Working Paper 547

RESTRUCTURING RURALITY? BATALLAS IN THE 1990S

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May 1991

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The nature of society and the means by which households and the people within them obtain a living has changed rapidly in many areas of the world during the past thirty years. These changes are a consequence of pressures from within and without society and reflect the struggle of individuals and households to ensure their survival in their search for prosperity. Changes are evident to anyone visiting communities on separate occasions in a 10-20 year period. The nature and spatial organisation of production is also changing. These changes, together, call into question the continued validity of the use of concepts such as 'rural' or 'urban'.

In Andean America, as in many parts of the Third World, farming in areas of smallholdings has changed. This has been in response to improved accessibility, to the new farming technologies, and to a re-evaluation of the role of farming in their livelihood strategies by members of farm housholds. The construction of new roads and the improvement of existing highways and the use of a wider range of motor vehicles to carry people and/or freight has made long journeys faster and less costly than a generation ago. The new farming technologies have made possible increased production of some crops and livestock but associated with the use of chemicals that have sometimes had unforeseen and undesirable effects on people, livestock, land and water. The greater experience of schooling and more widespread migration, together with the diffusion of radio and television communication has given rise to a greater awareness of a range of ways of making a living other than farming.

Of the changes that have affected both civil society and systems of production in western Europe and north America that are sufficiently fundamental to be referred to as restructuring, three can be identified as particularly relevant to the present case. Firstly, there have been major changes in the class composition of human settlements in rural areas. This has been the result both of people moving to such places (or of returning to them) while travelling to work elsewhere, and of local people changing their own forms of work and maintaining different styles of work simultaneously or over a period of time. Such activity as farming, working for others for wages, and providing services may be combined by individuals and households. This reduces the clarity with which class identify may be discerned[1].

This paper examines changes over a 21 year period in one area of highland Bolivia to show how people and their activities have changed and the extent to which these changes imply a restructuring that is similar to that which is taking place in the First World. It will be suggested that these changes are a response to increasing commercial opportunities and new needs, in

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1. For an account of the process of restructuring that has affected previously rural areas see Urry 1984 and Marsden et al. 1990.

part related to the liberalisation of social and economic life in the post-agrarian reform period. In areas of smallholdings, the importance of non-farming work and the relocation there of some urban workers calls further into question the validity of existing definitions of 'rural' living or settlements.

1. COUNTRYSIDE AND TOWN AS CATEGORIES

Rural and urban, countryside and town are all terms in common usage, both in First and Third Worlds and in urban and rural areas. Many people have an instinctive feeling for what the words mean. Rural life is associated primarily with getting a living from the natural environment: farming, fishing, and livestock rearing are common activities. It is also associated with a smaller, more cohesive community with frequent interaction between its members even though they may live in scattered homesteads or tiny hamlets. Urban life is associated with earning a living through wage-earning, by selling goods or services; communities are less easily identified, tend to contain people largely of one social class and are frequently less cohesive. Although traditional activities exist, change is expected.

The importance to the European colonisers of the establishment of urban settlements in Latin America during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has often been stressed and, in part, this was a reflection of the important role of towns in the Iberian Peninsula and much of the Mediterranean World. During the Colonial Period towns were the location of the administrators, estate owners, merchants as well as the great employers of native labour - mines and factories. Much of the trading that took place through marketplaces also took place in towns rather than in the countryside. Native people were confined to certain parts of the town and white or mixed-blood people dominated town activity. Colonialism frequently created its own network of urban centres, although appropriating what pre-colonial centres already existed (Brookfield 1972, Baran 1958).

The relationship between the two categories of settlement or livelihood reflects their different social, economic and political status: people in towns are socially superior, richer and more powerful than those in the countryside. This has particular relevance to the many Latin American situations where there is a wide cultural and even ethnic gulf between town and country. This is not a peculiarly Latin American situation however and Marx and Engels expressed a similar view in the 1840s in relation to European historical experience. They argued that people living in the country are concerned with getting a living by directly producing from the land, while those in the town live by exchanges between people. In the former case control over the means of production is through access to land, in the latter through access to and domination of accumulated labour (Marx and Engels 1970, 68). Gramsci acknowledged the complexity of the city-countryside relationship in the context of Twentieth Century Europe but nonetheless typifies cities as consumers and countrysides as producers (Gramsci 1971, 90 et seq., 287). Frank was concerned with analysing Latin American situations but he extended the geographical scope of town-country dependent relations by asserting that similar relationships exist between

world and state and at different geographical levels down to village and countryside (Frank 1967).

Much of the discussion concerning rural-urban relations in the Third World has focussed on the broad nature of the links between major cities and rural areas and, more recently, the nature and degree of urban bias in national and regional decision-making in favour of urban areas(see particularly Lipton 1977, Harriss and Moore 1984 and Unwin 1989). It has seldom dealt explicitly with the interaction between smaller urban centres and the countryside and there are few studies that attempt to document flows of goods and capital between town and country[1]. On the other hand studies of migration using urban and rural as categories abound despite the evident inadequacy of census definitions of rural and urban places (Preston 1969, 1980, Todaro 1976).

A major handicap in the examination of rural-urban relations is the difficulty in identifying which people are either urban or rural in societies whose population is highly mobile. A further problem lies in establishing the basis on which flows of goods, capital or people between clearly identified urban and rural places provide greater benefits to one or the other category of place. The major debates concerning rural-urban interaction in the past decade have been concerned with broad issue of urban influence over rural change but the discussion has been directed towards specific national concerns such as sectoral income distribution, terms of trade between urban and rural areas, or class or theoretical debate rather than empirical validation or refutation of opposing propositions[2]. Another related field of activity is concerned with the planned stimulation of the growth of secondary cities based on the notion that such development will aid rural development (for example Rondinelli and Ruddle 1978).

Countryside and town in Bolivia and the Andes[3]

The role of urban centres in Andean America has usually been discussed in the context of the primacy of metropolitan centres that contain many times the population of the next largest centres. It is usually these metropolitan centres that grow most rapidly. All such centres have a direct linkage with the countryside through the large numbers of people who migrate between city and rural area, and the movement of agents of

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1.One such study is that by Barbara and John Harriss (1984) which contributes very specifically to the debate on urban bias as well as that concerned with the distribution of the benefits of the adoption of new high-yielding varieties of food-grains.

2. An excellent range of debates and a detailed reply by Lipton is contained in Harriss and Moore op. cit.

3. For a fuller discussion of this topic see the earlier chapters in Preston 1978

government and non-government organisations from cities out into the countryside to facilitate rural change. The rate and direction of population change in the past 25 years has meant that a decreasing proportion of the population has lived in rural areas and the pace of rural-urban interaction has accelerated.

Traditionally, however, rural people had contact not with capital cities but with the local administrative centres from which they were governed and it was through these centres that the relation between town and country was articulated. In Andean America, as in many other parts of Latin America, small towns were seen by the rural population as being where estate owners, police, administrators, merchants and shopkeepers lived. All such people made a living by exploiting the rural population. Conflict between town and country was common and it has been examined in both Bolivia and Ecuador (Preston 1978 and Burgos 1970). This conflict was often latent and erupted periodically in violence and resulted in loss of life. This legacy of bitter rural-urban enmity is a significant component of present urban-rural relations. In such situations countryside and town were real and readily recognised categories.

While categorisation of people and places is an heuristic device, it is necessary to recognise that at no time have categories such as town and country, rural or urban, campesino or vecino been immutable or exclusive. People change roles from one moment to the next and places are viewed in different ways by different people. People from a small town are worldly and knowledgeable in their own environment and are so viewed by many rural residents; yet the same person in a city is seen as a country bumpkin. Rural-born Quechua-speakers working for a time in the city dress in jeans and a sports shirt in the evening and speak Spanish with neighbours but are capable of metamorphosing on return to their place of birth into Quechua-speaking poncho-clad campesinos.

2. CHANGING PLACES, PEOPLE AND LIVELIHOODS

Change is present in all people and communities. People age, the composition of their household varies as children are born, grow up and leave and as others are incorporated into and separate themselves from the household. Places change as houses are built, expand and/or decay and as crops and other vegetation elements change. Qualitative changes occur as soils become poorer with overuse or erosion or improved by drainage or terracing. Urban centres change as more services are available or deteriorate as market trade decreases and people move elsewhere.

In this paper the prime focus of attention is the character of people and their livelihoods in rural areas and related towns and the ways in which both people and the places in which they live are changing. A series of material changes have had a major impact on the lives of an increasing number of rural people in the past three decades and have led to equally important changes in the range of opportunities for making a living. The selective adoption of new livelihood strategies by households and individuals has led to a blurring of the categories of work and place such that urban living may encompass largely rural work and

rural dwellers may increasingly be urban workers. Even apparent farm-based household livelihoods increasingly incorporate non-farm work in countryside, town or city.

Such changes are closely linked with three separate but related elements of change. The mobility of rural and urban populations has increased as old roads have been improved and new ones constructed. Vehicular transport is more widely and frequently available and it is both rapid and relatively reliable. State control of fuel prices has made the cost of travelling affordable to large sectors of the population. This has facilitated migration, enabled migrants to travel further and to return more frequently or from further away with greater ease.

The growing desire for schooling by parents, who themselves had few or no years of such education has been partially satisfied by many governments. The satisfactory completion of primary schooling is now common among people in many rural and urban areas although the quantity and quality of education has deteriorated in many countries during the period of economic hardship of the 1980s (Ghai and Hewitt 1990). Schooling provides credentials and encourages aspirations for other sorts of work than those available in many rural areas or even in small towns and is a powerful incentive to migration. Although migration deprives rural communities and households of potentially productive and useful members it is unlikely that many opportunities would have existed for such people to use their productive skills (Preston and Taveras 1978). Migration usually does provide new opportunities, however scarce, but sending communities also benefit from migration. Most migrants return to their community of origin to visit or, eventually, to live (Preston 1978). Returned and visiting migrants bring back with them newly-acquired skills, capital from savings or goods acquired and often valuable experience in dealing with bureaucracy and in the management of small businesses. Exposure while away to a different range of social and economic relations, to messages conveyed through newspapers, television and radio heightens awareness of the range of cultural values held by different social classes and often leads to a revision of personal values and goals.

A third element of change is a direct consequence of increased mobility, migration and education, although also a reflection of the increased role of money in personal and household ways of living: it is the increase in number and importance of businesses in rural areas. These businesses range from the selling of farm produce though the processing and sale of food to retailing of consumer durables such as gas cookers, music centres and television sets. A range of services also transforms retail activity, in particular those associated with the provision of transport, facilities needed by a more literate population - typing and photocopying - and to satisfy new cultural demands such as casual food and drink.

These changes are remarked on by both fieldworkers and older villagers. Pachano, writing about Ecuadorean highland villages in the early 1980s comments on some becoming dormitory settlements as more and more village people worked elsewhere during the day (Pachano 1986). He remarks that the diversification of household livelihood strategies is a fundamental

characteristic of activities in villages and small towns which combine urban and rural identities. In this context it is therefore not so surprising that in a Javanese village in 1986 and a small Bolivian town in 1989 photocopying was possible and widely used.

The geographical distribution of change is uneven and the rate of change has been checked in recent years but life for the present generation of people in villages in different Third World countries around the Pacific Rim is very different from that experienced a generation ago. The changes described above suggest that the countryside is assuming a different role in people's lives; it is not being abandoned as people leave and rural production becomes less important in domestic strategies. Instead, the greater diversification of activities and the higher degree of mobility means that the simultaneous use of city, town and country resources is increasingly common. Therefore, some of the characteristics of both urban and rural places are no longer so singular. A farmer is also a livestock dealer, a town councillor, a city labourer and a member of a transport co-operative thus part-owner of a bus. A townsperson is a tailor, a shopkeeper, a livestock dealer, a tenant farmer and a student at a technical college. Both of these hypothetical people have economic (and possibly social) interests in both rural and urban places. For them the meaning of urban and rural is now far more associated with the characteristic appearance and distinctive resource endowment of such places rather than the nature of the people who most frequently inhabit such areas. Though people and livelihoods have changed, the physical attributes of the places have changed less and largely in response to new and different evaluations of resource potential.

A number of the changes in the circumstances of people in predominantly rural areas are illustrated by what has been observed over a twenty-year period on one locality in highland Bolivia. Bolivia is one of the poorer countries of Latin America with an income per head of $763 (Inter-American Development Bank 1990). However Bolivia has a particularly valuable informal economy based largely on the production and distribution of cocaine which may be responsible for as much as half of the gross national product (Blanes 1989). The locality includes the most successful of the small urban centres established at the time of the 1952 Revolution and its associated agrarian reform and it is only 60 kilometres from the capital, La Paz. Even so, the changes that have been observed in the course of field work in 1968, 1970-71, 1983 and 1989 are not so singular and there are many other rural localities in Bolivia and elsewhere that have experienced broadly similar changes. The purpose of this case study is to present evidence from long-term field observation of a particular locality to show how household livelihoods have been modified and how people have responded to the growth of their local urban centre in the context of national social and economic change. This will then be able to provide the empirical basis for a discussion of the nature of restructuring that appears to have occurred.

3. THE NORTH-EAST ALTIPLANO AFTER THE 1952 REVOLUTION

The north-east Altiplano of Bolivia shares many of the physical features of the Altiplano of Peru. It is a relatively level area but very high, the most densely-settled areas lying between 3850 and 4500 metres above sea level and receives only about 350mm of precipitation annually. It comprises near-level areas at about 3800m, around Lake Titicaca, whose large water area reduces the risk of frost in the fertile lakeshore fields. It is an area of relatively high population density containing three-quarters of the total Altiplano and is inhabited largely by Aymara-speaking people.

Prior to 1952 a large part of this area was divided into estates owned by an urban-based elite living either in La Paz or small regional centres. A large part of the marketable surplus was disposed of by landlords direct to major consumers - such as breweries - or through the city market network. The estates were worked by a servile labour force of colonos who had the use of a small area of land in return for a variety of services. That land not in estates was held by freeholding communities guided by a traditional leadership and usually with very little land per household. The 1953 land reform was particularly effective in the north-east Altiplano where there had been organised opposition to the landowners since the 1930s. Not surprisingly the principal beneficiaries were the estate workers among whom all or part of the estate land was divided[1]. Members of freeholding communities (comunarios) gained little unless they could recover any of their land that had been appropriated by estates during the previous 40 years.

The organisation of the estate workers through unions (sindicatos) was important in encouraging the expression of their needs, apart from speeding the process of land allocation. Freeholding communities also benefited as newly-created services in the countryside were used by comunario and ex-colono alike. Considerable stimulus for change following (and even before) 1952 came through the network of rural schools, especially those staffed by teachers from radical rural teacher training centres such as that at Warisata in the north-east Altiplano. Two changes were particularly important in allowing more rapid change in both former estates and free communities: The creation of new weekly markets and of new, quasi-urban centres where new schools and second homes for rural people were located (Preston 1970 and Clark 1968).

The new markets were necessary to handle the surplus production formerly appropriated by the landlords and now sold by producers to rural and urban merchants and consumers. Producers, local and city merchants and those providing related services (especially transport) benefited from these changes and more money was gained by rural producers. The creation of new towns was often, but not always, associated with a weekly market and those established at nodal points grew and provided a range of services to local

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1. More details of the agrarian reform procedure can be found in Preston 1969 or Carter 1965.

people and travellers on a daily basis. As schools were built and grew in size, teachers and pupils alike generated business for local people.

Not all new markets or towns were successful but attempts at the establishment of other new towns and markets still continue with varying degrees of success. By the end of the 1980s few relics of the old estates exist but, although some areas have transformed their agricultural system by the intensive production of flowers, onions or something similar. For many people land is scarce and does not provide a living without other work, often elsewhere. The period since 1952 has thus seen a series of major changes in land tenure, marketing and social consciousness but these differ only in degree from changes that have occurred in other parts of the Andes or even elsewhere in the Third World.

4. BATALLAS AROUND 1970

In the context of a post-agrarian reform rural society and economy Batallas symbolises the success of some of the recently-created towns and its creation and growth is largely the result of the activity of the members of the freeholding community in which it is located. Because community members received no extra land during the agrarian reform process the development of the town is more an outcome of the newly-enlarged post-1953 rural market system than of the more intensive use of extra plots of former estate land. Community members have little land (½-1 ha.) and outside work has long been necessary for survival.

Batallas market was started in the early 1940s when few estate owners would allow markets on their land. It was the idea of the schoolteacher who was from the teachers' college in Warisata and it was felt that it would have the dual function of providing a regular source of food and manufactured goods for local people (and particularly people such as teachers, without their own land) and providing income for local people from the sale of their produce[1]. After a slow start the market became established, aided by its position adjacent to the main highway from La Paz along the eastern shores of Lake Titicaca on the way to Peru via Copacabana. The town was conceived by the community around the time of the Revolution of 1952 but the plan was not drawn up until May 1953. It seems to be the earliest established of the new towns that were studied in 1968 (Preston 1970).

Its singularity is that it was founded in a freeholding community: the majority of such new settlements were established in former estates. It is also noteworthy because of its longstanding rivalry with its neighbouring former estate, Karhuiza, which has long been the regional union headquarters and which has built its own new town only 100 metres from Batallas. Because of its relative success and evident prosperity, Batallas demonstrates some of the features that other developing new towns may later acquire and it was partly for this reason that it was intensively studied in 1970-71 as part of a comparative study of

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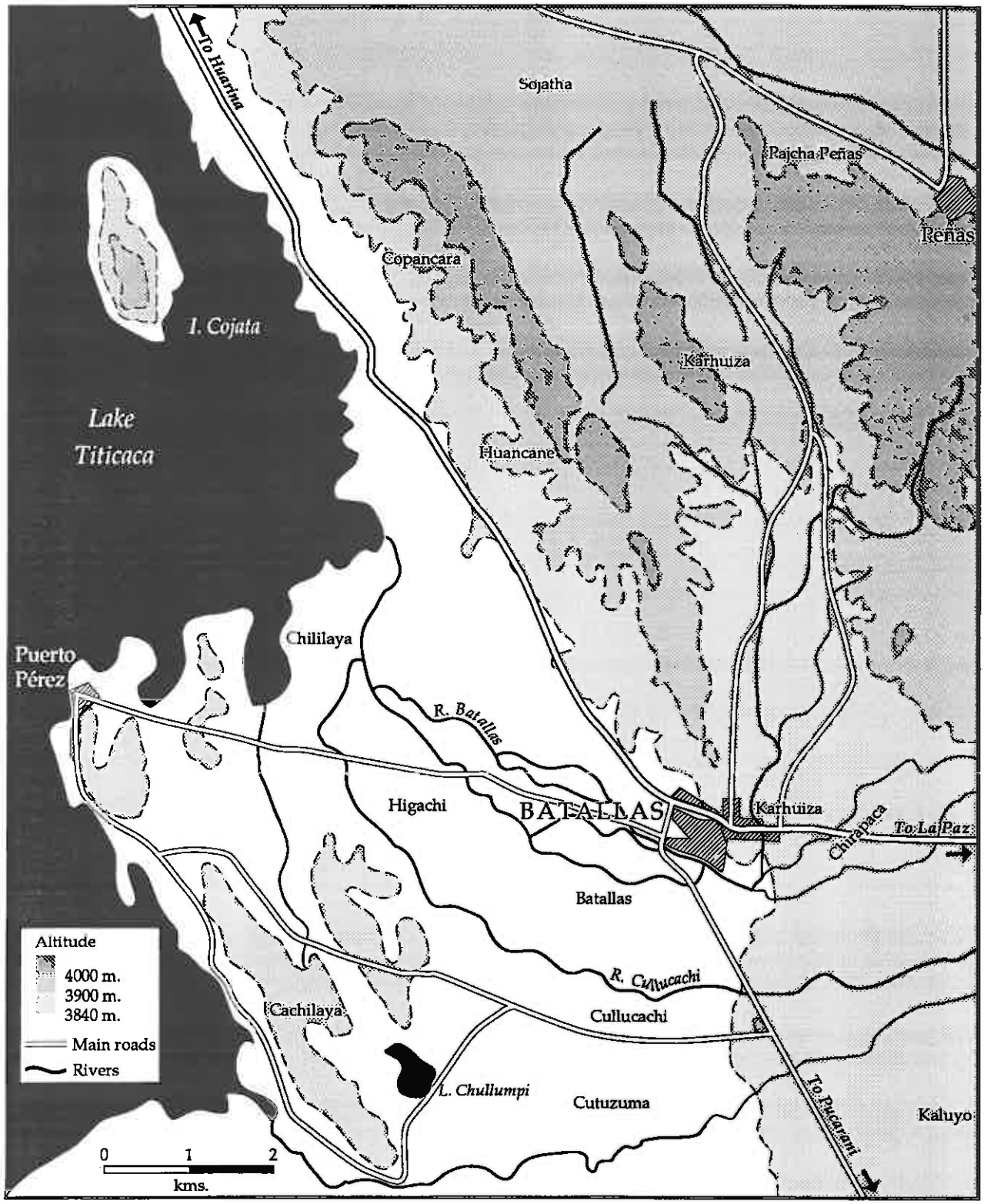
1. Based on accounts from interviews with Batallas residents in July 1968.


To Huarina
Sojatha
Pajcha Peñas
Peñas
Copancara
I. Cojata
Karhuiza
Lake
Titicaca
Huancane
Chililaya
Puerto
Pérez
R. Batallas
Higachi
BATALLAS
Karhuiza
Chirapaca
To La Paz
Batallas
R. Cullucachi
Cullucachi
Cachilaya
L. Chullumpi
Cutuzuma
To Puciarani
Kaluyo
Altitude
4000 m.
3900 m.
3840 m.
Main roads
Rivers
0
1
2
kms.

an old and a new urban centre to see the extent to which they influenced farming. In that study it was concluded that there was little difference in the ways in which farmers were influenced by the towns, for example as a source of new ideas, but that major differences did exist with regard to the administration of 'justice' and in the attitude of those in charge of the weekly markets. Batallas police and town officials punished so-called offenders less than the old centre. Market taxes in Batallas were collected jovially and less coercion of sellers was reported and observed. The services provided by Batallas were a large and varied market, a limited range of shops, a medical centre and a large and respected primary school. It was not yet the capital of its own canton nor was it a ceremonial centre of importance: the priest did not live there and came only on market days.

In 1971 the town had 217 completed houses, of which probably less than half were occupied all week, no water supply and no electricity. Most of the people who either lived in the town or had houses there were from Batallas community. The only outsiders are a handful of people with personal or commercial links with some of the more important town residents; they came from La Paz and a scattering of other parts of the northern Altiplano. One or two families from Pucarani, an old-established town nearby and capital of the Province of Los Andes, had houses in Batallas but no-one from any of the surrounding communities had been able to acquire a plot in the town. The principal reason for this was the shortage of land and people from Batallas seem to have given priority in acquiring land in the town. This is in marked contrast to some other new urban centres established along the road to La Paz, such as Palcoco and Corque Amaya, where as many as half the resident families are from more distant parts of the Altiplano[1]. People from communities surrounding Batallas wanted to move to the town and, because it was hard to get a plot, those in Karhuiza and Cullucachi have built their own small towns.

In 1970 most Batallas people lived in the countryside (campo) and, even though many had houses or at least plots in town, only between a quarter and a third of the Batallas households lived in the town. They came into town on Saturday for the market, maybe also on Thursday and Friday if they were preparing pigs for sale and for festivals. In some cases, children attending school stayed in the town house (or that of a relative) during the week during term time. People living in the campo referred to the advantages of living in town in cultural terms, as well as the material advantages of access to services and the possibilities of trade. Older people talked of the town as a place where one spoke Spanish, males dressed in jeans rather than homespun clothes and had a better chance of a 'civilised[2]' life.

People based in the town regarded those living primarily in the campo as comunarios (community people) who lived there because of

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1. From September 1981 notes.

2. Using the term civilisado.

the needs of the livestock and all the oldest community families (originarios) lived there[1]. This was particularly the view of the group of men who had held a series of town and community posts and who were seen by others as a town clique.

People living in Batallas made a living in a variety of ways. Most had access to land and a number rented land for grazing from people in neighbouring Karhuiza. Some had small businesses in the town, many shops existed - 84 buildings served at least occasionally as shops - and about four tailors worked some or all of the week in town. The most important commercial activity was the purchase and slaughter of pigs. Between 50 and 70 people were pig dealers. Using personal, family and local capital they bought pigs in communities and homes all over the northern Altiplano, as well as in the sub-tropical valleys of the Yungas to the east of La Paz and in the recently-colonised areas near Caranavi. Pigs were slaughtered and the prepared carcasses sold very early on Saturday morning, in time for buyers to transport them to La Paz for sale the same day. Few people reared pigs for sale in any numbers. It was particularly a young persons occupation, requiring much travelling.

Batallas in 1970 was a small town packed with people on market day and all but deserted for the rest of the week. Many of those who lived in town spent much time looking after land and livestock in the campo where most of the members of the community lived. Seeking people to interview on a weekday after 9 a.m. was difficult. Although there was an identifiable group who were townsfolk and had been closely associated with the formation and development of the town, they depended on the support of those still living in the countryside to retain their positions of authority and among any group of officials gathered beside the town office there would be a few who returned to their families in the campo in the evening and seemed to represent the interests of those in the community who were not townsfolk.

5. BATALLAS AFTER 19 YEARS

Field work in Batallas in 1968 and 1971 provided a basis of knowledge about the community in the context of other neighbouring communities as well as several other recently-formed urban centres. Further visits in 1981 and, for a month, in 1989 have provided a view of some of the changes over this period. Useful data were provided by a survey of all occupied homes in Batallas carried out with a small team of assistants at the end of the period there in 1989.

The physical expansion of Batallas is striking and easily verifiable from photographs. Despite the continued constriction

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1. Interview with Gisbert, 29 July 1968

of the town's growth by a shortage of land on which to build[1], it has expanded and there are 70 per cent more houses in 1989 than 1971 although the exact population change is harder to estimate. It is likely that the population has doubled since a larger proportion of the houses are now occupied (about 70 per cent) than in 1971. The population enumerated in 1989 was 1018 with 1318 said to be normally resident.

The changes in the physical appearance of the town include two storey houses. These now have balconies overhanging the street and sometimes interior balconies overlooking a tiny patio. Many have yards housing vehicles or farm machinery. Most people in the community of Batallas have moved to town while retaining the old home for shelter and occasional overnight stays to protect crops or livestock.

The most striking set of changes is related to the services available which reflect both the demands of the local population and the desire to satisfy them on the part of the shopkeepers and the political leadership at both local and national level. In 1981 a shop was selling gas cookers (with four burners and ovens, made in Brazil or Argentina), electric irons and blenders and claimed to be doing good business. Several shops sold coffins, made in La Paz, 14 shops sold ice creams in 1989 using a number of small boys who sold the ices to passing travellers in buses on the adjacent highway as well as in the rural areas round about. Electricity provision has facilitated the use of consumer goods and, judging by the distribution of aerials as much as one third of Batallas homes may have television. A local bus co-operative includes Batallas people and at least two buses a day travel from one or other of the communities near Batallas to La Paz. The proliferation of buses and minibuses travelling along the main highway means that it is rarely necessary to wait less than 10-15 minutes before getting a bus for the one-hour ride to the edge of the capital. Most secondary school teachers now commute daily from wherever they live rather than seek lodging near to school. An Aymara-speaking Polish priest lives in a house next to the church and is involved in a range of activities; a separate building houses a group of nuns who likewise engage in community work and have a photocopier, used by village people. The Catholic Church has co-operated in the establishment of the recently-opened technical agrarian university adjacent to the town's large secondary school.

The pig business continues to be the major commercial operation, with almost 200 people slaughtering up to 500 pigs each week, a tripling of the number of people involved since 1971. Pigs are now officially inspected in Batallas and taken directly to La Paz to be sold. If commercial activity has increased farming seems to have changed little. There seems more scepticism regarding the use of chemical fertiliser and no new crop varieties or breeds of livestock seemed to have been widely adopted. One

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1. A group of young men in 1989 commented that, becuase of the shortage of building plots, there were actually three-storey houses and people were having to sleep in tiered bunks to be able to house the whole (extended) family [field notes 9 August 1990].

innovation of potential importance is the construction of raised beds (camellones) in the lowlying grasslands in Higachi where excellent yields of potatoes were expected (on the basis of experience in comparable areas) in this re-creation of prehistoric cultivation techniques that were formerly more widespread in such lowlands around Lake Titicaca (Smith et al. 1968, Erickson and Candle 1989). The contrast between commercial dynamism and lack of rural change should not be over-stated. Batallas has depended on non-agricultural activities for a large part of its cash income for a number of generations. Local oral tradition suggests that the community was created by a group of indians being given land in return for having worked on the building of the La Paz - Potosí railway earlier this century but land has always been scarce.

Migration is part of everyday life for many households. Some older people interviewed had lived away in mining areas or in the city but only 12 per cent of heads of household living in Batallas in 1989 had lived in La Paz. Almost 20 per cent of children aged over 15 of Batallas households lived elsewhere. Some people live in Batallas but work elsewhere. Nineteen people, including nine heads of household work away from the town: they are mostly male and often primary school teachers who travel to work in rural areas between Batallas and La Paz. Few people remain in the countryside to sleep. Only a handful of older people were interviewed who stayed on the farm on their own. Even they had houses in town where they sometimes stayed and where kinsfolk lived.

Household livelihood strategies are even more diversified than they used to be. In all areas of micro-holdings people must live by more than just farming their own plots. More Batallas people engage in a wider range of jobs than in the 1960s. One person may be, at the same time, a teacher, farmer, shopkeeper, and moneylender. His/her household will include an even greater diversity of jobs. Over a third of Batallas households have no land[1] and they may be a group who chose to live in the town more for its business possibilities than as a base for farming.

Over a twenty year period the town has doubled in size as virtually everyone has moved from the countryside to the town. Retail activity has increased both in value of goods sold and the range of goods available locally has increased. The quality of life in Batallas has materially improved. These changes, according to farm informants, appear to have taken place without much change in farming systems.

6. RESTRUCTURING RURALITY?

To answer the question that forms part of the title of this paper the main changes in the Batallas region over the past twenty years must be reiterated and the extent to which they represent a new ordering of life for Batallas people considered. Four

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1. The mean age of the heads of such households is similar to that of all households and they have more years of schooling than other heads of household.

salient changes emerge.

1. There has been a dramatic emptying of the countryside as people forsake their thatched home in the fields for all or a part of a two-storey, tin-roofed town house. If one criterion of rural is a low population density and scattered homes (Urry 1989, 48) then Batallas community is no longer rural.

2. It is likely that the social composition of Batallas is more heterogenous than previously as houseolds become established in the town whose living comes more from the provision of services and the exercising of craft skills (such as tailoring) than from farming. The use of the town as a dormitory by Batallas-born people working as teachers elsewhere introduces yet another high status element into the town population. Land and its ownsership is no longer a major determinant of social status. Characterising the social composition of households and communities becomes complex for each person's activity pattern may intersect more than one social stratum.

3. More people work outside the community and much further away than before. Work includes wage earning in villages and nearby small towns, renting or sharecropping land in other communities, selling goods and services in markets and fairs over a wide area and, in pig dealing, trading as widely as ever before but now selling carcasses and meat in the city rather than locally. This means that Batallas people operate over a larger area in northern Bolivia than ever before in association with a wider variety of jobs.

4. The range of goods and services that are available in the Batallas area (mostly in the town itself) is greater. Thus, the quality of life available is very much better than twenty years ago. In particular the quality and range of education that is locally available is unequalled in any location within 40 kms.

Although rural freeholding communities were seldom so culturally and economically isolated as those on estates, the changes in Batallas represent a restructuring in the relative importance of different activities in daily life. Few activities have been adopted that were previously unknown - save service activities that were previously technically more difficult such as ice cream making or welding - but far more people are spending more time and earning more money in activities that were previously of little importance. By contrast, although farming is a part of the life for the two-thirds of Batallas households that have access to land, it is of relatively less importance than formerly.

An acute analysis of the ways in which rural regions are experiencing restructuring is provided by Urry (op.cit.). The relevance of his major points to the case of Batallas will be considered in order to judge the extent to which changes in the countrysides of northern industrialised nations are similar to those of a part of the Third World.

He argues that contemporary capitalism does not now generate increasing concentrations of capital, state power and labour in urban areas, nor are social relations in rural areas dominated by

social relations in urban areas (op.cit.). While the concentration of power and capital in, say, Bolivia in the capital city is very great, it has been argued by Roberts and others that the process of contemporary urban growth gives greater importance to second order urban centres (Roberts 1989). The process of capital accumulation in Batallas through the greater relative importance of wage-earning and profit-seeking (selling goods and services) suggests that the level of living of its people has improved markedly. The degree of diversity in household livelihood strategies reduces the extent to which it is socially or economically dominated by La Paz. Furthermore, Batallas has successfully exploited its political links with the capital - often using influential emigrants - to enhance its political status and to obtain its superior education facilities.

Urry further argues that highly significant changes are taking place in the spatial structuring of contemporary capitalist societies that make rural and urban characterisation of places simplistic or even misleading. This is represented in the Bolivian case by the creation of an 'urban' centre by 'rural' people and by the development of varied and geographically wide-ranging forms of work as an autocthonous response to previously more limited livelihood opportunities.

The social changes taking place in local class systems are far more complex than can be summarised by the creation of a rural middle class either in Britain or Bolivia. Although the agrarian reform created a new landed group in Bolivia, it was far from homogeneous (individuals received widely differing amounts of land) and, as we have said, freeholding communities such as Batallas received no land. But, in former estates and freeholding communities alike, the last two decades have seen a progressive sub-division of land among heirs and many have now little land. The many and varied activities other than farming in which people engage make class affiliation increasingly complex. Although the precise occupational changes are very different from those in industrialised countries, the continuous evolution of social composition to reflect local conditions and opportunities is similar.

One group of changes in rural areas in Europe and Anglo-America have been termed counter-urbanisation, by which is meant the relocation of people and some forms of employment from urban areas to surrounding rural regions. This is already evident near to the mega-cities of Latin America. The changes in Bolivia and elsewhere in Andean America include a dramatic improvement in the quality of life in small towns where there is a high level of commercial activity and the extension of domestic livelihood strategies of rural people to encompass work in cities and other more distant rural areas as well as the movement of urban people to live more cheaply and decently beyond the city's periphery.

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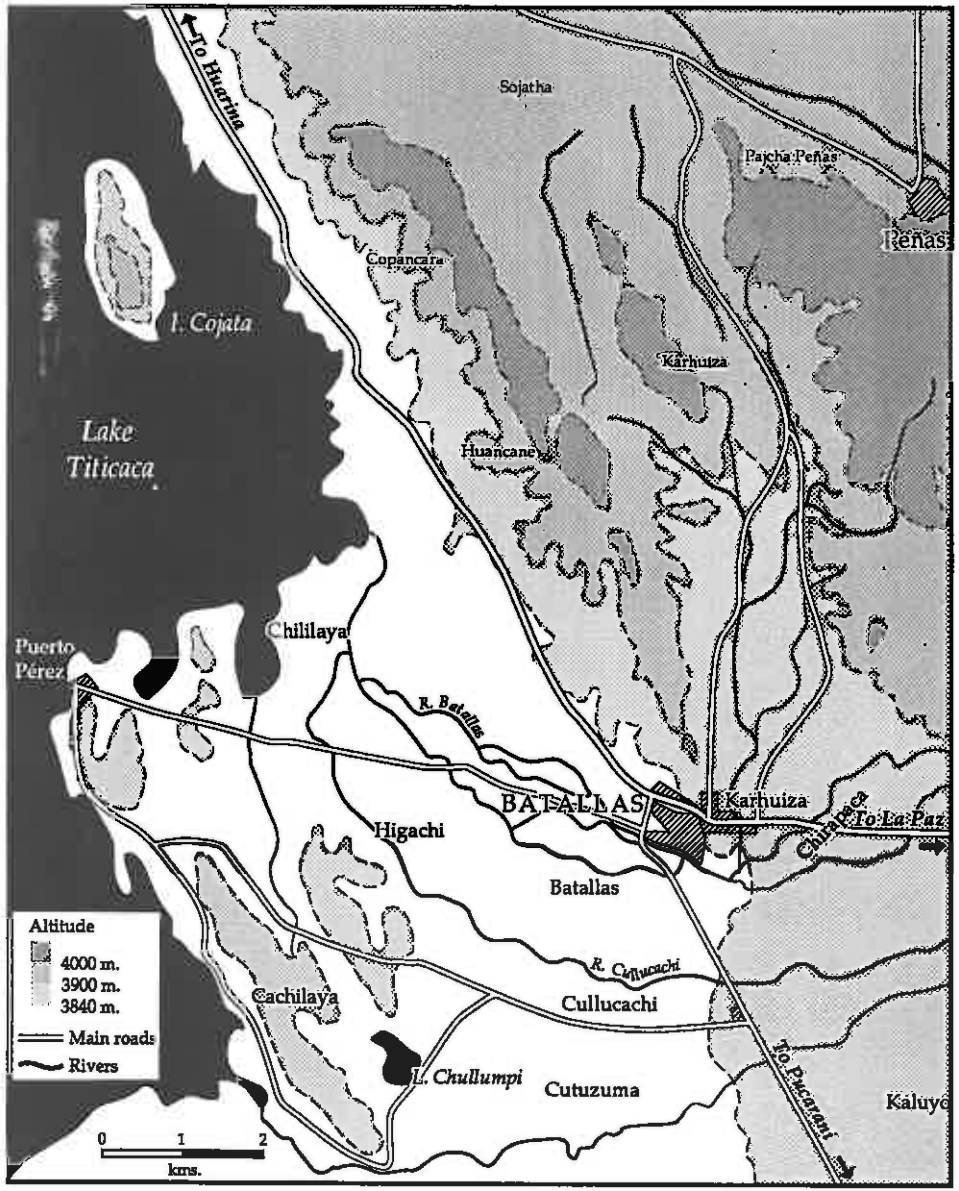
To Huarina
Sojatha
Pajcha Peñas
Peñas
Copancara
I. Cojata
Karhuiza
Lake
Titicaca
Huancane
Chililaya
Puerto
Pérez
R. Batallas
BATALLAS
Karhuiza
To La Paz
Higachi
Batallas
Altitude
4000 m.
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3840 m.
Main roads
Rivers
R. Cullucachi
Cachilaya
Cullucachi
I. Chullumpi
Cutuzuma
To Pucarani
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