

**Magda von der Heydt-Coca (Baltimore) 1995**

***When Worlds Collide: the Incorporation of the Andean World into the Emerging World-Economy in the Colonial Period.***

The collective rise of the Western World during „the long sixteenth century“ coincided with the decline of the newly discovered Andean civilization. The impact of the conquest not only halted the evolution of the Andean society but actually reversed it. In this paper I analyze the incorporation of Andean civilizations into the emerging world-system. The conquest set off a spiral of irreversible decline in the indigenous civilizations. The dynamics of this process of social transformations are characterized by cumulative causation and self-reinforcement mechanisms. I show how the colonial institutions have shaped the lives of these involuntary participants of the world-economy and traces the paths of self-reinforcement mechanisms in the historical facts.

The first part deals with the Andean culture before the conquest, the second part with its transformation. To follow the changes more systematically, I disassemble the holistic concept of culture into three levels of relationships: human-nature, human-human and human-cosmos. The Andean system of production remained unchanged. In fact, the surplus extraction depended on the exploitation of the self-sufficient Andean communities and their technology. In contrast, the human-human relationships were changed substantially. The imposed new colonial economic institutions of mita, tribute, and repartimiento, paved the way for subsequent changes in the social system such as caciquism, stratification among commoners, migration, and acculturation, which had dysfunctional and disruptive effects on the Andean society. The relations of power imposed by the colonization are also reflected in the post-columbian Andean mythology. A process of attrition took place over time. Andean civilization lost its socio-political complexity and regressed to the community level.

The last part presents a theoretical discussion of the cumulative causation dynamic that worked out the decline of the Andean civilization and examines some assumptions of social evolutionary theory.

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