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Table of Contents

THEORY CORNER

The Theories of Geertz, Harris, and Radcliffe-Brown
By: Sonja Ulrich pp. 1-5

Approaches to Social Structure in Anthropological Theory
By: Christie D'Anna pp. 6-11

STUDENT RESEARCH

Bhutan: The Impact of Television on an Unsuspecting Culture
By: Timothy Dahlum pp. 12-21

Cahuachi: Interpretations on Function in Nasca Society
By: Marybeth Gilbert pp. 22-43

Positive Change; Preserving Hmong Culture while Adapting
to American Society
By: Elsie Heredia pp. 44-55

Coltan in the Congo
By: Mallory Kerwin pp. 56-66



“The Theories of Geertz, Harris, and Radcliffe-Brown”

By: Sonja Ulrich

INTRODUCTION:

This paper compares and contrasts the theoretical positions of three influential anthropologists through the topic of cultural change. Clifford Geertz, Marvin Harris, and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown contributed to the field of Anthropology by conceptualizing and applying their theories in their ethnographic studies. Two main schools of thought about anthropology’s philosophical approaches have evolved in the last century: the idealist and materialist points of view. Idealists focus on the ideologies that shape human behavior and beliefs. Materialists, on the other hand, focus on the material conditions of a society, as they are the foundation of human existence. After discussing each anthropologist’s theories and position, I will conclude with a brief comparison and statement on which position best supports cultural change.

DISCUSSION:

Clifford Geertz was a highly influential cultural anthropologist, who contributed to the field from an idealistic point of view. He contended that culture is a system of symbols. Symbols are thoughts and actions and ideals through which people communicate their ideas about life. Geertz placed high value on “local knowledge”, which refers to native’s knowledge about symbolic acts such as words, gestures, and ceremonies. Such cultural acts enable people to make sense of their world. Geertz believed that it is the anthropologist’s task to interpret local knowledge in their

ethnographic texts, and to place cultural activities into local contexts. Interpretation of cultural events becomes a critical element when a society is undergoing rapid changes. Geertz pointed out that change in beliefs and practices become necessary when external social conditions or structures no longer coincide or support cultural symbols, values, and meanings. He exemplified this process in his interpretation of a Javanese funeral in *Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Funeral*.

Marvin Harris was a strong advocate for anthropology to be based on natural sciences. He coined the term “cultural materialism”, which is based on the work of Karl Marx. Cultural materialism refers to dimensions of culture that are shaped by material conditions. It is applied through a tripartite model of socio-cultural systems that include infrastructure, structure, and superstructure. Harris’ cultural materialism theory advocates a scientific approach in analyzing social structures that lead to laws based on generalizations that are derived from comparative studies. Harris argued that social changes begin in a society’s infrastructure, which refers to a population’s production and reproduction capabilities. Changes in this fundamental level lead to changes in all other levels, which ultimately affects the socio-cultural wellbeing of a society. Harris used this theory to explain the collapse of the Soviet Union in his article *Anthropology and the Theoretical and Pragmatic Significance of the Collapse of the Soviet and Eastern European Communities*.

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown’s theoretical position is considered to be in between the idealist and the materialist. He contended that a society has to have a physical existence which needs to be maintained, and that idealism associated with a culture holds the society’s values together. Radcliffe-Brown advocated the usage of a comparative method that compares social structures of one society to that of others in order to identify re-occurring patterns. This comparison enables the anthropologist to formulate law-like generalizations about human society. Radcliffe-Brown noted that social structures consist of regularly occurring sets of social interactions and relationships between people, which occur regardless of the individual who occupies the positions. These

structural relationships serve to maintain society by working together in various capacities as functional units. Cultural changes occur when these functional units fail to work together due to changes in material conditions or ideological values. Generalized social laws of human societies can be formed if social structures have similar functions in different societies. Radcliffe-Brown exemplified the application of the comparative method through his examination of marital practices and the concept of totemism amongst primitive societies in Australia and American Northwest Coast Indians in his article *Comparative Methodologies in Social Anthropology*.

ANALYSIS:

Geertz's idealist perspective differed greatly from Harris' materialistic point of view in regards to what constructs human culture. Harris saw culture rooted in the material condition of a society, whereas Geertz maintained that culture is shaped by the ideas and worldviews of the people. Radcliffe-Brown supported both sides. He contended that culture is indeed rooted in material conditions, but that its values are strengthened through the expression of ideas. Besides these basic differences in their theoretical approaches explaining human phenomena, the methodologies used in the process varied among these three anthropologists. Geertz focused on observing and interpreting cultural manifestations such as symbols, beliefs, and actions used by people to make sense of the world. Harris and Radcliffe-Brown both looked for law-like generalizations amongst societies. Harris focused on material infrastructures in societies with emphasis on the modes of production and reproduction. Radcliffe-Brown used his comparative method to find regularities in human societies. This focus on regularities versus irregularities caused him not to be able to explain cultural changes very well. Harris and Radcliffe-Brown appear to have removed themselves from human's search of meaning by focusing on material manifestations of human's existence. By searching for law-like generalizations they were pre-disposed to approach a society with pre-conceived ideas and areas to

focus on. Geertz's approach appears more neutral and open-minded. He seems to embody the true task of an anthropologist: collect data through observations, and interpret this data with a holistic approach. This approach tries to make sense of a cultural phenomenon in context of cultural, social, and political realms of the society.

CONCLUSION:

This paper examined the theoretical position of three noteworthy anthropologists: Clifford Geertz, Marvin Harris, and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown. Clifford Geertz represents an idealist approach to understanding human activity. This approach is based on examining ideas and beliefs that enable humans to make sense of their world. Geertz attributed the change in cultures to changes in external social structures that no longer coincide or support cultural symbols, values, and meanings. Marvin Harris constructed the term "cultural materialism", which implies that cultures are shaped by material conditions. He used a tripartite model of socio-cultural systems, and explained cultural changes to a society's changing mode of production and reproduction. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown represents a position between idealist and materialist. He viewed culture as being rooted in the material conditions of a society with social values expressed through ideology. Changes in culture are therefore a result in both areas, the material and the ideology. However, both Harris and Radcliffe-Brown focused on finding generalized law-like commonalities, whereas Geertz's focus lay in interpreting and explaining the meaning of individual cultural phenomenon.

As a conclusion on the discussion which theoretical approach best explains why cultures change, I am stating my preference for Clifford Geertz's approach. Instead of focusing on generalized comparisons that could explain a cultural change, Geertz's approach looks at external social conditions that might no longer coincide or support ideological beliefs and values of a culture

group. His holistic approach and philosophy that anthropology is the “art of interpretation”, and that it should be a quest of meaning instead of laws embodies the essence of the field for me.

“Approaches to Social Structure in Anthropological Theory”

By: Christie D’Anna

In anthropology, two distinct approaches have been developed. These are the idealist and the materialist positions of theory. The idealist believes that the most important thing about a culture are the “ideals” they hold – their values, belief systems, spiritualities, etc – and that these are the driving force behind shaping culture and approaches to life. Idealists believe that the point of anthropology is to understand the way in which people make sense of their worlds, and how this is reflected in various aspects of culture. The materialist point of view differs in that it contends that the shaping force behind society is the “material conditions of existence” – food, shelter, reproductions, technologies and ways of adapting to their environment. These are what determine the basic patterns of society according to a materialist perspective. For materialists, the point of anthropology is to derive scientific laws of culture that can be applied to all societies. To a materialist, society’s values and ideals are shaped by material adaptations. To an idealist, material adaptations are shaped by a cultures values and ideals.

In this paper I am going to assess these opposing viewpoints by explaining how an anthropologist from each extreme would describe the phenomena of social structure – the ways in which a society organizes itself. For the idealist position, I am going to describe the work of Ruth Benedict, using her article “Configurations of Culture in North America.” For the materialist approach I will use the theory of Leslie White, as described in his article “Energy and the Evolution of Culture.” In addition to this, I am going to describe the theoretical approach of Franz Boas, an anthropologist whose theoretical position lies not on either extreme of the spectrum between

idealist/materialist, but somewhere in the middle. I will use his article "The Methods of Ethnology" to illustrate this point.

In the article "Configurations of Culture in North America," Ruth Benedict spells out her theoretical approach. She was a student of Franz Boas and a strong believer in "Boasian particularism" – the idea that all cultures had inherent value that could only be discovered by looking at them individually and in terms of their specific particulars. She developed this view further, arguing that cultures are "more or less coherent" entities that should be understood in terms of their "core values and configurations." Benedict notes that scholars from other disciplines had already used this configurational approach to understanding culture, and borrows two concepts from Nietzsche to support her argument – the Dionysian worldview, which "values excess as escape," versus the Apollonian "cultural pursuit of sobriety." Core values like these, once institutionalized by society, shape and define culture. Benedict uses Pueblo cultures to exemplify the Apollonian configuration, describing them as "cultural islands" because despite their close contact with Dionysian Plains cultures, they consistently reject Dionysian elements such as excess, individualism and violence. These elements, common in Plains mourning ceremonies, are absent in Apollonian bereavement practices because they reflect core differences in these worldviews.

Benedict's discussion of cultural approaches to danger shows that cultural configurations are not mutually exclusive. Realist cultures, which regard danger and contamination realistically, may be either Apollonian or Dionysian. The opposite, Non-Realist, such as Northwest Coast and Non-Pueblo Southwest cultures, tend towards Dionysian worldviews and are much more common. Combinations of configurations like these are what hold cultures together.

In terms of social structure, Benedict critiques approaches such as that taken by theories of cultural evolution, which state that social structures and cultural institutions are created out of a response to "innate" human emotions, and that the difference between opposing cultures was not

their key values but their approaches to these innate emotions. Benedict argues that cultural institutions are created out of response not to “innate” emotions, but to these key values she described. According to Ruth Benedict, social structures are particular to individual cultures, and reflect the key values and cultural configurations that are particular to that specific culture. For example, she described the social structure of the Northwest Coast cultures in terms of their cultural configuration as a non-realist society in terms of their approach to danger, and described how this configuration is reflected in their social structures, such as the potlatch.

In “Energy and the Evolution of Culture,” Leslie White argues that culture is the way in which humans adapt to their physical environments, with the purpose of serving the needs of man. He proposes a tripartite model of culture in which cultural change proceeds from the technological realm to the sociological and ideological realms. Though changes in the sociological and ideological realms may influence the technological realm, changes in the technological realm are what generate cultural evolution. White takes this a step further by describing not only how cultures evolve, but also why they sometimes stop evolving. White depicts the means of cultural change with the formula $E \times T = P$. The amount of energy harnessed per unit of time (E) times the efficiency of tools used to harness that energy (T), equals cultural development (P). As the amount of energy available and the efficiency of technology increases, so does cultural development. If these two factors halt, culture does not develop any further. Cultural progress is not inevitable, and social systems sometimes inhibit development by taking away the incentive for technological innovation. Therefore, according to White’s interpretation of culture, social structures arise out of the same processes that produce cultural change. Changes in social structure are not brought about by changes in a cultures value system or “key cultural configurations,” as Ruth Benedict would argue, but by changes in the way cultures harness the energy that is available to them, in other words how they adapt to the material conditions of their existence.

In contrast with these two extreme points of view, in the article "The Methods of Ethnology," Franz Boas takes a position somewhere in between the two. His approach, called Boasian Particularism, states that cultures can only be truly understood when evaluated in terms of their specific contexts. Unlike his student Ruth Benedict, however, Boas did not take on a strictly idealist approach to this theory. He stated that in addition to looking at cultures in terms of their individual values and ideals, anthropologists must take into account the influence of environment and contact between cultures on cultural development and culture change. In this article, he critiques Evolutionist and Hyper-Diffusionist theories of anthropology. . Cultural Evolutionists argue that evolutionary stages, defined by "similar" traits, are applicable to all cultures. Hyper-Diffusionists argue that these "similar" traits come from a single point of origin. Boas argues that these theories are based on broad, as well as false, assumptions about the nature of cultural change, and that they do not take into account all of the factors (such as individual environmental contexts) that can account for cultural change and development. These theories claim that "similar" traits indicate either evolutionary stages or "diffusionist" patterns, but Boas states that within specific contexts of culture these "similar" traits are in fact very different and serve very different purposes, given the culture's physical and social environmental context. Boas's acknowledgement that environment can have an effect on cultural development and the development of social structures and institutions, and his insistence on taking these factors into account when researching culture change, puts him closer on the spectrum to the materialist viewpoint than his idealist compatriots because he recognizes that the environmental context, otherwise known as the material conditions of existence, have an effect on the development of social structures.

In my opinion, the most effective way for anthropological theory to explain the phenomena of social structure and cultural institutions is the "in the middle" approach of Franz Boas. While Ruth Benedict's argument that social structures are developed out of response to a cultures

particular key core values and cultural configurations makes sense for the specific cultures she was analyzing, it does not take into account the historical context of those cultures, nor does it describe how these key core values may change over time, and how that would impact social structure. I think that those are very important points, which should not be overlooked. Leslie White's approach, stating that cultural phenomena such as social structures can be explained by looking at the cultures material conditions of existence, more specifically their use of energy, does take a more historical approach. His theory that cultural change can be accounted for with the formula $E \text{ (Energy)} \times T \text{ (Technology)} = P \text{ (Cultural Development)}$, states that either of the two factors E and T may change over time or space, therefore having a differing effect on the development of social structures. What White's theory lacks, in my opinion, is a thorough recognition and understanding of the "ideological realm" of culture. This, the realm of culture that White discusses the least, is glossed over very quickly in his article and not given much importance at all. In my opinion, the factors that make up a cultures ideological realm – their religion, spiritual beliefs, values and morals, etc – are one of the clearest aspects of societies individual nature and should be considered very important by anthropologists. I believe that Franz Boas's theory, laid out in "The Methods of Ethnology," responds to both of these critiques. Unlike Benedict, Boas recognizes that cultures have particular historical and environmental contexts that change over time, therefore affecting changes in social structure. He also, unlike White, recognizes that the ideological standpoint of a culture is an important factor to consider when discussing either a cultural description in general, or the way in which social structures are developed and change throughout time in specific. Boasian particularism, because it takes into account the full spectrum of historical and cultural contexts when describing societies, is in my opinion the greatest of the three positions listed in this paper to describe social structures.

In conclusion, in this paper I analyzed three distinct theories of anthropological inquiry, specifically referring to the way in which the anthropologists listed would describe the development of social structure according to their principal theory. On one end of the spectrum is the idealist position, illustrated by the theorist Ruth Benedict. In Benedict's theory, she describes social structures as reflecting the "key core values and configurations" of a society – particular to an individual society and unchanged throughout time. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the theorist Leslie White, a materialist who describes social structure as reflecting the "material conditions of existence" for a particular society. White notes that the driving force behind changes in social structure is the way in which societies access energy sources and harness the energy for their benefit. In the middle of these two opposite ends of the spectrum is theorist Franz Boas, who states that cultures must be looked at in their entire particular context – including their ideological perspective, environmental context and socio-historical context. I believe that this is the best approach to take when looking at how social structures develop, because it touches on both the strengths and the weaknesses of the two extreme positions. It recognizes, like the idealist position, that ideologies are important factors in developing social structures, but also mentions what Ruth Benedict failed to recognize – that cultures, and their ideologies, change over time. It also recognizes, like the materialist position, that environmental context must be taken into consideration, but without ignoring the importance of the ideological realm. It is because of this that I believe that Franz Boas's "middle man" theory is superior to either the idealist or materialist positions in this case.



“Bhutan: The Impact of Television on an Unsuspecting Culture”

Timothy Dahlum

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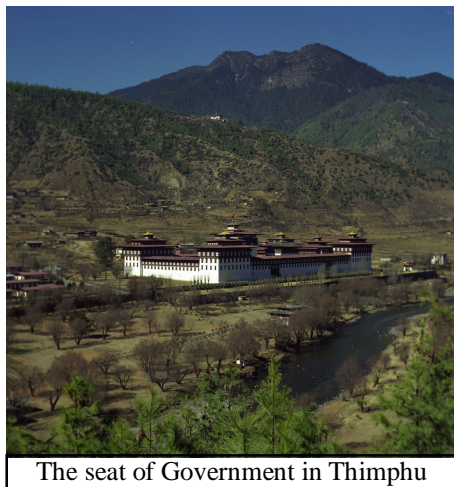
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Bhutan is in the throes of a unique dilemma, upon which rests, quite possibly, the future of its socio-cultural identity. The introduction, or more appropriately allowance, of television into



The National Flag of Bhutan



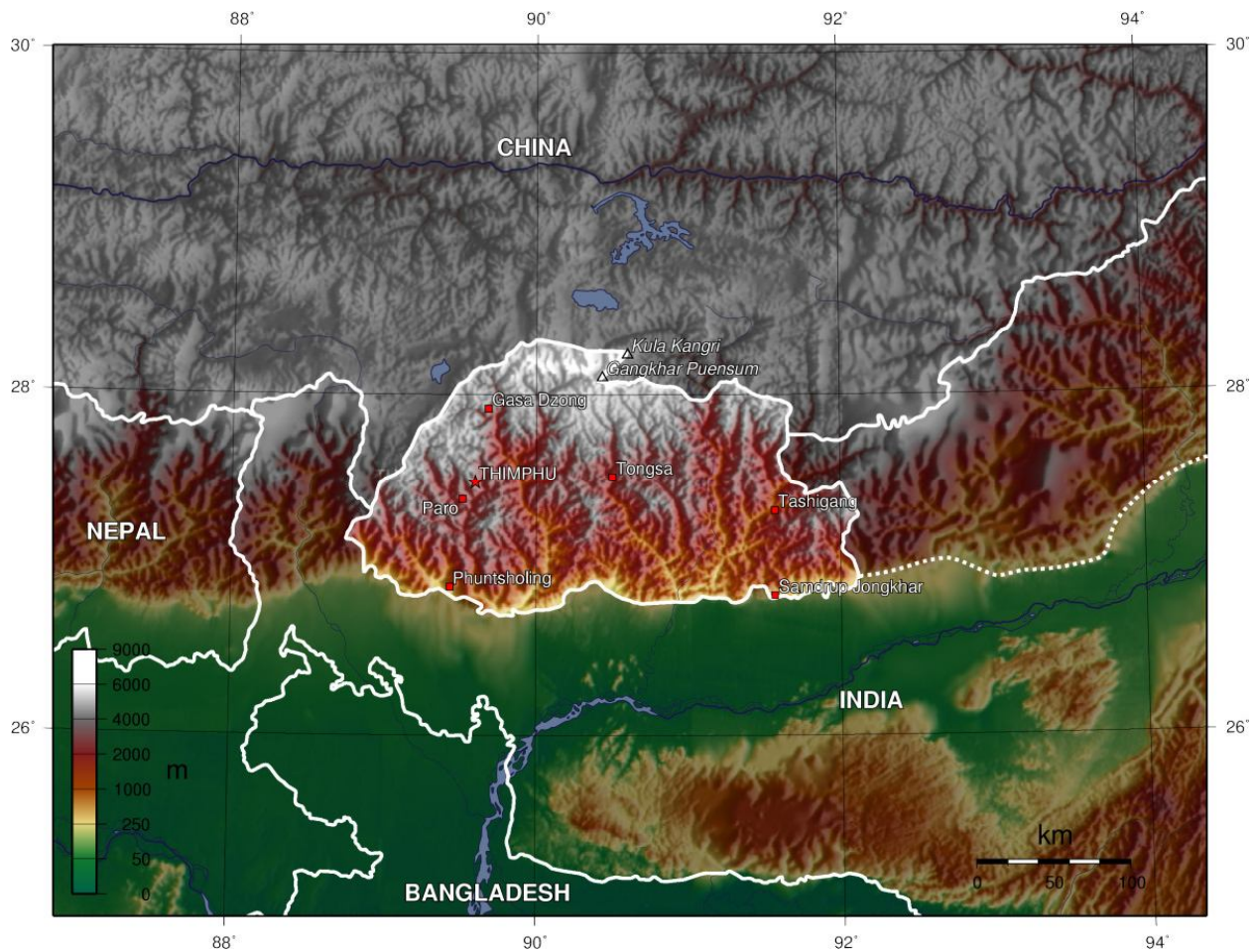
The seat of Government in Thimphu

Bhutan in 1999 has been a unique chance to directly observe the impact this medium has on the daily lives of human populations. While this was inaugurated with the start of state television broadcasts, which were at first only for one hour each day and has now grown to sixty hours per week, the allowance of television opened the flood gates of international broadcasting and a psychological tool used by transglobal marketers to push their products and services. In

less than a decade there are already distinct shifts in the sociocultural patterns between generations of Bhutanese, with the young more readily adopting the world-view promulgated by

the media unleashed upon an unwitting populace. There is a very direct dichotomization occurring not only between the youngest population and their elders, but also according to geography and whether or not television is available in their areas. These concerns coupled with the growth of the Bhutanese economy, and its emergence onto the international field of trade, are matters of concern.

Bhutan is a landlocked country primarily in the Himalayas between India and China. Since 1875, Bhutan has received subsidies from India for land it ceded to British India, and has relied upon that steady source of income as well as statecraft and negotiating power on their behalf,



Topographic relief map of Bhutan, illustrating the dramatic differences in elevation.

first from Britain, and now from India since their independence in 1947. In 1907, the present Bhutanese monarchy was formalized under British influence. The present form of government,

seated in the capital of

Thimphu, is in transition to a

constitutional monarchy

while maintaining its special

relationship with India. The

terrain of Bhutan is primarily

montane with few arable

valleys (total arable land is

2.3%), and a total area of

47,000 sq. km. The

elevations range from 97 m (318 ft) at the lowest point found in southern Bhutan, to 7,553 m

(24,780 ft) among the Himalayas.



Terraced farm field in Bhutan

Sectoral Share in the GDP in 1980 prices				
Sectors	1980	1990	2001	GDP Growth 2001
Agriculture	55.7	44.1	32.9	3.2
Mining and Quarrying	0.6	0.9	1.3	19.4
Manufacturing	3.2	7.0	7.1	7.3
Electricity	0.2	9.1	10.2	12.3
Construction	7.9	6.1	12.1	17.5
Wholesale and Retail trade, hotels and restaurants	10.9	6.0	5.8	7.2
Transport and Communications	4.3	7.6	9.6	4.0
Finance, insurance and real estate	6.3	9.4	10.5	8.8
Community and social services (govt)	10.8	9.9	10.5	6.4
Total	100	100	100	6.6

Source: Central Statistical Organization, National Accounts Statistics Report 2002, Thimphu

Bhutan's economy is among the smallest and least developed in the world and is linked to India's economy through trade and the above mentioned financial assistance from India. More than 60% of the population rely on forestry or farming for their livelihood, with farming being making up 33% of the GDP comprising the source of livelihood for about

four-fifths of the population on the small percentage of arable land available. With the current trend towards migrating to urban centers, farming is already seeing a decline, and will continue to shrink in the future due to cheaper food imports. The natural resources that are currently

Country/city	Price per kw hour
BHUTAN	1.7
INDIA	
Delhi	7.7
West Bengal	7.2
Assam	7.6
Bihar	5.6
PAKISTAN	6.2
BANGLADESH	6.1
NEPAL	8.2
SRI LANKA	6.1

Comparative Electricity Prices in South Asia for Industrial Usage
(Prices in US Cents per kw hour)

Source: World Bank, BHUTAN Private Sector Survey 2002

being commodified are: timber, hydropower, gypsum, ferro silicon, and calcium carbonate.

The hydropower industry is expanding at the highest rate, 12.3% in 2001. “There are few large-scale energy intensive industries that process cement, calcium carbide and ferro silicon. As electricity comprises almost 60% of the cost of production in the case of ferro silicon, cement and calcium carbide, these industries derive comparative advantage from

the availability of cheap and reliable hydroelectric power.” (Wangyal 2004). The majority of these electricity-intensive partially-processed products are marketed to India. Yet, 90% of the electricity presently produced is exported to India, indicating a low level of domestic use for industry.

The religious landscape, which must be taken into account, is between 75-98% Buddhist, depending on the source of information, with the remainder being Hindu. The form of Buddhism practiced is closely related to Tibetan Buddhism in its syncretic bond of Mahayana Buddhist traditions and animistic Bon traditions. Both the Buddhist and Hindu traditions are patronized by the royal family in Bhutan, and the two religions coexist harmoniously. This religious context will come in to play when discussing the impacts of television on Gross National Happiness (GNH).



Masked dancer at a religious festival

Television was introduced in Bhutan in June 1999 along with internet access. Prior to this date, all news and information was conveyed via radio for a limited number of hours per week, and a weekly newspaper. To illustrate the penetration of media in Bhutan a survey was taken in 1998 of households in five regions and it found, “of all the households . . . on average, 63.1% own at least one radio receiver, 22.6% own a tape recorder, 6.9% own a TV screen, 8.4% own a video player or recorder, and 6.5% own a telephone” (Raption 2001). The introduction of these new media onto a traditional society has profound consequences, especially on the youngest of the population. Where traditionally most of the population of Bhutan was engaged solely in face-to-face communication, the quite sudden revelation of the world around them has created a form of culture-shock for many in Bhutan. Those in who Bhutan that have access to these new media forms are being influenced, and in turn are changing in ways that are starkly contrasted to the other 80% of the populace. Increasing viewer numbers as well as the length of viewing per day is directly correlated to the increase of conspicuous consumption, which is very much out of sync with Bhutanese culture and exactly what the advertisers and media companies want there viewers to do. About one-third of Bhutanese television viewers admit that advertisements have influenced their purchases. This has been reflected outwardly in their choice of clothes, but also in their food purchases, concept of beauty, and worldview of love, where each is contrasted against the traditional and still majority practiced Bhutanese culture.

Since the June 2nd launch of BBS’s television service, the daily routines of many people in Thimphu-if not their lives-have changed. It has undoubtedly changed their sitting arrangements, meal timings, pattern of communication and transformed many other similar social activities. Before the arrival of television, household members often sat together after meals to tell stories and share their experiences. Now the television has become their focal point of attention. Some parents have developed a tendency to spend less time with their children and to delay their household chores and ignore some family matters in order to see their favourite programmes on television. Since the introduction of television, meal are being served at different hours and sometimes in different locations. It has also changed their sleeping habits. 50% of the respondents agreed that it has greatly shifted their sleeping hours

to late night (11 to 12 am). Face-to-face interaction with neighbors and family members is also declining although a few of them argued that family interaction has increased. However, at least 35% of them certainly felt that it has decreased their interaction with their neighbors because they spend their free time watching television (Rapten, 2001).

The move towards television, and especially the import of television from sources outside of Bhutan, mainly India, has transplanted another culture that has already adopted and evolved along a conspicuous consumption course, onto a people that had relatively little outside knowledge prior to this incursion. Even though the direct impact has been on only 20% of the people, it has spread to the rest of the largely rural population. The ties between the urban and rural populations are very real, and whether or not with intent, the urban consumers of this new media are bringing their new culture home to their villages. This has created situations of misunderstanding outside of the urban environment where the new culture is being fostered. Conspicuous consumption is not a realistic option in most of the rural communities in Bhutan and so creates situations of animosity towards the urban dwellers, especially when they return to their villages. The difference in the impact between urban and rural settings is based on the differentiation, and geographic difficulties, in bringing television to the rural communities.



Trongsa Dzong, seat of the King

While the idea of television was mostly welcomed in Bhutan at its inception there was not a clear understanding of the ramifications of the medium and its largely unregulated use as a harbinger of capitalist indoctrination. Television on a global scale is intrinsically connected with the advancement of inculcating the global populations into the capitalist globalization dogma through a reshaping of cultural norms in the societies it is inflicted upon.

The reason for the current format and psychological impact on populations by television is a dissemination of dissatisfaction and a disconnect from reality, that on the whole is unhealthy. It seeks to anesthetize people into a false sense of dissatisfaction with not only their personal selves but their society as a whole, and expects the viewer to buy into a reality that is entirely disconnects and in no way related to the world around them. It replaces traditional cultures and life-ways with an artificially constructed one that cannot function outside of the fantasy universe behind the screen. In any of the developing world that television has penetrated into, it has become the leading pastime instead of verbal communication, civic participation, and traditional happenings, and the amount of time spent watching television is increasing every year. “. . . dependence on television for entertainment is not only a significant predictor of civic disengagement, it is the single most consistent predictor I have discovered, . . . Other things being equal, each hour of television viewing per day means roughly a 10 percent reduction in most forms of civic activism” (McDonald, 2004). Television watching forces social withdrawal, and the entire purpose of commercial television is to capture attention more and more. Part of the draw for television is its simplistic nature, setting up the situation where viewers would rather spend more time with the television than attend slow celebrations or learn and participate in many of the subtle and many times complex rituals and traditions of their own culture, in essence choosing the easier route even if there is not a real world connection for them.

Disconnecting with the surrounding culture and replacing it with the fast, slick, limited attention span of commercial television is a factor in the dependency of viewers of global media. With this slick packaging comes a reluctance to engage in civic life in any active sense and the overall failure of community structured culture. In Bhutan this has been a phenomenon that is easily observable due to the unique nature of the introduction of television. There has been a

distinct shift in the people who have direct contact with global media in their adoption of the ideals being thrust at them regarding capitalist globalization, even if the audience does not recognize it as such, and an upswing in the conspicuous consumption of marketed goods of obsolescence in the disposable culture. They have absorbed the notion that happiness and success are all related to high levels of conspicuous consumption, with the goal of ever higher levels of consumption to bring ever higher levels of happiness.



Taktshang, "Tigers Nest" Monastery

Existing scientific research on the value of materialism yields clear and consistent findings. People who are highly focused on materialistic values have lower personal well-being and psychological health than those who believe that materialistic pursuits are relatively unimportant. These relationships have been documented in samples of people ranging from the wealthy to the poor, from teenagers to the elderly, and from Australians to South Koreans . . . The Studies document that strong materialistic values are associated with a pervasive undermining of people's well-being, from low life-satisfaction and happiness to depression and anxiety, to physical problems such as headaches, and to personality disorders, narcissism and anti-social behavior (Kasser 2002).

In response to this trend the King of Bhutan has declared his intent to not focus on GNP (Gross National Product) only, but to focus on GNH (Gross National Happiness) first and GNP second. GNH is rooted in the Mahayana and Bon traditions of Bhutan and most notably their northern neighbors in Tibet. At its root is the idea that all suffering comes from desire, and that we should practice material moderation and focus on spiritual accomplishment instead. This means that economic growth is not a balanced goal unless it takes into account the individual and collective interest, including sustainable growth and an emphasis on reciprocity. The goal is to allow Bhutan to economically flower while keeping in check greed and harm to Bhutan' culture and national heritage. This movement is seen as a means to reduce the excesses of capitalist

globalism to levels that are in sync with the traditions of Bhutan and the doctrines of their belief system. This is not to say that GNH is an attempt to stymie Bhutan's emergence into the international arena, but merely to provide a form of regulation and temperance during their growth. The key to the program is the way the policy of GNH has been set up, is that to challenge GNH is to challenge the legitimacy of Buddhism. We can only wait and see how well this system of temperance will work, and hope for the best.

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"Cahuachi: Interpretations on Function in Nasca Society"

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Introduction

Situated prominently along the southern drainage of the Nasca River on the south coast of Peru is a massive complex of terraced hillsides and expansive open plazas extending along the riverbank for almost a mile, nearly as far as the eye can see. Cahuachi is a site so large, so unique, and so mysterious that it continues to impress and captivate people today just as it has since its heyday in the Early Intermediate Period, from about 1,500-1,800 BC. The site is most often referred to as the center of Nasca society much in the same way as Los Angeles or New York are centers of American society; but Cahuachi's actual role in the culture is a matter of debate among archaeologists, spearheaded by the excavations and research of Helaine Silverman and others. This paper will seek to extract a comprehensive hypothesis on the nature of Cahuachi's function by focusing on the two main arguments for the site as either a non-urban ceremonial pilgrimage center, or a capital administrative center with a high urban population, based on the artifactual and architectural evidence discovered thus far.

Building an Historical Context

As the founding father of American anthropology, Franz Boas would say, in order to consider interpretations on the function of Cahuachi, we must first consider “the historical causes that led to the formation of the customs in question” by taking into account the historical context of Nasca culture leading up to and during the Early Intermediate Period (Bohannon and Glazer 1988:90). Nasca sites have been found all along the Peruvian southern coast from the Chincha to the Acari valleys, the core area of habitation with which the ceramic style is associated centers on the Ica and Nasca valleys. Polychrome pottery characterized by slip painting is a mainstay of Nasca culture, and the relative chronology of the culture is based on the at least eight identifiable ceramic traditions, organized into Nasca Phases 1-8. Highly technologically advanced textiles, handed down from the Paracas tradition of the Early Horizon, also demonstrated the culture’s sophistication and breadth of interaction in the region with the extensive use of wool from the southern highlands; the north coast would not see comparable use of wool until almost a thousand years later. Zoomorphic and geometric motifs are prominent in both the ceramic and textile traditions, and both also have depictions of trophy head taking which held an ideographic meaning unintelligible in the present-day.

The characteristic most Americans will associate with the culture is the Nasca Lines, large-scale geoglyphs scraped out of the desert sand, some of which can only be seen in their entirety from the air. Zoomorphic and geometric motifs dominate these landscape artifacts as they do the pottery and textiles. Theories abound on the purpose of these lines, from sacred pathways, to water routes, to alien landing strips; to properly serve such a discussion would require more attention on the issue than the purpose of this paper allows. However, geoglyphs will play a part in Silverman and Giuseppe Orefici’s hypotheses on the role of Cahuachi, as will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Terraced hillside architecture along the surface water sections of the Ica and Nasca River valleys are also a primary feature of the Nasca culture. Structures sat above and adjacent to irrigated floodplains that served as individual oases of agriculture sprinkled along the river drainages; the overall settlement layout suggests a confederate system of separate, but related habitational zones, rather than an interconnected, continuous settlement. As the site of Cahuachi is composed of 40 or so natural hills, or mounds, made unnaturally large and terraced by man, this evidence of terraced hillside architecture combined with the characteristic motifs on ceramic and textiles found there further linked Cahuachi to the Nasca cultures.

Background to the Problem

Having situated our perspective to the historical context of Nasca culture in the Early Intermediate Period, a review of issues of consensus on Cahuachi is necessary before further interpretation can be made. The site of Cahuachi is the second largest known Nasca site at 150ha, the sprawling 200ha site of Ventilla just to the northeast being the largest. As seen in Figure 1, the apogee of Cahuachi occurred during Nasca Phase 3, during which time the majority of the mounds were constructed and used. In between the 40 mounds are open spaces called *kanchas*, which serve as the focus for Orefici's ongoing excavations, as will be subsequently discussed. The largest mound is 20m tall, at the top of which sits a massive plaza measuring 45m by 75m. Although such scale may be interpreted as reflecting an overall architectural authority, excavations into the construction of the mounds themselves reveal a low level of standardization not consistent with "one mind at one time" theory. Similarly, not only do the construction materials within the mounds point to limited standardization, as Silverman will point out (seen in

Figure 2), but the relatively small amount of labor estimated in mound construction also suggest a confederate, rather than unified standard; there may have been general agreement on using terraced hillside architecture with plazas to complement the existing topography, but any other dominant overarching paradigm there is not, at least as interpreted from the data available. One of the major difficulties in making any definitive conclusions about Cahuachi is the massive looting over the last thousand years that have destroyed large portions of the site, creating gaping holes in the data that echo those in the sand.

The other major problem at the bottom of the interpretational debate on Cahuachi is the vague and various terms different researchers use to describe the site and its function; there is no one officially-recognized definition in the discipline for either “urban” or “vacant ceremonial” centers. To unambiguously address this issue will inevitably leave out alternative definitions, but for the purpose of this paper we can define urbanism using Silverman’s 1988 publication on Cahuachi and non-urban cultural complexities on Peru’s southern coast:

I take as my starting point for the definition of urbanism the existence of a population that is 1) large, dense, permanent, and residential; 2) economically varied; and 3) socially heterogeneous. It must be 4) concentrated in a continuous, compact area that exhibits 5) intrasite stratification of architecture, 6) planned physical layout with streets and districts, 7) extensive food and goods storage facilities, and 8) intense economic specialization and craft production. [Silverman 1988:404]

Obviously, such a list could be exhaustive and relative to the cultural and historical context. Neither should it be inferred that urbanism must include all eight criteria listed here to be defined as such. We can also use Silverman’s definition on the opposite end of the spectrum by saying vacant ceremonial centers lack the population size and density of urban centers,

although they may perform many urban functions and/or exist within urban centers.

Correspondingly, they lack a substantial permanent population other than perhaps a residential priesthood. According to Paul Wheatley, vacant ceremonial centers are “starkly empty during most of the year. Only during seasonal festivals, when cultivators were presumably drawn in from the surrounding countryside, would it have sheltered a more numerous and less specialized population” (Wheatley 1971:257).

Excavations—Building an Archaeological Context

The first major excavation at Cahuachi was undertaken by Alfred Kroeber in 1926, with the purpose of examining grave goods there and in the surrounding area for their interrelations as “intact units” in order to substantiate or modify the Gayton-Kroeber sequence. Along with Anna Gayton, Kroeber been developing a ceramic sequence hitherto based on pottery “without grave and other local provenience” (Silverman 1993:16). The focus of Kroeber’s method was on his Unit A (Silverman’s Unit 19), a heavily looted area located in the northwest corner of the site, in which he discovered and meticulously cataloged two burials intact with grave goods. In also making a survey of the site, Kroeber concluded that Cahuachi was composed of systematic constructions that all took advantage of the existing topography, during which the largest amount of labor went into leveling terraces and building adobe walls, rather than mound construction itself.

The next major excavation to take place was not until the 1952-1953 season, conducted by William Duncan Strong, whose focus was to determine the temporal relationship between the Nasca and the Paracas culture that had preceded it. To execute this purpose at Cahuachi, Strong

chose to use a series of arbitrary level excavations to be analyzed through type-frequency seriation. This method was later criticized by Silverman because it “led to the persistent mixing of the ceramic collections that were supposed to provide an empirical chronological sequence” (Silverman 1993:26). Strong selected Cahuachi as a likely place to provide highly stratified sequencing even before excavation began. This means his characterization of “house mounds” in conjunction with temples and cemeteries was interpretively biased from the start because it implied that the mounds were the result of kitchen and domestic refuse sequentially built up over time as structures came to be inhabited and then abandoned. Strong’s conclusion of the site held that “Cahuachi was the greatest, and probably the main capital site of the Nazca civilization in the time of its own peculiar highest florescence” (Strong 1957:32). Figure 3 shows Strong’s map of the site, the northwest and southeast sections notably excluded, while Figure 4 presents Strong’s map overlaid on an aerial photograph taken at the same time as the excavation to more clearly illustrate how the architecture took advantage of the surrounding hillside. The aerial photograph in Figure 5 is a close-up of Strong’s Great Temple, and graphically portrays the extensive looting that plagues the site.

Silverman’s own excavations took place in 1983, with the general purpose of deducing “a model of how early Nasca society was organized” (Silverman 1993:110). As a means to this end, she focused her efforts initially in systematic sampling of the unlooted areas around Unit 16 (see Figure 6), which included the northwestern-most portion of the site. Interestingly, Silverman originally had accepted and agreed with Strong’s interpretation of the site as a capital city, and this systematic sampling was concentrated on finding evidence for permanent residential habitation, believing that like at the large open kanchas between Huacas de la Luna and del Sol, residential dwellings and craft production would be located in the sand of the kanchas at

Cahuachi. However, when these samplings turned up no evidence for urbanism, “fieldwork strategy was modified to test the new hypothesis...that open unconstructed areas had a lack of habitation rather than a buried domestic occupation” (Silverman 1993:111).

From this turning point Silverman first ran a set of 23 test pits that covered the entire expanse of the unlooted areas of the site complex in order to either promote or disprove this new hypothesis. From accounts by local farmers who plowed the nearby land, to a consideration that people either did not permanently or in large numbers reside in the floodplains of the valley bottom (or if they did such evidence would be too far buried in sediment to be accessible), the conclusion was made that Cahuachi’s location on a narrow portion of the Nasca valley would lend itself more useful to agriculture and foraging than human settlement. Silverman combined this information with the geographical limits of the site itself, and took a stance of complete avoidance of looted areas as well as mounds when deciding on test pit placement. As Silverman recalls in her 1993 comprehensive publication on the site, “when none of these excavations turned up evidence indicative of a large, dense, residential population, it became necessary to totally rethink the site” (Silverman 1993:112). Subsequent artifactual and other discoveries made after this point, which will be discussed in detail in the following section, especially from the Room of the Posts in Unit 19 (see Figure 7), allowed Silverman to further develop her alternative hypothesis and conclude “Cahuachi was a great ceremonial center whose population size, density, and composition changed in accordance with a cyclical ritual and political calendar” (Silverman 1993:319).

The last and still ongoing excavations of the site have been implemented beginning in 1983 by Giuseppe Orefici, whose goal was to reveal Cahuachi’s architecture specifically, and its architectural growth generally. Such a research purpose implicitly bypasses the issue of the site’s

function as not one of primary concern not only in its rhetoric but its method. Over consecutive yearly field seasons, Orefici has exclusively focused on the mounds themselves rather than the kanchas, with special attention around Unit 10, about 500m almost directly east of Unit 16 in the central zone of the site complex. While a comprehensive publication from Orefici is still pending, what he has informally concluded so far, taken from the January 2000 BBC Horizon series broadcast of “The Lost City of Nasca,” is that Cahuachi was a ceremonial center used for ritual by inhabitants in the nearby confirmed urban center to the northeast called Ventilla, connected through the pampa by geoglyphs.

Analysis/Discussion

Silverman concluded that evidence of “spatial concentration of ritual paraphernalia...special storage facilities, sacred burial grounds, temples, and dedicatory offerings” all point to Cahuachi’s role as a non-urban ceremonial pilgrimage center (Silverman 1988:422). Her excavations at Unit 19 especially helped her arrive at this conclusion through the discovery of the Room of the Posts and the implications of its unique existence at the site. Evidence that its walls were continuously replastered and painted over time, its concentration of dedicatory offerings—even during later Nasca Phases—combined with the post holes and flat-planed huarango posts possibly indicative of ancestor worship, and the careful entombment of the room in later Phases, caused Silverman to conclude “the Room of the Posts must be interpreted as a sacred precinct” (Silverman 1993:190). In addition to the strong ceremonial function implied by Unit 19, Silverman also focused her conclusions on the 70:30 ratio of fineware to plainware as seen in Figure 8, which one would expect to be opposite at an urban

site. Other factors in Silverman's conclusion examine the lack of large long-term storage facilities, as only so far small storage facilities have been found, containing panpipes and other ritual objects, as well as vegetal and beverage remains possibly pointing to ritual feasting. A lack of evidence that Cahuachi supported specialized craft production, evidence that ritual consumption of pottery took place at the site, existence of possible ushnus discovered by Orefici atop Units 10 and 12B, and the sacredness of the location in association with the River Nasca and geoglyphs in the pampa were all considerations in redefining the "Nasca capital city" as a ceremonial center.

On a more in-depth level, Silverman argues that Cahuachi as a pilgrimage center for civic-ceremonial activities is not only supported by the artifactual evidence, but by the architecture and construction of the complex, and by considering Nasca societal organization as a heterarchy, or order without hierarchy. As Moore and others have pointed out, as archaeologists we focus on the built environment, but the natural environment should nevertheless hold our attention in that sacred places and places of pilgrimage are often purely natural landscape, modified only to accentuate the natural features. Taking the position it was during periodic pilgrimages that the refuse found in mound construction fills was deposited, Silverman elaborates by saying individual *allyus* were responsible for the individual mound constructions during pilgrim habitation. Each *allyu* probably supported and modified their mound over time as an axis mundi of their sociopolitical and ideological world. The orientation with nearby geoglyphs, as seen in Figure 9, show that one possibly connects Cahuachi with the known urban center of Ventilla directly opposite on the Ingenio River, and may have served part of the pilgrimage experience as ritual pathways.

Other interpretations of Cahuachi include Rowe's proposition that, based on Strong's evidence of a Nasca I habitation at the site and with his identification of "house mounds," as well as the unprecedented size of the site, Cahuachi was not only the Nasca capital, but probably served as the keystone in formulating an urban tradition on the south coast of Peru. Rowe is in the minority of archaeologists who uphold Strong's interpretation; however, his original text on the subject not being accessible, I cannot fully examine the specific archaeological evidence Rowe uses to support this claim.

Carmichael in 1988 studied grave goods at Cahuachi and discovered an interesting pattern of unrestricted circulation of goods in Nasca society, as seen in the distribution of different ceramic motifs in Figure 10. This does not mean social status distinctions did not exist, just that it is not explicit in the apparent unrestricted nature of goods circulation. Furthermore, he concludes the iconography on the ceramics points to ceremonial and feasting contexts. In this same vein, Valdez's discovery in 2000 of Feature 8 and associated artifacts (a large vessel situated next to a circular oven unique at the site) supports Silverman's hypothesis by providing new data for ceremonial feasting. Figure 11 depicts Valdez's sketch of Feature 8. Vaughn also supports Silverman's conclusion by pointing out iconographic evidence shows "large, group-oriented ceremonies involving feasting were integral to Nasca life...[and] the very act of consumption must have been a ritually charged event, whether it took place in a house at Marcaya or in a plaza at Cahuachi" (Vaughn 2004:81). In addition, he points out that the numerous panpipes and polychrome pottery may have been ritually-charged objects that provided linkages between major ritual activities taking place at Cahuachi and those of the everyday commoner households.

The most relevant criticism I found on Silverman's conclusion came from a review of her 1993 publication by Alan Kolata, who makes the following counterclaim:

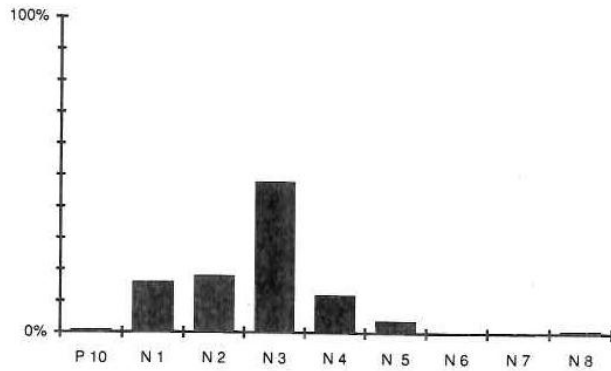
Apart from the commoners who were incorporated into the cities in a retainer capacity, the mass of native Andean populations rarely participated in urban culture at all except on the occasion of public rituals. Not surprisingly, like Cahuachi, several and perhaps most of the Andean capitals were simultaneously regional focal points of pilgrimage. [Kolata 1995:361] Kolata bases his argument on the idea that Andean cities existed more for political and ideological, rather than economic reasons. He claims that Cahuachi was not so dissimilar to "true" cities like Cuzco, Chan Chan, and Wari, because they were all essentially religious in nature, held seats of power and restricted areas for elites, with large resident populations of commoners set apart (physically in this case) from the urban culture.

Further Questions, Conclusions, and Final Thoughts

If I were to more extensively investigate the function of Cahuachi and Silverman's conclusion, questions for further inquiry on Cahuachi, and unsettled points include the following: How strong is the evidence that geoglyphs actually connect Cahuachi and Ventilla? Is there any evidence of hearths at the site other than the one discovered by Valdez? Is it possible that part of the complex could have been residentially occupied while other areas were used for ceremonial purposes? How long and how often were the pilgrimages to the site? Is there any correlation in the artifactual evidence from Ventilla and Cahuachi that supports the pilgrimage hypothesis? Are there any iconographic depictions of pilgrimage dating from the Nasca 3 Phase and/or depict Cahuachi or references to Cahuachi?

Based on the available evidence, it is clear Cahuachi served as a ceremonial, and most likely a pilgrimage, center. What is unknown is the extent of Cahuachi's influence in the region. It is although conjectured that the entirety of Nasca society used the site as its primary civic-ceremonial center, at least during its Nasca 3 apogee, then sporadically as a sacred burial location during subsequent Phases. Taking into account Silverman's Nasca 3 settlement pattern in Figure 15, along with a comparative consideration of Nasca as a State and as chiefdom, any conclusions on Cahuachi will ultimately depend on the larger context of defining Nasca societal structure.

Although I agree with Silverman's conclusion that Cahuachi was not an urban but a ceremonial center, I temper that with a consideration of Kolata's counterargument that Silverman's implicit dichotomy between ceremonial and urban centers was nonexistent in ancient Nasca, and that Cahuachi was probably more similar to decidedly urban centers than Silverman allows. Of course, as Silverman suggests, I also agree a standard definition or criteria of urbanism/urban centers and ceremonial centers needs to be formulated and employed in Andean archaeology to avoid such ambiguity in future discussions of interpretations on site function. But as with most things in this discipline, it will be more easily said than done, and will be up to a new generation of archaeologists to discover.



16.50. Histogram showing percentages of phaseable Nasca pottery from excavations at Cahuachi. Nasca 3 is clearly the apogee of the site.

Figure 1. Depicts Nasca 3 as the apogee of the site.

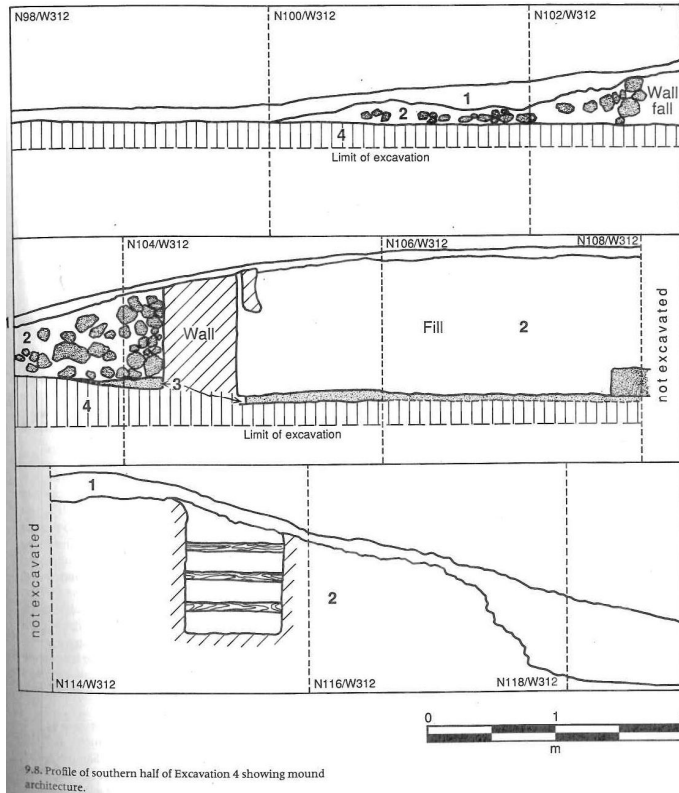
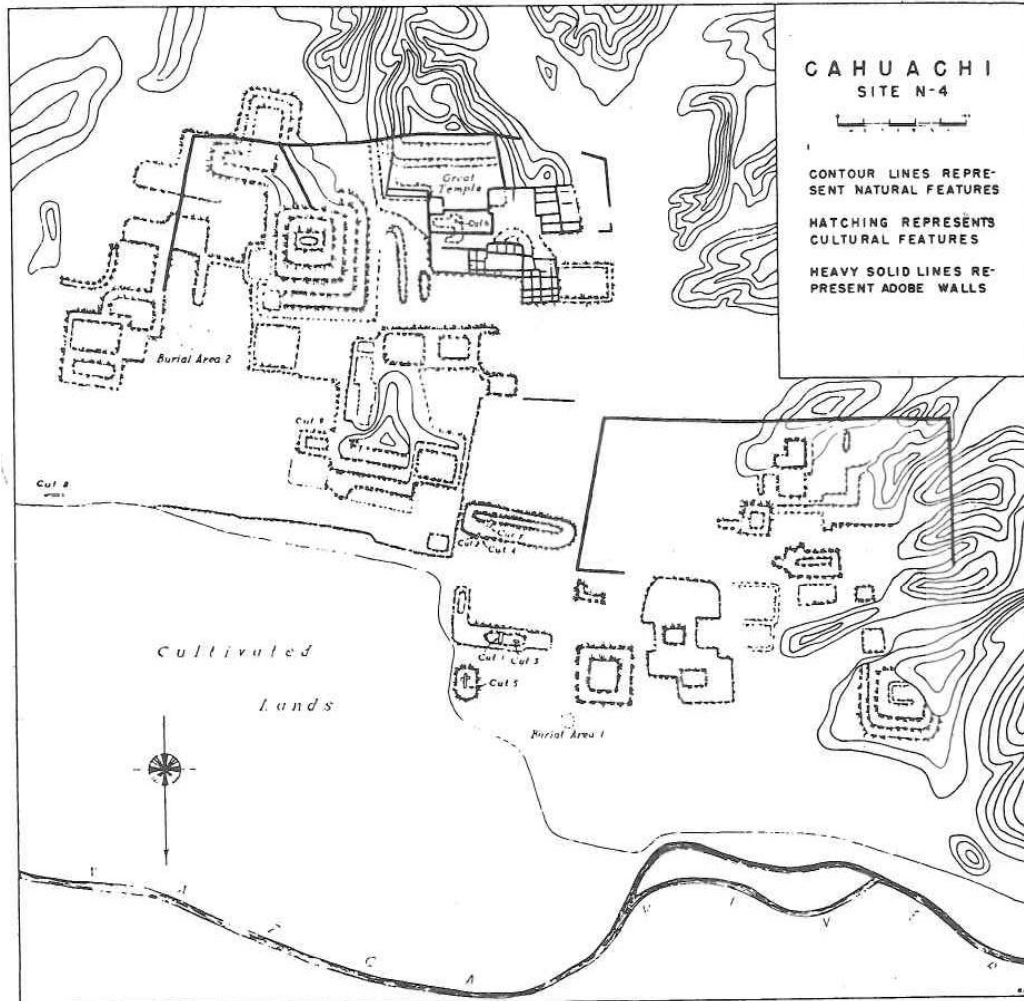


Figure 2. Depicts the mound construction that relied mostly on building up the existing topography with fill construction.



2.2. Strong's (1957: fig. 4) plan of Cahuachi. Note that Strong orients the site with the north arrow pointing to the bottom of the page whereas Kroeber oriented the site with north to the top. The area encompassed by Strong's map is smaller

than that portrayed on Kroeber's sketch map. When compared with figure 2.4, it can be seen that Strong portrays several artificially modified features as natural.

Figure 3. Strong's map of the site.



5.1. Strong's aerial photograph of the core of Cahuachi. On the photograph Strong inked the artificial and architectural features he observed. This photograph became the basis of his

map of the site. The photograph is oriented to the south as in Strong's (1957: fig. 4; see fig. 2.2) original map of the site.

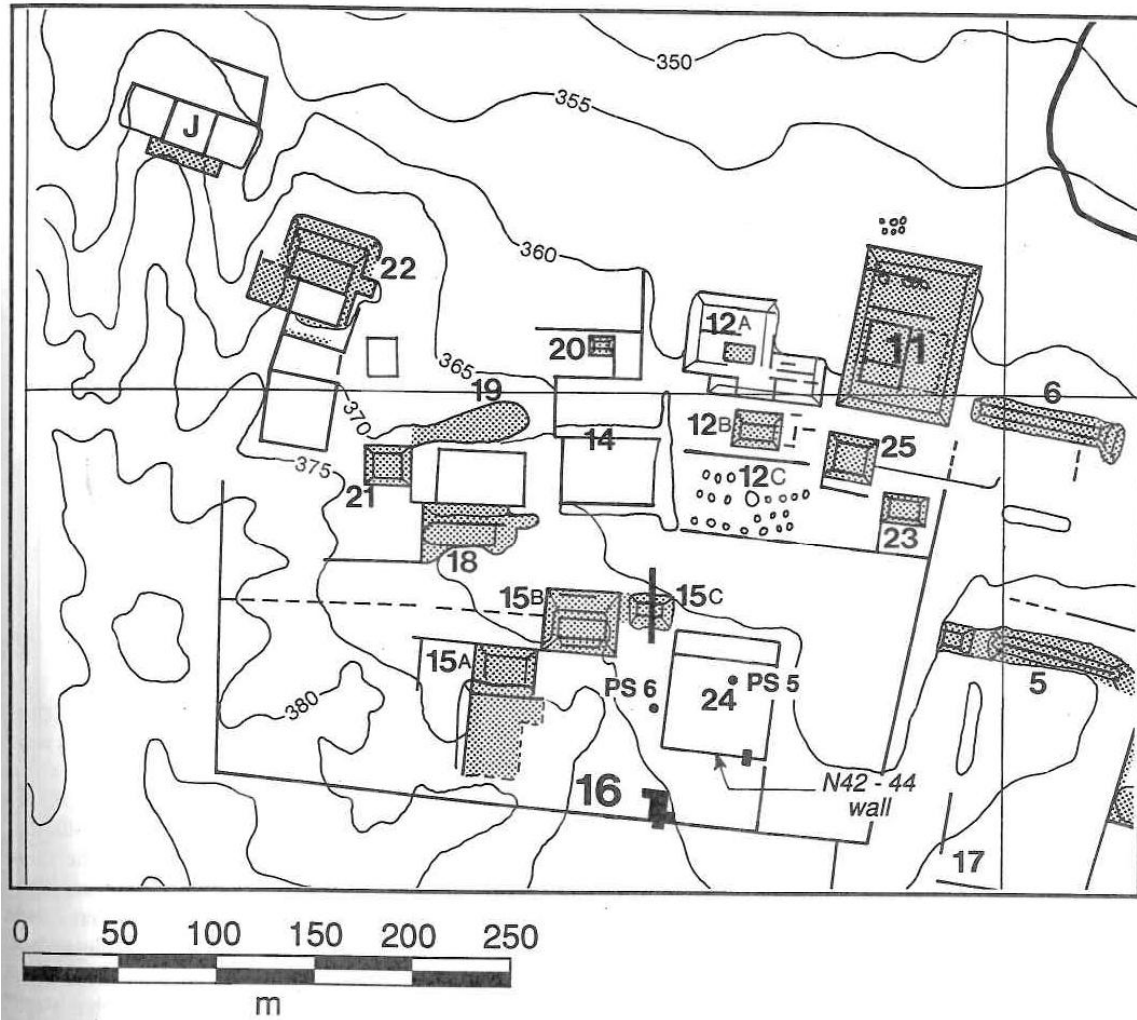
Figure 4. Depicts an aerial photograph of the site with Strong's map overlaid on top.



5.6. Aerial photograph of Unit 2 looking to the north. The natural hill was artificially leveled and terraced. The lighter

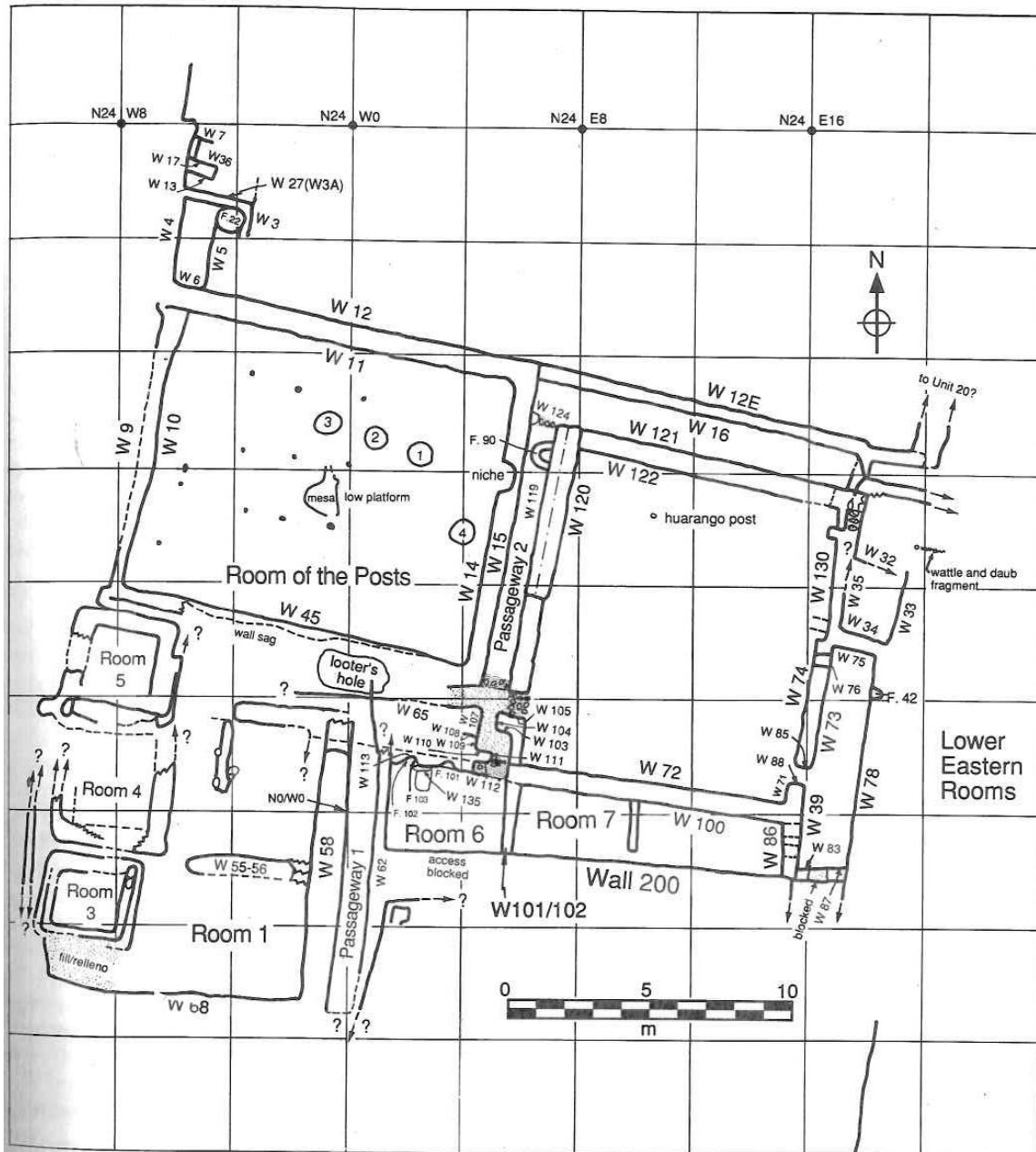
colored adobe walls stand out in strong contrast to the darker color of the hill. Unit 1 is seen at the upper right.

Figure 5. Depicts Strong's Great Temple (Silverman's Unit 2) that illustrates the expansive looting which characterizes the site.



9.1. Plan of the Unit 16 area (derived from fig. 2.4) showing location of excavation units and point samples.

Figure 6. Depicts the northwest corner of the site that is mostly encompassed by Unit 16.



12.7. Enlarged detailed plan of Unit 19's architecture (derived from fig. 12.3).

Figure 7. Depicts the architectural layout of Unit 19. Note the Room of the Posts.

Table 16.1. Comparison of Plainware to Fineware Based on Surface Level of Each Excavation Exhibiting Nasca Pottery

Plainware Sherds	Fineware Sherds	Total Sherds
1970	591	2,561
77%	23%	100%

Table 16.3. Subsurface Sherd Count Comparing Plainware to Fineware

Plainware Sherds	Fineware Sherds	Total Sherds
3,532	999	4,531
78%	22%	100%

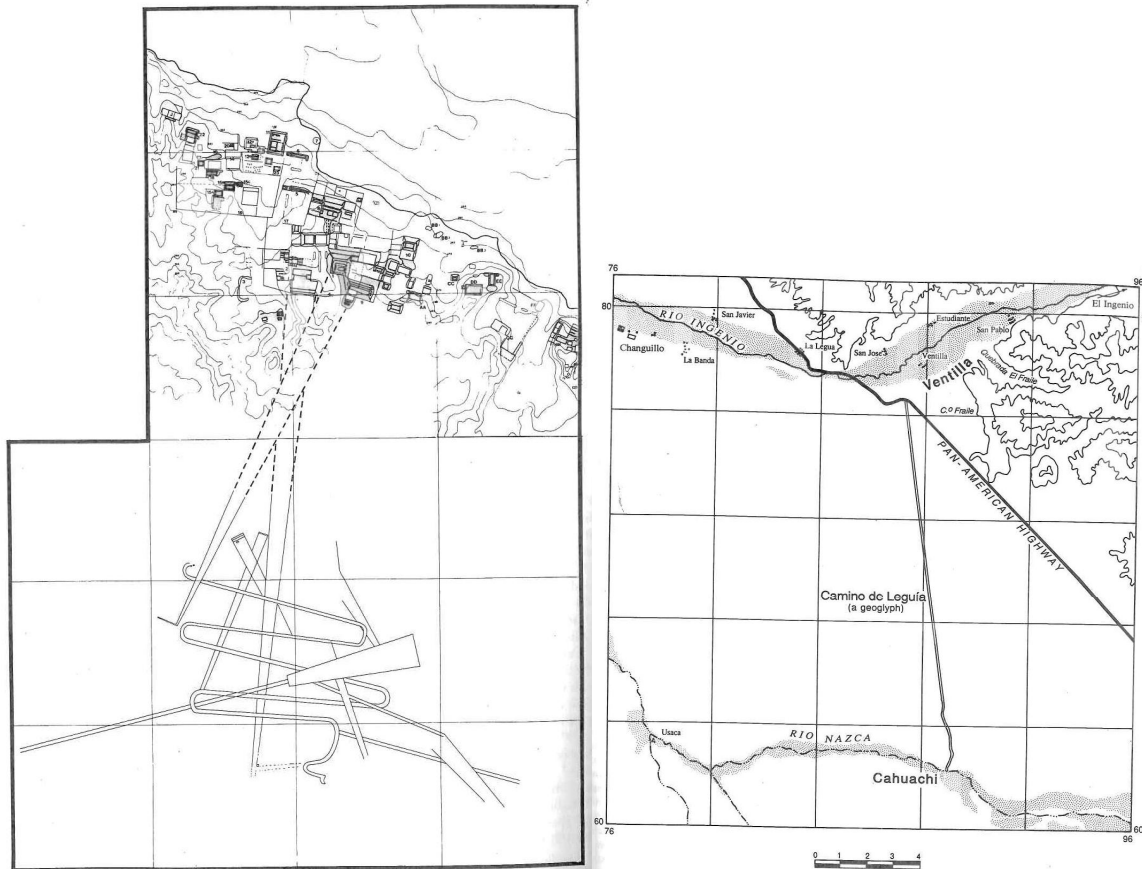
Table 16.2. Comparison of Plainware to Fineware. Rim Sherds (MNI) Only Based on Surface Level of Each Excavation Exhibiting Nasca Pottery

Plainware Sherds	Fineware Sherds	Total Rims
68	183	251
27%	73%	100%

Table 16.4. Comparison of Plainware Rims to Fineware Rims from the Subsurface Strata (MNI Only)

Plainware Rims	Fineware Rims	Total Rims
140	339	479
29%	71%	100%

Figure 8. Depicts the ratio of plainware to fineware by number of sherds, and then by MNI.



22.2. Complex of geoglyphs in the Pampa de Atarco directly behind (south) Cahuachi. Some of the lines appear to point directly at some of Cahuachi's principal architectural features.

23.1. Map showing location of Cahuachi (Nazca valley) and Ventilla (Site 165 in Ingenio valley). The two sites are connected across the pampa by the Camino de Leguía, a geoglyph converted into one of the segments of the original Pan-American Highway earlier this century.

Figure 9. Depicts Cahuachi in association with geoglyphs and Ventilla.

Table 16.9. Contexts of Thematic Painted Pottery at Cahuachi

<i>Mythical Motifs</i>	<i>Natural Motifs</i>	<i>Geometric Motifs</i>
On Unit 19 Rooms 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Wall 45-65 fill Lower Eastern Rooms Base of Unit 19 Looters' Holes 3, 4, 5 Test Pit 4	Rooms 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Wall 45-65 fill Lower Eastern Rooms Base of Unit 19 Looters' Hole 3 Test Pit 4 Point Sample 2	Rooms 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Wall 45-65 fill Lower Eastern Rooms Base of Unit 19 Looters' Holes 3, 4 Test Pit 4 Point Samples 1, 2
Elsewhere at the Site		Test Pit 17
Unit 16: Excavation 1 Unit F: Excavation 5		Unit 16: Excavation 1 Unit F: Excavation 5

Figure 10. Depicts the distribution of the different ceramic motifs at the site.

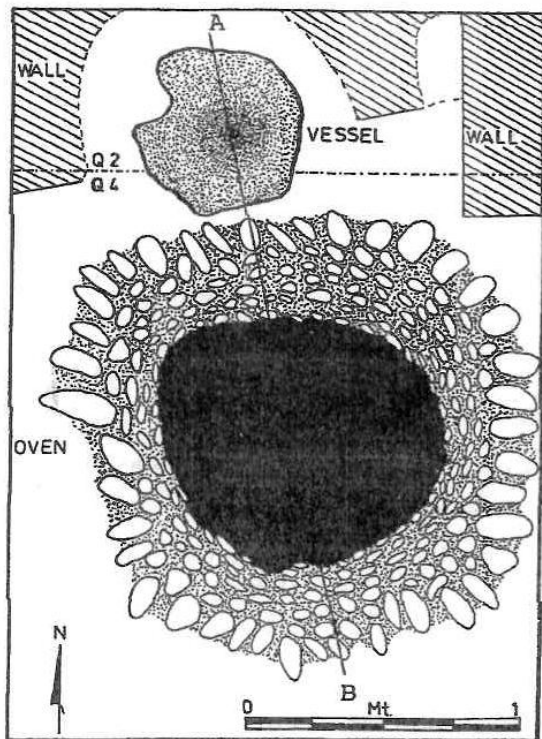


FIG. 2. Feature of experiment 8: association of oven with vessel.

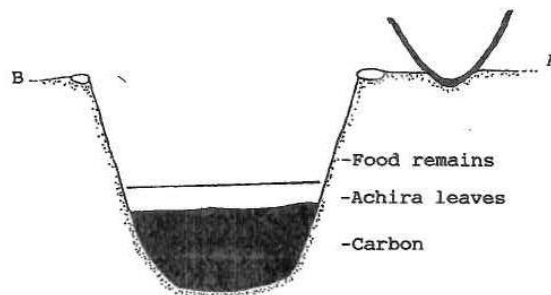


FIG. 3. Vertical sections of experiment 8 feature.

Figure 11. Depicts Valdez's Feature 8 from an overhead view, and with a cross-section.

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“Positive Change; Preserving Hmong Culture while Adapting to American Society”

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Recently I participated as a student in a Hmong literacy class located in Long Beach California. This class is part of a government funded program, designed to, “assist Hmong and other Laotian Refugee groups with their adjustments to American life, to preserve Hmong culture, to educate the general public about Hmong history and culture, and to support cooperation among Laotian and Southeast Asian refugee groups (Hmong Association).” The program takes place every Sunday in the *McArthur Park’s Culture Center*, known to local people as “Homeland (see figure 1.1-1.2 .)” This center is broadly referred to as Homeland because of the conception that it is a refuge to minorities conflicted with their cultural transition from native practices, views and behaviors to those of mainstream American culture. Through this center and its programs the government seeks to reduce hostility between different minority groups that inhabit the Long Beach area and between those minority groups and American mainstream society (Ramson.) In addition to Hmong literacy classes, the Hmong Association Program offers traditional Hmong dance, singing, sewing, drumming, Qeej playing (a type of instrument similar to a wooden mouth organ), and marriage classes. The center also provides a space for interaction between Hmong community members ranging from infants to elders.

Figure 1.1

Below. An image of the front entrance of McArthur “Homeland” Neighborhood Center in Long Beach, where the Hmong program takes place every Sunday.

**Figure 1.2**

Above. Picture of a Mac Arthur Park sign placed in front of the main entrance.

Through participant observation, mapping, interviews (formal and informal), and analysis of videotaped interactions among members of the group I was able to gain insights regarding acculturation through which parts of Hmong culture system are maintained and assimilation through which parts of Hmong culture system are discontinued and replaced by mainstream American culture. This paper focuses on the techniques that the Hmong groups in Long Beach

use to recruit members into roles and statuses within their cultural context. Moreover, I focus on the role the Hmong Association plays in the recruitment of members into Hmong culture and the maintenance of Hmong culture. Finally, I discuss the influence that American culture and context have in this processes, and insider's points of view regarding the transmission of Hmong culture within these American settings.

According to known anthropologist George Spindler(1997) the recruitment of novices into membership of a cultural system and into roles and statuses within that culture take place during periods of intense cultural compression in which teaching and learning are accelerated. He explains that through this process, values, attitudes and beliefs that make the structure credible are inculcated. In other words, people must believe that their system is the most beneficial for them. In order for this structure to work novices must be provided with skills and competencies necessary to succeed within the cultural context (p. 302). Periods of cultural compression among Long Beach Hmong group observed take place every Sunday at the Homeland center, and during certain rites of passage such as name giving/receiving, marriages, and funerals.

Recruitment and Maintenance of Culture during Rites of Passage

Although during the short time spent with the community I did not have the opportunity to attend any Rite of Passage ceremonies, I learned about them through Interviews, conversations with community members, and analysis of conversations between community members.

While speaking to Lauj, one of the Hmong Association board members, explained the importance of an individual's name and the different situations in which names are received, changed, and exhibited. He explained that the first name received by an individual is given to him when born. In addition to an individual name each member of Hmong society receives a

clan name, interpreted by American society as a last name. Among Hmong societies clan names are used to identify a person's lineage. Clan names help keep social order giving an individual social advantages, or disadvantages, depending on individual and relative's choices. Chang the community's literacy teacher explain to his students during a language lesson that once an individual has given his clan name he is responsible for representing his clan's values and beliefs. If an individual's clan has a bad reputation he may have a hard time finding a mate or may be mistrusted when making a deal. Moreover, when speaking to Chang he explained to me that when in need of financial help an individual can receive aid from anyone within his clan or he may request help from a member of a clan whose clan members have been previously helped by his clan. Through this reciprocity practice

Continuously, Lauj extended that a second name is given to men when getting married. This name is given to the husband by his parents in law as a sign of approval of the marriage. Once receiving a marriage name a man is considered full member of society gaining the respect of adults and assuming responsibilities such as supporting his family. On the other hand, when married women loose their individualized names and adopt their husbands' clan name. Once married, a woman is referred to as "wife of *husband's Clan name.*" Along with their new name women receive the rights and responsibilities of a full member of the society as well. If a member of the group refers to a married woman by her childhood name he would be considered to be disrespectful towards her husband. After marriage the only times in which a woman will use her clan name are when asked for it or in a situation where the reciprocity rule applies. These processes of name attribution and name exhibition help transmit the Hmong value of clan unity. Also as individuals are benefited through these practices their recruitment into their role and status in society are reinforced.

Throughout my participant observation many members of the community approached me and willingly talked to me about their beliefs and practices. During a conversation, Moua an adult man informed me about two important rituals in Hmong society weddings and funerals. Initially he described the steps that are taken throughout the course of a wedding. He clarified that a wedding takes place after a man has taken a woman to live with him. First, both the man and the woman must find two wise people in the community that are knowledgeable in marriage life and wedding rituals. Then, the husband will approach the home in which him and the woman live and the two wise people accompanying him will begin to sing negotiating songs known as Mekong. If the two wise people are “knowledgeable enough” the woman’s two wise people will respond by singing Mekong back and giving them alcoholic drinks that they must drink prior to entering the home. Next, the man and wise people are allowed to enter into the home in which the man is required to sing a special chant while building a table in which him and the woman will sit to negotiate. After the table is built, the man and the woman sit down and sing Mekong to negotiate what each of them will have to compromise in order for the marriage to be effective. Once the man and woman agree with the help of the wise people they are declared to be married. This process is extensive and requires that each of the members participating have cultural knowledge. Through dramatization and usage of songs in this rite of passage, members of this group accept a new role and status in their society with its rights and obligations. This ritual also serves to maintain Hmong culture as it awards knowledgeable members with a high status, therefore motivating other members to want to acquire this knowledge.

A ritual that plays an important role in recruiting members into Hmong culture membership is funerals. At funerals Cheexai, a type of song chanting, accompanies an instrument called Qeej. According to Moua Cheexai is directed towards the younger people

present at the funeral. He explained that Cheexai consists of the repetition of phrases explaining the importance of living a good life by following norms given to you by the elders, and teaching the cycle of life in which one is born and will die at sometime. Continuously, Moua explained that Cheexai is only performed by adults considered knowledgeable of life and by elders. He said that if Cheexai is performed by someone young it would be meaningless because the young would not take that person's knowledge seriously due to his short life and lack of experiences. Through this repetition of phrases at funerals novices are exposed to Hmong cultural values, worldviews, and practices. During funerals they are also exposed to social norms imbedded within participant frameworks. These social norms include, who executes which role in society according to status. In this case, elders and adults play the role of imparting knowledge and due to the possession of this knowledge they hold the highest status in society.

Recruitment and Maintenance of Culture in the Homeland Center

While visiting the Homeland center I focused many of my participant observations in the Hmong literacy class. This class plays an important role in the recruitment and maintenance of Hmong culture. The classroom in which this class takes place is assembled with portable tables and chairs every Sunday. Prior to the beginning of class the oldest students carry tables inside and each student brings their individual chair. Continuously, Chang is in charge of bringing in the white board, board-erase markers, a folder with lessons, and a pointer. The classroom is arranged in a U like formation facing the board. The board is placed in the middle front part of the classroom (see figure 1.1.)

Most class sessions begin with Chang writing words within a phonetic sound category. As Chang writes the lesson on the board students begin to copy it into a notebook designated for this class. Students range from four years of age to fifteen years of age and they are all expected

to quietly copy the board. Once Chang considers the students have had enough time to copy the board he begins to individually ask students to read the set of words aloud. As they read he corrects their pronunciation by modeling and explaining the way in which the mouth must be positioned. While each appointed student read aloud other students may be involved by laughing at his pronunciation, quietly observing, or talking to other students. However, Chang does not give them permission to write at this moment. Subsequently, Chang questions the students on the contextualized meanings of the words by having them translate them into English. He says the word in Hmong and then asks in English, “*Hmong word* means to...” Then, the students begin to say sentences in English using the translation of the word. As words are translated cultural worldviews are carried out and the students are exposed to them. For example, one of the words in one of the lessons was “noob zoo” which was translated by the students to “relative” or “family.” Once the students learned the translation Chang explained to them that, “noob zoo meant family and that coming from a good family meant that an individual and his ancestors did things in a correct manner and that when looking for a mate they should look for someone coming from a good family.” The last part of the lesson consists of the students reading the board chorally as Chang points at each word.

Chang’s goal as a teacher is to help students develop Hmong literacy. He explained to me that it is important for the students to learn Hmong so that they can preserve their culture, have an advantage in society by being bilingual, and to help the elders in case they need translations. Although learning to speak Hmong language alone does serve to the maintenance of culture it is not the only aspect of the literacy class that supports this goal. As students are exposed to the meanings of words with Hmong cultural emphasis students are given reinforcement through verbal expression.

Another important aspect that plays an important role in the transmission of culture is the way in which the students move through and organize their space and the way in which they habitually interact with one another. When students help set up the classroom putting all their chairs facing the space in which Chang will locate himself they are non-verbally agreeing to the concept of an adult having the higher status and his role being to impart the knowledge. As mentioned previously, the notion of the adult possessing knowledge and the younger generation attempting to learn that knowledge is a Hmong value. Another exhibition of this norm is seen as the teacher demonstrates control over the classroom having no spatial boundaries, while the students have a boundary around the central front area of the classroom (refer to figure 1.3.)

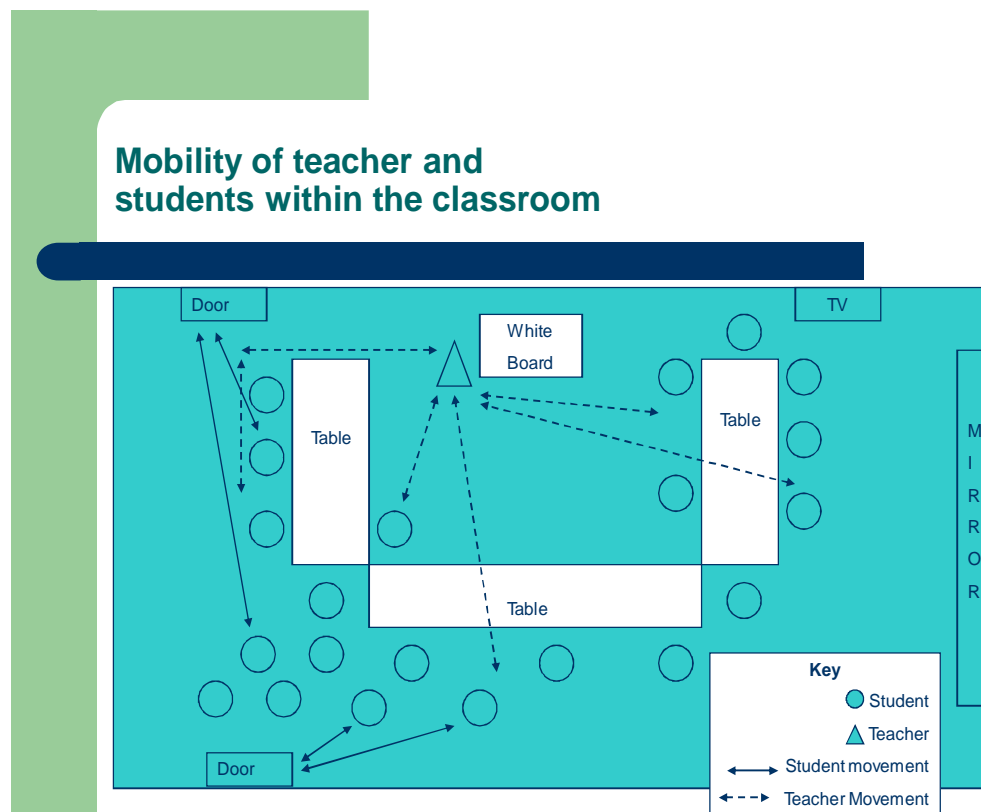


Figure 1.3

This figure shows a map of spatial relations between the teacher, students and space. Students demonstrate to have spatial boundaries, while the teacher is free to move through space to overlook student's work.

In addition, during class when students talk to one another they support cultural views that have been imparted to them by their parents. For example, when an eight year old student said that he wished he was outside playing instead of being in class, another child responded that he should stay inside the class to learn Hmong and please his parents.

In another occasion when some students did not find chairs available for themselves they shared a chair with a classmate. In this occasion students did not ask Chang if it was appropriate to do this. This demonstrates that it is common for them to share space closely. Working in an American classroom I have seen the contrast to this special rule. Children in the classroom have the tendency to move their desks close together or want to share desks to which teacher's response is always negative. The American cultured teacher responds by reprimanding children and reminding them they must respect each other's "personal space."

As demonstrated through these examples the acquirement of Hmong language, exposure to the specific use of space, and interactions are helpful to the recruitment and maintenance of Hmong culture in the Long Beach community. Yet, a feature that has not yet been discussed is highly significant to this process, the learning of skills and competencies that help students succeed in their cultural framework. For the Hmong society in Long Beach this aspect can be complex as they must teach their children skills and values that will help them succeed not only within the Hmong framework, but also within the American cultural framework they live in. In order to achieve this goal certain values and beliefs must be compromised.

Success lays in Hmong Adaptations to American Life and Culture

On his studies in the *Transmission of Culture* Spindler (1997) argues that, "children [...] initially recruited to a cultural system than the one from which they originated, create discontinuity through the destruction of social order which produces dislocations in life patterns

and interpersonal relations as well as potentially positive change (p. 303).” As noted previously in this paper among Hmong societies elders hold the highest status. Elders living in Long Beach are mostly refugees that were born and raised in Laos. Since the Hmong culture is traditionally oral elders are commonly illiterate. Rather than seen as an incompetency, illiteracy among elders is thought to be insignificant. Lauj explained to me that elders acquired their knowledge while growing up in Laos with no distractions. For that reason, elders are thought to be the only ones that possess valid knowledge that they can use as they please and that cannot be removed from them. On the other hand, living in the United States the Hmong have had to adapt to American practices. Therefore, literacy among their children is expected to be one hundred percent. Rather than being resistant to this change they motivate their children to follow the guidelines needed to be successful in the American society. This situation supports Spindler’s idea that discontinuity in culture can cause positive change. However it does not support the idea that discontinuity causes conflicts between different generations’ interpersonal relations. Perhaps, the reason for the lack of conflict between views is attributed to Hmong culture’s respect for individuality and appreciation of knowledge.

In conclusion, through the above examples Hmong members demonstrate their appreciation and desire to maintain Hmong culture, while they also demonstrate their willingness to adapt to American society. These two aspects result in the outcome of having “positive change.” As mentioned earlier a requirement for the recruitment and maintenance of members into a culture is that they acquire skills and competencies that will help them succeed. Minority groups in the United States have a challenge as they must struggle to maintain their cultures and assimilate to the American culture at the same time. Long Beach’s Hmong society deals with this

challenge by teaching Hmong culture with combined Hmong and American frameworks and by having as their main goal “their children’s success” regardless of context.

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“Coltan in the Congo”

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I. Introduction to the Democratic Republic of Congo

The area currently known as the Democratic Republic of Congo has undergone numerous regime changes in its history, and yet their position in the global world and economy has consistently remained the same. Throughout the years, they have played the role as the exploited, and in today's globalized world, they are in more danger than they have ever been in. In the mines of the Democratic Republic of Congo, there is a vast array of valuable minerals that are desired all over the world. Most commonly, people have heard the poignant term “blood diamonds” that come out of Africa, a term coined in the late 1990's to the early 2000's. Now there is an even more useful mineral that the entire globalized community is pining for, and not just because it sparkles. “Columbium (also known as niobium) and tantalum together compose what is commonly known as coltan, an essential but rare mineral” (Montague: 2002). This mineral is used within various types of “high-tech equipment ranging from cellular phones and computers to jet engines, missiles, ships, and weapons systems” (Montague: 2002). Although cell phones and laptops exist all over the world, there is a significant concentration in the United States of America and European markets in regards to big business economy. This mineral, coltan is significantly valuable for creating a number of products within the developed nation, however, this periphery nation is feeling the heavy impact on its own people. There has been a civil unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo on and off for

some time, however, their most recent civil war is a nearly direct result of the struggle over mining rights for these materials. The key factor here is globalization, and globalization and greed can make people do some very sorry things.

II. A History of Exploitation

As early as 1878, there was interest in the area currently known as the Democratic Republic of Congo by outside sources of power. It was this year that “King Leopold II (of Belgium) formed a consortium of bankers to finance exploration of the Congo” (Library of Congress) It was then, at the “Conference of Berlin, November 1884- February 1885, major European powers acknowledge claim of Leopold II’s International Association of the Congo, a colony named the Congo Free State.” (Library of Congress). It was here that the first recorded and acknowledged embodiments of exploitation take place, where a “transportation network and exploitation of mineral resources begin” (Library of Congress). The primary exports at this time were items such as minerals, rubber, and ivory. To mine and harvest these valuable trade items Belgium relied on Congolese slave labor. “In response to growing criticism of treatment of African population, the Belgian parliament annexed Congo Free State and renames it Belgian Congo” (Library of Congress), in the year 1908. However, this did not mean that the land was then free of Belgian rule. From the years 1940-1945 Production of goods and minerals greatly increased to finance Belgian effort in World War II; (Library of Congress) this was an effort to aid the country of Belgium, and between the years of 1952-1958, there was a long awaited leavening of pressure; “legal reforms enacted permitting Africans to own land, granting them free access to public establishments, and the right to trial in all courts of law as well as some political participation.” (Library of Congress) As it is seen here there are actually a number of conflicts until the land actually reaches independence from its governing body of Belgium. The renaming to the Free State of Congo is really just Belgium’s way of paying lip service to the rest of the world.

III. Present Day Situation

The Democratic Republic of Congo is located in central Africa, to the Northeast of Angola.

The terrain is described as a “vast, low-lying central area is a basin-shaped plateau sloping toward the



west and covered by tropical rainforest.

Mountainous terraces in the west surround this area, plateaus merging into savannas in the south

and southwest and dense grasslands extending

beyond the Congo River in the north. High

mountains are found in the extreme eastern

region.” (US DEPT OF STATE) Its size is

comparable to Western Europe; or rather it is ¼

the size of the United States. Its country capital

is Kinshasa, and its republic government rules

the country. The president is the primary power

holder and Joseph Kabila is currently holding the position.

Currently, the state of the Democratic Republic of Congo is not a stable one. The total population is 66,514,504 (CIA World factbook 2008) as of October 2008, and there are “over 200 African ethnic groups of which the majority are Bantu; the four largest tribes - Mongo, Luba, Kongo (all Bantu), and the Mangbetu-Azande (Hamitic) make up about 45% of the population”(CIA World factbook 2008). As abundant as diversity within this country is, there are other aspects where the country as a whole is greatly lacking. Health is an important issue in this region, and poor medical aid lends itself to a high mortality rate for the overall county. The vast array of infectious diseases immediately affecting the population include “bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and

typhoid fever, malaria, plague, African trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness), schistosomiasis, and the more recently introduced rabies” (CIA World factbook 2008). Along side all of these is the epidemic of AIDS and the HIV virus that is affecting the rest of the continent of Africa. In the Democratic Republic of Congo it is recorded that at least 1.1 million people are living with the HIV virus or AIDS, and there have been at least 100,000 deaths related to it (CIA World factbook 2008). This statistic is the most recent available, but it is from 2003, and the numbers have most certainly risen in the last few years. Due to this high risk environment and the lack of proper medical aid, the median age of a person living in the Democratic Republic of Congo is 16.3 years of age and only 2.5% of the population is over the age of 65 (CIA World factbook 2008). It is not only the health of the people that suffers here, but the health of the earth as well. The country’s greatest natural resources include “cobalt, copper, niobium, tantalum, petroleum, industrial and gem diamonds, gold, silver, zinc, manganese, tin, uranium, and coal” (CIA World factbook 2008) When there is mining, there is always a toll taken on the environment. Some of the environmental risk factors include soil erosion, deforestation, degradation of ground water, loss of habitat, and the poaching of wildlife.

IV. Natural Resources Linked to Civil War

The history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been a varied one, but its position in the globalized world has remained consistent. Although the country has undergone extreme regime changes and the name has changed from the Congo Free State to the Belgian Congo to Congo/Leopoldville to Congo/Kinshasa and to Zaire, they have always played the role of the exploited periphery region. These innumerable name changes have done nothing to change the Democratic Republic of Congo’s position on the global economic scale. There have been two large-scale civil wars in the country’s late history, and the second, which began in 1998, is still ongoing. The country has a vast array of mineral wealth, and it is these natural resources, which are adding fuel to the already lit fire. It is no surprise that natural resources are often times the root cause of conflict and it must here be noted that “recent studies have found that

natural resources and civil war are highly correlated" (Ross: 2004) Presented in table 2 are the civil wars that have been fueled by natural resources from 1990- 2000. The conflict in The Democratic Republic of Congo has approximately 73,000 people dying monthly, while in 2003, the death toll was rapidly approaching four million in three years of war" (Montague: 2002).

TABLE 2. *Civil wars linked to resource wealth, 1990–2000*

<i>Country</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Afghanistan	1992–2001	Gems, opium
Angola	1975–2002	Oil, diamonds
<i>Burma</i>	1983–95	Timber, tin, gems, opium
Cambodia	1978–97	Timber, gems
Colombia	1984–	Oil, gold, coca
Congo Republic	1997	Oil
Congo, Dem. Rep.	1996	Copper, coltan, diamonds, gold, cobalt
Congo, Dem. Rep.	1997–99	Copper, coltan, diamonds, gold, cobalt
<i>Indonesia (Aceh)</i>	1976–	Natural gas
Liberia	1989–96	Timber, diamonds, iron, palm oil, cocoa, coffee, marijuana, rubber, gold
Peru	1982–96	Coca
Sierra Leone	1991–2000	Diamonds
<i>Sudan</i>	1983–	Oil

Note: Separatist conflicts are listed in italics.

There is a correlation to resource wealth and the onslaught and continuation of war and conflicts. It is argued that "resource wealth tends to increase the casualty rate during a civil war by causing combatants to fight for resource rich territory that would otherwise have little value" (Ross: 2004) The area known as the Democratic Republic of Congo, has an abundance of mineral wealth, and this has created an air of hostility within the region. The need for coltan as a result of the computer boom in the 1990's has created massive global problems in this region. The Democratic Republic of Congo contains 80% of the world's reserves of coltan (Montague: 2002), and countries and corporations have funded militias in order to gain controlling interests in the mineral. "Between 1990 and 1999, sales of tantalum capacitors used in the electronics industry for cellular phones, pagers, PC's, and automotive electronics increased by 300%" (Montague: 2002). This increase is primarily concerning the big players of the world market, such as the United States, Asia and Europe. These are the core nations that take the extracted coltan from the periphery nations, and then process it to be used for consumer products, but these products rarely reach nations like the Democratic Republic of Congo, they are more often sold in the first world and developed nations.

The developed countries of the world benefit greatly from the consumer goods made with coltan while seeing none of the adverse effects, on the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo and surrounding areas. "Many of the DR Congo's neighbors and the rebels under their patronage are intent on expanding their reach, either for security or extractive reasons" (Moore: 2001). The surrounding regions are fighting in essence over the mining rights to these reserves of coltan, for the wealth that comes with those rights.

V. The Steps towards Conflict

During the Cold War era, the country was under the power of the tyrant Mobutu Sese Seko and was known as Zaire amongst the international community. After the war was over, the start of this age of conflict began, when the rest of the world was waiting for the current Democratic Republic of Congo to come under new political reign, so that countries could make new investments and deals with the country and its vast mineral resources. The first civil war was lead in order to overthrow Dictator Mobutu Sese Seko by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), which was a group of Congolese political dissenters. This occurred between 1996 and 1997 and was the force that lead president Laurent Kabila to power. Rather than the new president of the Democratic Republic of Congo building the country up, or the political activists of the ADFL forming the country, it was the "international corporations that were the ones whose influence was critical in re-shaping the political landscape of the country" (Ross: 2004). International companies formed alliances with the ADFL after this first conflict, and were able to get the mining rights to certain areas that were previously undisclosed to them by the Mobutu administration. "By securing large mining deals with the ADFL during the early stages of the war, international mining interests helped create a relationship that established "legitimate" mining operations in rebel-occupied territories and essentially provided revenues to the ADFL." (Ross: 2004) It was in 1997 that a deal was cut between the rebels known as the ADFL and the American

Mining Fields corp. This allowed for satellite infrared photos to be taken of the region so that the mining prospects were easier to recognize. This is noted in history as “the first time that a developing nation has gone directly to the private sector for help.” (Ross: 2004). With these private industries working with this brand-new government corruption took hold.

Beginning in 1998, president Kabila and his previous political backers from neighboring areas Rwanda and Uganda turned against each other, and the second civil war began. Economic tensions had been rising between Kabila and his previous supporters in the ADFL from Rwanda and Uruguay, and tensions between the Democratic Republic of Congo and its investors had been rising as well. These investors, “considering Kabila’s Marxist background, began to question his commitment to a free market.” (Ross: 2004) for the local population however, the worry was much different. “The ADFL had been primarily supported by Rwandan and Ugandan troops, and there was a tension growing between the Congolese population and the increasingly powerful group of foreign soldiers.” (Ross: 2004) because of the ADFL and its presence in the Democratic of Congo, the Congolese began to worry about their own safety. The tension between the Congolese population and these foreign soldiers eventually erupted into a break between Kabila and these foreign soldiers. Although they had helped Kabila in his rise to democratic power, the tensions had become so strong that they were no longer allies. “In august, 1998, Rwanda and Uganda invaded the DRC as Kabila’s foes. They carried with them intimate knowledge of the country’s terrain and its mineral riches as investor confidence in Kabila’s DRC was waning.” (Ross: 2004) Instead of being an attempt to overthrow the state of the government, or fix some political injustice, this was a war over mineral rights and economic gain driven by greed and the desire for power.

VI. The Global World and the Conflict

During the late 90’s the market for coltan greatly expanded due to an increase in consumer electronics products. This was the peak of the technology age, and since 80% of the world’s coltan

reserves exist in this area of Africa, there was intense economic interest amongst mining companies and big business around this war. It is at this time that the government of Rwanda was a prime example of how the need for coltan was financing the war. This war was described as “self financing” by the president of Rwandan Paul Kagame, as “the sale of several Congolese commodities extracted from mining operations in newly conquered territory financed the war, [and] between late 1999 and late 2000 the Rwandan army alone reaped revenues of at least \$20 million a month” (Ross: 2004).

“This crisis has gone largely unreported in the west [...] given the role that Western corporations and governments have played in creating and sustaining the conflict.” (Nest: 2006) This is an event comparable to the acts of genocide in Darfur and Rwanda; however, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo goes unreported, not because of the government’s blind eye or lack of desire for intervention, but rather the role that the government and big business has played in regards to this issue. It is the American people and their consumer products that are financing the war by default. This desire for coltan by big business and corporations is the draw for the conflict to keep going. “The U.N. Panel of Experts on Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Congo concluded that resource exploitation was directly responsible for the ongoing economy of war in the region, [and] illegal exploitation of resources had established a predatory network of elites” (Nest: 2006) One of the overriding problems in the regulation of coltan, is that once taken out of its region of origin, it is largely untraceable and some companies are not required to report where their coltan is derivative from. In the late 1990’s, Rwanda held a big part of the monopoly on coltan in the world, and because of the conflict, it is impossible to tell if the coltan that was being purchased from the country of Rwanda was really illegally mined and harvested from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The areas that were overtaken by the Rwandans and Ugandans are being mined and the products are illegally being sold to companies all over the

world. The largest consumers in the world of coltan are, unsurprisingly, America, Asia (Japan) and Europe, and none of these nations are being directly affected by the bloodshed caused by this conflict.

VII. Call and Response: What to do now

“From the brutalities of the Belgian colonists and their U.S. backers, to the trespasses of neighboring governments in Uganda and Rwanda, the DRC has been made a killing field of exploitation.” (Nest: 2006) Although this bloodshed is the most obvious repercussion of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is not the only one. The slow rate of legal economic growth in the country is also bad news for its inhabitants. “The prolonged exploitation of Congolese mineral wealth has helped establish tremendous vulnerability in the Congolese political, economic, and social system.” (Ross: 2004) The Democratic Republic of Congo has been exploited for centuries, and for the country to be able to grow in to a viable, self-sustaining region, it is going to take some serious effort. There is going to have to be a stop in the illegal mining and harvesting of the natural resources of the area, and that is going to take not only the efforts of the Congolese government, but of the global system’s as well. Profit is always going to be the underlying current behind all actions, but human welfare and justice need to begin to play some kind of role. Regulating the world trade of coltan could create less of a market for illegal mining, as well as open up the arena for the Democratic Republic of Congo to begin making profit off of the natural resources that are rightfully theirs. It was in the U.N. Resolution of 1803 where it was stated that:

The right of people and nations to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources must be exercised in the interest of their national development and of the well-being of the people of the state concerned. International co-operation for the economic development of developing countries, whether in the form of public or private capital investments... shall be based upon the respect for sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources (Ross: 2004)

It is clearly written here, that what the global market is doing to the Democratic Republic of Congo is unjust and illegal. The governments of Uganda and Rwanda are obviously to blame, but the United States

of America, Asia, and Western Europe (as well as other countries who buy the coltan that is being taken out of the Democratic Republic of Congo) need to be recognized and regulated as well.

One of the most frightening aspects of this conflict and its relation to globalization is how “the international community has distanced itself from the war in DRC. Despite the mounting death toll, the country receives only a trickle of aid, and even less media attention. Internationally, it is recognized that the war has produced a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, yet rebel movements have been able to successfully sustain their war efforts by plundering and looting the economic wealth of the country’s mineral-rich eastern region” (Montague: 2002) In relation to this fact, it is obvious that the international community needs to bring this issue into the public light, even if it is self-incriminating. There are lives and environmental factors at stake here, and it is unfair to turn a blind eye at accepting the stolen resources and goods from a country, when the act of doing so is fueling one of the bloodiest civil wars in Africa’s history. If the public was made aware of this conflict that was being sustained due to the use and trade of coltan, then it is possible that the consumer use of it would decline. The rape of a country and its inhabitants needs to be stopped, or at least made public. Just because exploitation of the Democratic Republic of Congo has been a trend in the past, does not mean it should continue to be one.

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