. Thus, for Florence Babb, wearing the *pollera* is a heroic gesture of cultural resistance. In her opinion, based on her study of the Vicos project, the close linkage between the language people use and the type of clothes they wear explains why "Quechua-speaking women of Vicos [kept] their traditional dress while the Spanish-speaking males adopt[ed] *mestizo* clothing. [As] language and clothing are key indicators of social class in Peru, the women's resistance to speaking Spanish and wearing *mestizo* clothing can be seen as a rejection of the culture of the dominant class" (Babb 1999, 112).

These examples reinforce Sinesio Lopez's understanding of how Peruvian citizenship is formed. Since the beginning of the Republic, Peru has offered its people the illusion of miscegenation and integration, neutralizing the identities of Quechua and Aymara groups inhabiting the Andes to the point that, as some recent studies conclude, today it is difficult to define what typifies indigenous people or what "Andean" actually means. But this does not seem to be the case for women, who seem to be anchored, in spite of themselves, in a rigid identity that is

not allowed to change. The situation of women in Andean communities is a further illustration of Amartya Sen's thesis that the restriction of women's entitlements limits their capabilities. In the Peruvian case, the restrictions on freedom of movement for many women in Andean areas have resulted in the limitation of their cultural portfolios, which are broadened when people move from one structural context to another and learn to act appropriately in various settings. This process is enriched by communication and interaction with others (Wolf 1996, 96). The density of an individual's daily life experiences, a product of real or symbolic migrations, creates the capacity to choose between a plurality of identities. Andean peasant women are denied this freedom and this capacity.

#### IN THE NAME OF CULTURE

The previous section reproduced a dialogue about Andean social representation that has been molded over decades. What follows is a discussion of the views of some researchers and development activists on the cultural practices that govern relations between Andean men and women and that often conflict with international human rights standards as well as national legislation with regard to women's rights. In addition to the ideal of gender complementarity, a basic reason for this conflict is the primacy of collective rights over individual rights in Andean communities, which is intended to ensure their economic and social survival.

Studies of the ideology of pre-Hispanic Andean communities, among them that of Maria Rostworowski, agree on the existence of common principles that have at their apex a concept of duality, in mythology and even in political organization. Dualism is an ordering concept of the Andean worldview: each masculine god has his double, an exact replica who, in the "mirror theory" of Andean cosmology, reproduces itself as a mirror image with characteristics that are both opposite and complementary (Rostworowski 1988).

Several analyses of Andean gender relations have taken this system of organization as their starting point, noting that complementarity in gender roles is necessary to reproduce the family. Both men and women's roles are valued equally when both cooperate in agricultural production, but the intrusion of new production techniques and cultural contact introduce the pattern of male dominance that exists between men and women in the non-Andean world. Other researchers, although they acknowledge the continuing relevance of this representation, have suggested that there is evidence that there is competition and even rivalry within the Andean pair-bond (Ortiz Rescaniere 2001, 162).



Social pressure within Andean communities helps ensure that each person is part of a stable and procreating marriage, linked to a group of productive activities and exchanges that guarantee the continuity of the family and the community. Some studies contrast "Western individualism" with "Andean solidarity and fraternity" made possible by a worldview that emphasizes the complementarity of opposites and reciprocal exchange (PRATEC 2001, 109).

These concepts were reflected in my interviews. One of the Cuzco-based NGOs presents the idea of complementary dualism as follows. In the rural communities, there is a notion of "incompleteness." *Everyone recognizes that he or she is not self-sufficient. The idea of the "individual" does not work in the community; each person is subordinated to the social collective within which the man as well as the woman plays an important role, but only as part of an established couple, which gives each person a level of maturity and completion; the couple comes together and makes a unity. The couple, not the individual, is recognized as a member of the community.* Complementarity understood in this way allows some of the NGOs working in Andean communities to rationalize the fact that men make community decisions and hold title to the land and women do not, because the couple is a unit that is represented by the man.

With the individual subordinated to the social group, collective decisions supersede individual wills, with gendered consequences. Studies on family dynamics in Andean peasant communities recognize the power of parents in choosing partners for their children. "Arranged marriages" are decided largely on economic grounds, and the parents pressure their children, especially their daughters, to accept the partner they have chosen.<sup>3</sup> Such "contracts" are made for several reasons: to broaden relations of reciprocity among families in agricultural tasks, join small parcels of land, or raise a family's social status. Although this tradition is weakening, it is still maintained in the most isolated rural communities, frustrating the aspirations of youth and, on some occasions, precipitating the flight of women from their communities (de la Cadena 1997b; Denegri 2000; Pinzás 2001; R. Valderrama and Escalante 1997).

In addition to arranged marriages, mock abduction is practiced in highland communities in the southern Andes. In this tradition, the relation between the man's initiative and the woman's acquiescence with regard to a union initiated without the parents' permission is less clear. Ethnographic studies in the highlands of Cuzco show that sometimes women are forced into being "stolen"; they are often very young and lose social support if they express their disagreement (Pinzás 2001). Others see mock abduction as part of a ceremonial "battle," which

can initiate the *rimanakey*, the process of negotiation between the families of the two who are about to marry. "In some cases, the abduction initiates the *rimanakey* . . . [In the case of] rival villages that exchange women, the suitor and his supporters "attack" the relatives of the young woman . . . The victor, after taking the woman (or having gotten one in the noise of the fight) goes with his parents to the house of the 'aggrieved' and her 'defeated' relatives to begin the visits and conversations appropriate to the *rimanakey*" (Ortiz 2001, 153).

At the end of the 1990s, one NGO in the southern Peruvian Andes, whose declared mission is to defend human rights, began a pilot project of creating alternative centers for the administration of justice based on customary law and managed by the rural communities. The NGO based its project on the assumption that the law of the state and customary law each represents "a different set of values" and that the view that the constitution should prevail had led to the "criminalization of cultural practices." One of these practices "that creates the most conflict is trial matrimony or *seruimakey*." In this tradition the age of marriage for the girl is between fourteen and eighteen years and the usual form of marriage is mock abduction with the hidden complicity of the girl's family. But these practices are illegal under the Penal Code which labels them as rape, seduction, kidnapping and violation of sexual freedom" (IPAZ 2000, 19). This "human rights" NGO was advocating the preservation of this cultural tradition despite the fact that these practices violate national and international norms that protect women's rights.

If scholars and NGO staffs assert, as many do, that the "individual" does not exist in Andean communities, the possibilities for debating these contradictions are closed off. I interviewed the director of a Cuzco-based NGO who is very respectful of local traditions. He insisted that it is impossible to apply Western norms to customary law: *When you recognize the individual as an individual under the constitution, and you respect the state's authority, you can exercise your rights. But in the Andean community, the collective has the authority, because the collective determines each moment of existence of its members.* This position illustrates a point Adam Przeworski makes in his analysis of the relationship between customary law and the new constitution of South Africa: the area of greatest friction between the two systems is related to patriarchy. Cultural practices that allow women to be coerced — abduction, arranged marriages, infant betrothals, and the like — illustrate the conflict between the individual rights consecrated in the constitution and the cultural rights which are entrenched against them (Przeworski 1998, 132).

A further example of tension between cultural practices and the universal

claims of human rights is the issue of violence against women. Violence against women occurs everywhere, but there are marked differences between the way it is analyzed and dealt with in various regions. It provides a difficult challenge for those who defend the autonomy and natural goodness of indigenous social structures. There is extensive documentation of such violence in the Andes, both historically and today. An analysis of petitions for divorce or nullification of marriage in two regions of Peru in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for example, found domestic violence the most widespread and well-documented complaint, whatever the social level or ethnic origin of the litigants. The archives of lawsuits in the rural zones of Cuzco during this period suggest that among the indigenous, personal violence was commonplace in daily life. Family abuse and disputes motivated by sex were the principle causes of homicide in three provinces located southeast of Cuzco at the end of the colonial period, even more than cases involving land, taxes, or robberies (Lavallé 1999, 87; Stavig 1996, 14).

Since the enactment of the Law against Family Violence in Peru in 1993, some of the evaluations carried out by human rights and feminist groups in the highland areas have documented that family violence is primarily violence against women. Eighty percent of the rural population believes it is one of the main problems of justice that needs to be addressed (Fernández and Trigo 2001). To this day, violence against women is allowed and legitimized by recourse to custom. In the Andes, men see women as susceptible to "bad behavior," prone to speak and laugh with men, which offends the husband's honor and justifies his maltreatment, according to a study of six rural communities in the department of Cuzco (Pinzás 2001). In various rural areas men beat their wives frequently, but the wives do not abandon their husbands because the alternatives for women outside marriage are virtually nonexistent; the only real alternative is to leave the community. When abused women seek refuge with their parents, the parents try to send them back to live with the husband because it is so expensive to support a daughter and her children: social norms say that women should resign themselves to mistreatment (Bourque and Warren 1981). Anthropologists Valderrama and Escalante report this admonition of a mother to her daughter who was having problems with her husband: "You brought him, and now don't tell me you can't live with him. No, *senora*. I cannot have a married woman living in my house. Go, *senora*. You need to be behind your husband." (R. Valderrama and Escalante 1997, 369; their translation from Quechua to Spanish).

For battered women, the Andean community provides little recourse. Social

expectations are that the wife will view her husband's wishes as her destiny, and any outside efforts to protect women are viewed as meddling in the community's affairs. Such interventions are permitted only when called for by intimates of the couple (such as brothers and sisters, godparents, or communal authorities). They also have their risks, as is shown by a study carried out by Ruiz Bravo in eight communities of Puno, in the southern Peruvian Andes. Because custom and practice accept some forms of violence against women, when a woman who is abused seeks the help of third parties, it is up to her to prove there was no "offense," that the violence was not legitimate in customary terms (Pinzás 2001; Ruiz Bravo et al. 1998).<sup>5</sup> Some argue that differentiated systems for treatment of violence against women in Peru are needed because formal laws are geared to the needs of urban women and require urban institutions to support them. By contrast, highland communities are far from the official centers where a police report can be drawn up and women can be given protection.

Article 149 of the constitution recognizes that "the authorities of peasant and native communities, with the support of peasant patrols,<sup>6</sup> can exercise judicial functions within their areas in accordance with customary law as long as they do not violate people's fundamental rights," which makes it difficult for individuals to claim the protection of the state. In practice the state does not intervene in communities when there are violations of human rights, which gives gender violence a high degree of impunity.<sup>7</sup>

Two of the four Cuzco-based NGOs whose staffs I interviewed in 2000 have institutional guidelines that include informing people about the content of the Law against Family Violence in force in Peru. In spite of this, they assert that some of their efforts at prevention and condemnation have failed because the NGOs did not understand "the perspective of Andean women." A director told me at length of a case of a woman who, tired of being badly treated, had sought refuge in the house of a friend and had filed a complaint with the police with the help of the NGO. But he was very surprised to find that when she returned to her house and found her children and her farm neglected, she decided to go back to her husband: *This has happened to us often, because a woman who is badly abused will*

*make a complaint but then the woman herself will ask that the charge be withdrawn. This shows that women value something more than their individual rights—they value their relation with the land. For some NGO staff members, these distinct cultural codes inhibit more decisive action in favor of women. As an anthropologist from Cuzco who is responsible for gender issues in her institution put it, *We say, "How**

*can it be that he has beaten you so badly?" But they say: "We have a way of dealing with things; I am with him for my children; we've been together for years." To their mothers who see them being abused, it just seems normal that the husband mistreats his wife. For them it's a way of life, and the women don't want their husbands to be punished. If we file a complaint, we make the problem worse because, as the women say, they can take care of it themselves and it's always been this way. We can't interfere with their lives.*

Twenty-five percent of the women who live in rural zones of Peru are illiterate, and this percentage is greater in the Andean countryside and in some zones of Amazonia where the maternal tongue is not Spanish. There is also a marked difference between urban and rural women in terms of their fertility rates (2.2 in the city and 4.3 in the countryside). One dramatic indicator is maternal mortality, which is one of the highest in Latin America. In 2000, the national rate was 185 maternal deaths for every 10,000 live births, but it could double in the rural areas (Fernández and Trigos 2001).

Women of the highland communities of the Andes are part of what Nancy Fraser calls "bivalent communities"; they suffer both from an economic and social injustice and also from cultural devaluation. One is not a consequence of the other, and both must be addressed by redistribution and recognition (Fraser 1998). Given the tension between the idea of universal rights and recognition of the specific rights of groups, how far do collective rights extend? Rodolfo Stavenhagen suggests that collective rights that promote the individual rights of the members of a group or community should be considered human rights if they do not violate the rights of individuals (1996, 163). Enrique Mayer responds by asking who defines which collective rights contradict individual rights? Doesn't any selection of such rights by outsiders smack of colonialism and the missionary spirit? He suggests that one way to resolve the conflict is to recognize collective rights as human rights when they can be exercised without coercion (1996, 173).

Without wanting to enter into this debate, I think that even Mayer's alternative fails to provide a clear boundary between the coercive and noncoercive exercise of collective rights, and this is particularly important in the case of Andean women, who have a very narrow margin of choice.

#### **HORIZONTALITY AND RESISTANCE: DONOR AGENCIES AND COUNTERPART NGOS**

The third tension in the effort to address gender inequalities in Andean peasant communities is one that has emerged between local NGOs and the donor agen-

cies that fund them. Although both are seeking to promote development, their communication breaks down when it comes to gender.

In 1998 there were 534 officially registered NGOs in Peru. This number may be misleading: many may be inactive, and others may have formed since then. Lima, the capital city, has the largest share of these organizations, but there are a significant number in other regions on the coast and in the Andes, such as Cuzco and Ayacucho. Their activities in rural areas are primarily directed toward improving agricultural production and the provision of basic services. Women's and feminist NGOs are not as common outside the capital as they are in Lima; in the areas in which I carried out interviews, the common pattern is "mixed" NGOs with men and women on staff. In general, they direct their efforts toward working with men; their programs for women include training to improve their skills in family health care and nutrition and small income-generating activities. These NGOs receive funds from various countries and multilateral agencies, and recently they have entered into competitive bidding to do projects in partnership with the state. Still, the majority of their funds come from private international organizations: in 1999, funds provided by such organizations to Peruvian NGOs grew to \$153 million (M. Valderrama and Negrón 2001).

The emergence of NGOs, which started in Peru at the beginning of the 1970s, had strong political ties to the popular sectors. These coincided with the agendas of the private donors—fundamentally European and especially Dutch—which were committed to overcoming poverty through support for civil society. In the 1990s, political and economic changes in Peru and in the international system caused these agendas to be modified. The European donors expanded the goals of their interventions to include issues such as the environment and gender, creating a gap between donors and recipients and increasing the likelihood of undesired pressure from Northern NGOs on their counterparts in the South. Partnership has always been a sensitive issue in the relations between donors and local NGOs. Despite the efforts of some donors to build more "horizontal" relationships, including processes of consultation to set institutional priorities, attempts of Southern NGOs to achieve greater autonomy and more balanced relationships with the North are inevitably distorted by the financial dependence of the local NGOs on Northern donors (Baumann 1999).

International cooperation agencies often raise funds from private sources within their home countries, but direct government funding of NGO donors often plays a major role and reflects the official aid policies of governments in the