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Title

The Fiesta System and Economic Change.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/27f411nn>

Journal

Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 13(3)

ISSN

1359-0987

Authors

Colby, Benjamin N
Smith, Waldemar R

Publication Date

1978-09-01

DOI

10.2307/2801963

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Peer reviewed

beliefs in the perception of misfortune, she points out that the logic of Zulu conceptions (and, one might add, those of others elsewhere in Africa) renders explanations couched in terms of ancestral 'malevolence' inappropriate; for ancestral intervention is regarded as just sanction for the neglect of formal obligations in the establishment of marriage. Such intervention disrupts the reproductive process within the offending union, and the wrath of the dead is thus generally only of aetiological significance in the early years of marriage. In a similar manner, Ngubane explores the Zulu notion of pollution in terms of the structural location of women in kinship and ritual organisation. She lucidly demonstrates the consonance of the position of women in the social and symbolic orders: they are marginal in terms of the norms of patrilineality, in their association with the processes of birth and death, and in their role as mediators with the spiritual realm.

Inevitably, such an explicit analytical focus must also impose limitations. The author's concern with the interrelation of cosmos and kinship order serves to provide her with a framework which is more or less conventional in the modern anthropological approach to mystical systems. As Fabrega has suggested (Fabrega, H. 1972. *Medical anthropology*. In *Biennial Review of Anthropology: 1971*. (ed.) B. Siegel. pp. 176-229. Stanford Univ. Press) this perspective often tends to imply that illness is regarded as a second order phenomenon, as an index of disruption in a system whose normative arrangement is the primary concern. Now, while such a focus might well reflect certain dominant emic perceptions, it is often insufficient to handle other aspects of ethnomedical knowledge which are vital to the comparative analysis of healing systems. Hence, despite Ngubane's excellent discussion of illness as a lack of balance between patient and environment, and of the colour symbolism of medicinal treatment, we do not really gain a comprehensive picture of indigenous disease taxonomies, or of the full repertoire of available therapeutic techniques. Nor do we learn how causal principles actually function as a body of aetiological knowledge. Perhaps, more attention to these issues in relation to everyday medical practice among the Nyuswa might have afforded insight into the degree of flexibility inherent in the overall system, and the manner in which it serves to cope with therapeutic failure and intractable illness. There is also little discussion of the place of Western medicine in Zulu thought and healing practice, and one gains no clear impression of the extent to which alternative

beliefs and techniques come into play in the context of treatment.

However, these reservations do not detract from the overall value of the work. Ngubane's fine observations raise a number of significant issues in the study of health and healing. It is to be hoped that she will continue to develop these insights in broader ethnographic and theoretical perspective.

JEAN COMAROFF

University of Manchester

SMITH, WALDEMAR R. *The fiesta system and economic change*. xii, 194 pp., plates, maps, bibliogr. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1977. \$15

This is an interesting study of social, religious and economic change in a Mam-speaking region of the western Guatemalan highlands. It covers the towns of San Pedro, San Marcos, and San Miguel Ixtahuacan, along with some smaller villages. A rapidly expanding population, depleted land, and national political domination by coffee, cotton, and other interests lead to a continuing impoverishment of the Indians. The interesting exception is the town of San Pedro (and also Quezaltenango, which the author mentions briefly) where Indian businesses have expanded at the expense of Ladino businesses.

The book begins with an attack on the Harvard Chiapas Project as insular and functionalist (in the old superorganic sense). Chapters 3 and 4 develop the critique. The author assails Cancian's view of the religious cargo system as functioning to prohibit Ladino-isation and to preserve the Indian lifestyle. But Smith's alternative view that it 'deepened the fragmentation of Indian society into a series of culturally self-sufficient and politically ineffective communities' (p. 14) does not seem all that different from Cancian. Smith also criticises the pluralistic approach that van den Berghe and I used for the Ixil region in Guatemala as giving too much emphasis to ideas and not enough to economics.

The major part of the book is a detailed comparative description of the three main towns, their religious organisation, changes occurring within them, trends towards modernity and impoverishment, and other aspects of the socio-cultural setting.

The last eight pages of Smith's book are an exposition of the kind of political ecology he feels is important. It brings together much of the earlier materials. But it is on a different tack from the critique and religious focus with which he began.

For the most part Smith's book adds further useful information to regional studies

of Guatemala and Chiapas. The newest or most unexpected finding is how Ladino businessmen are at a competitive disadvantage with the Indian entrepreneurs. The Indians' values are such that they are willing to live below their means and re-invest their profits, while the Ladinos live above theirs. The Indian families are more labour-intensive. Indian wives can work even with infants, whom they carry strapped on their backs, while Ladino wives with small children are unproductive and hire household help. Here Smith shows how ideas, that is, ethnic identity, values and goals, can lead to a significant socio-economic development.

The author's interpretations of cultural change in the region provide useful matter for further study. A few of them should be challenged. For example, no economic or demographic models are presented or tested to support the statement that population concentration is a major reason for Indian entrepreneurial activity. Without more detailed specification, there are too many counter examples. We would not normally expect detailed formal models and tests in such a broad and general work as this, if it were not for the criticism that Smith levels against others, some of which is convincing but some of which can be settled only through testable, quantitative models, or through a more explicit theory concerning the recursive nature of cultural processes. There are no charts or tables and very few quantitative data in the book.

Indications are that political unrest is on the increase in Guatemala again. Studies such as this one will be very helpful in providing the kind of background needed to understand the situation.

BENJAMIN N. COLBY

University of California, Irvine

L'uomo: società, tradizione, sviluppo. Vol. I, No. 1. 147 pp., illus., bibliogr. [Roma]: Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo delle Attività Educative e Culturale in Africa, 1977. \$12 p.a.

Readers of *Man* were recently reminded of the institutional impoverishment and disarray of Italian anthropology (Bernardi, *Man* N.S., II (1976), p. 283); the arrival of a new sister journal, a namesake, edited by Grottanelli and due to come out twice a year, is clearly an effort to remedy that state of affairs. The Editorial says it is intended to meet the needs of ethnographers and practical men concerned with 'collaboration of societies from different continents and different levels of development' (p. 1). Processes of transcul-

turation are important, painful (they will entail 'sweat, tears and blood for . . . hundreds of millions of men' (p. 2), long-drawn-out and costly. 'Ethnologists, among all scientists (*scienziati*), are those who have the greatest competence in dealing with acculturative processes. . . . Without transforming itself into an applied science, ethnology is a natural seconder (*affiancatrice*) of the efforts of governments, of national and international bodies who give aid' (p. 3).

The first issue contains six articles. Bernardi, reviewing general crises in anthropology, concludes that they are crises not of decay but of growth: anthropology adapts itself to a world in which people are face to face as never before, and in which new kinds of people, hitherto taken seriously in the West mostly only by anthropologists, now have to be regarded as important by everyone: 'their cultural value and their political weight represent the most important discovery . . . of our century'. Because anthropologists have been less ethnocentric for longer than most other people they are as it were the compères of the anthropological revolution. They can do urgent anthropology; they can study complex societies if they make the necessary advances; if they are ethically clean they can do applied anthropology.

Lanternari contributes an article with illuminating details of De Martino's life and work and establishes a case that a distinctive contribution can be made by Italian anthropologists. De Martino was not a professional anthropologist, going to places because that was his job, but a man impelled by an inner need to find his identity, to 'historicise' himself: his studies of popular beliefs in Italian regions were related to this need, which is characteristic of not-merely-professional men. Moreover, he had considered the methods and ideas of Malinowski and found them unresponsive to his purposes; functionalists were tied by their origins 'on the bandwagon of British imperialism and . . . favoured a science openly in the service of policies of "control and education" (Radcliffe-Brown)' (p. 41). De Martino's successors have established a folkloric and ethnomusicological tradition; students of popular religion have widened their scope to take account of the changes produced by expanding capitalism and consumerism, and of the growth of magical and mystical beliefs in the bourgeoisie, and have paid attention to Christian popular forms. For all his defects De Martino is 'a model' (p. 45) for Italian practitioners of an Italian anthropology and they should not run away from their heritage into the arms of foreign masters.