

By 1979 Congress was discussing a federal land use bill but it failed to pass. Failure of the bill's passage was linked to the perception that this might be the first step toward national land use planning. Strong fears were voiced that such policies would lead ultimately to a situation where government tells every landowner what they do with their property.

Lehman presents three primary conclusions from the examination of land use legislation. He argues, successfully, that on the political level, the movement for agricultural land preservation in the 1970s provided environmentalists an important inroad into agricultural policy making. Social science research was enhanced as many of the issues dealt with the social phenomena rather than strictly physical issues of land. These discussions renewed the focus on the ecological restraints on agriculture, enhancing the perspective that agriculture was moving from an era of abundance into an era of uncertainty about land, water, and energy resources.

Lehman concludes that farmland preservation should be viewed in the context of a more encompassing scope of federal and state policies. Export policy, agricultural research, federal grants, tax policies, federal interest rates, and even birth control policies, all of which are part of the context of land preservation in the 1990s. Given the increasing importance of land preservation, the movement within USDA to include sustainable agriculture in their discussions about agricultural production, and the increasing linkages between environmental and rural groups, this book makes an important contribution. By placing in context the federal policies influencing farmland preservation Lehman has provided a service to those of us who study and work with agricultural, environmental, and rural interests.

## **Prophets of Agroforestry: Guaraní Communities and Commercial Gathering, by Richard K. Reed Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. xiii, 251 pp.**

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The Guaraní language is an anomaly in lowland South America. It is the only native American Indian language with more than a million speakers in that vast region--indeed, it numbers more than three times that amount. Most of the thirty or so surviving languages of the same family (Tupí-Guaraní), which are spoken in a broad expanse across lowland South America, exhibit fewer than 1,000 native speakers; many have fewer than 500 speakers. I know of one Tupí-Guaraní language originally spoken in the region west of the lower Tocantins River valley, that has only two known native speakers, a not so uncommon occurrence in today's lowland South America, with its sadly diminishing native language diversity. The Guaraní language, in contrast to threatened native languages, is spoken along with Spanish by about 90 percent of the inhabitants of Paraguay, most of whom, it seems, do not consider themselves to be "Indians" (*índios*), but rather Paraguayans more generally. It would be as if most of the citizens of the United States spoke the national language of business and government, English, in addition to a mother language, Penobscot, but who otherwise continued in every other way to be Americans as we think of them today. The analogy is extreme, but it helps illustrate the concept of an unusual nation in South America, Paraguay, that is bilingual but not really bicultural.

Whereas a language may exist apart from the culture with which its origins are associated, Richard Reed's new book makes a case for persistence of some native Guaraní cultural traits in a study of Chiripá communities in eastern Paraguay's Mbaracayú region. It is a useful though problematic ethnographic contribution. The Chiripá are one of three "native" Guaraní speaking groups in Paraguay, the other two being the Mbyá and the Pai-tavyterã. They differ among themselves, and all consider themselves distinct from the Paraguayan national society in nuanced particulars of ethnic identity. The Chiripá who are the subject of this monograph are further distinguished by their agroforestry. In particular, this book argues that subsistence production of food (a native trait) and extraction of a nontimber forest product (*yerba* [*Ilex paraguensis*, Aquifoliaceae -- holly family], used in the stimulating tea-like drink called *yerba maté*) for an external market are compatible with forest conservation. Specifically, the central argument of this work on the little known (outside of Paraguay) Chiripá people is that their lifeways until recently exemplified that otherwise elusive buzzword, sustainable development. That is, the Chiripá, according to Reed, are a people who have been able to use and commercialize the forest without destroying its physiognomy, or and altering or reducing its species composition.

But however useful this contribution may be as firsthand documentation of a little known, often neglected group of native South Americans, the methods used to evaluate the central argument are not transparent enough. The author's fieldwork with the Chiripá was in the respected tradition of participant observation over the long term, and Reed acquired a working knowledge of the language. That experience is valid. But the reliability of the finding that Chiripá agroforestry represents a model of sustained extraction, or an informed prophesy as to how agroforestry and conservation may be achieved simultaneously in eastern Paraguay or elsewhere in lowland South America, suffers frequently from a lack of specification as to how the primary data used to support that finding with respect to the Chiripá were constructed.

The Chiripá speak the same language as the other two native Guaraní groups of eastern Paraguay, even though there seem to be minor (though perhaps not to them) dialect differences. This language is fundamentally different from- though related to- the language of the neighboring Aché (or Guayaki), at one time a hunting-and-gathering people. The Chiripá are ethnically distinct in terms of religion and residence (p. 16). Their religious leaders (*tamoí*) use ceremonial speech that is "mutually unintelligible" with that of the Mbyá and Pai-tavyterã (p. 13). Their residence patterns seem to involve some tendency toward neolocality and the descent ideology is bilateral. The village (*tekoá*) seems to be an amalgamation of neolocal households united by ad hoc bilateral relations and some diffuse allegiance to a particular *tamoí*. Several *tekoá* make up what is called the "larger individual community," an artifact of national administration. It is not clear whether there is a native label for that community and whether it has any corporate existence (p. 79) in native ideology. Reed argues that nuclear family households are the "primary units of residence, production, and consumption" (pp. 88-89). They plant and harvest in subsistence swiddens (*kokué*) according to usufruct norms. These swiddens contain maize, sweet manioc, sweet potatoes, squashes, and other important food crops. Cash is obtained by sale of yerba leaves that are harvested from trees that grow in the low forest (*ka'ati*), unlike the high forest from which swiddens are cleared.

The author states the central argument several times, but the data do not always support it. He claims that "Yerba extraction has not destroyed the fauna, forest cover, or soil of Mbaracayú" (p. 25). But he also states the "Chiripá transplant [*yerba*] seedlings away from competition and cut away the undergrowth surrounding young plants . . . Thus, the forest of Mbaracayú has been transformed by centuries of human intervention" (p. 27). The evidence that the fauna, forest cover, and soil have not been altered or destroyed by *yerba* extraction is not given, so it is hard to evaluate the claims for sustainability here. Extraction does not involve felling or killing the trees, though, so there is at least negative evi-

dence to support Reed's central argument.

The extraction and sale of *yerba* seem similar in structural and economic aspects to the extraction and sale of natural rubber in Amazonia and chicle in lowland Mesoamerica. The resource in all three cases is scattered in the forest, or in some specific habitat of the forest; extraction does not, in principle, kill the tree; and labor involved in extraction tends to be individualistic. The atomization of Chiripá society, with its emphasis on nuclear family economics, seems comparable to that describe, by Robert F. Murphy, cited in Reed, for the Mundurucu Indians of south-central Amazonia, who became increasingly dependent on rubber extraction while maintaining subsistence agriculture. But whether the Chiripá nuclear family is usually not embedded in some larger group, even if that is not strictly a unilocal and corporate group, remains unclear in this ethnography.

It is difficult to assess Chiripá reasons for changing sites for swiddens. At one point, Reed argues that "as the fertility of their present soil and forests decline, Chiripá *tekoá* believe in their rights to move into new forest " (p. 86), which incidentally implies that the *tekoá* and not the nuclear family may be the "primary unit of residence," if not also of production and of consumption. Primary data on soil fertility are not given. But whether declining soil fertility is the underlying reason for village relocation becomes an open question, if not a contradiction, upon reading that "Weed and insect invasions, not soil fertility, are the principle reasons the Chiripá shift their plots" (p. 127). Perhaps the reasons for individual families' shifting of swidden plots are different from the reasons why aggregates of individual families in the form of the *tekoá* relocate the settlement, but if so these reasons are not explained in the text.

The null hypothesis with regard to group activity, as informed by Reed's participant observation, might be stated as "The *tekoá*, not the nuclear family, is the primary unit of production." A *tekoá* is first defined as a small group that has been "the traditional settlement unit in the forest" (p. 79). It is an exclusive group based on kinship, however cognatic the links, since individuals without kin relations in the group "can be excluded from the social life of the group" (p. 79). In this regard, I take issue with Reed's literal translation of *tekoá* as 'place of cultural life' from *tekó* 'culture' and *-a* 'place of.' The Guaraní did not aboriginally have a word for "culture," an anthropological term, and *-a* may best be considered an agentive suffix, only sometimes meaning "place of." *Tekó* is cognate with Ka'apor (a Tupí-Guaraní language of Amazonia) *tekó*, which means "having." The suffix *-a* is cognate with Ka'apor *-ha*, an agentive. The "*tekoá*" by my literal reading, admittedly influenced by another language source, would be best translated as having, or living space. A Ka'apor word for village, or "home," is *tekoha*, a cognate by inspection with Chiripá *tekoá*. It is possibly the main unit of production since even though extractivism (involving *yerba*) is individualistic, people do aggregate in units larger than nuclear families, and these units are probably pervaded by not only kinship ties but also by economic exchanges at the level of reciprocity in food and services. Nuclear families are unreliable units of production in tropical forests partly because of the unpredictability of success and failure of food crops over time. Larger groups can share more agricultural risk and are inherently more likely to serve as units of production in horticultural society. This does not mean that *tekoá* are corporate groups, and the author's arguments against that seem sound. But the diffuse ties of bilateral kinship can serve to aggregate households, and aggregated units seem to be critical to the long-term success of subsistence agriculture in lowland South American forests, including those of Mbaracayú.

Several minor errors with species identifications and names are to be noted. *Ricinus communis* is not a fruit tree, but the castor bean tree (p. 32); *Syagrus* sp. is not the same as the "coconut palm," which is *Cocos nucifera* (p. 137); caimans are crocodilians related to but not the same as the American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) (p. 227); *Dioscorea alata* is a yam introduced from Africa, not the traditional (non-introduced) domesticated yam of lowland South America, which is *Dioscorea trifida* (p. 132).

Insufficient or inadequate statistical data are used to support the central argument. Table 4 (pp. 156-157) displays percentages of time spent in various activities but not the primary data. No attempt is made to calculate the significance, if any, between differences in time spent among the diverse activities by men on the one hand and by women on the other, or among the differences by any one sex for any two activities. Perhaps the sample size (of 2007 "time points" for adults of both sexes--note 14, Ch. 5, p. 227) was insufficient, and if so, the author should have stated that. Table 3 shows income per garden in the community of Itanaramí in 1982, but how these were measured is not given in the table or in the text. Table 2 on p. 98 shows the "aggregate Guaraní market basket" of 17 households; it displays percentages of expenditures on diverse food, clothing, production, luxury, and other items, but not the actual figures per household, and information on how the data were collected is not given in the table or the text. It is impossible to discern from these data, for example, whether there is stratification of income in Itanaramí. Table 5 on p. 161 shows a "sample of an adolescent's wage expenditures" as though it reflected in general on how the earnings from wage labor are spent, and therefore says very little.

I am not arguing that Reed's main findings are wrong--the problem is there is no scientific way to evaluate whether they are wrong or right from this work alone. It is entirely plausible that Chiripá agroforestry does involve subsistence agriculture and sustained extractivism (of *yerba* leaves). The problem concerns the presentation of methods and evidence for these findings. Reed's work has the validity of long-term participation observation, but not the reliability of canonical and transparent procedures in data presentation and analysis. Reed's book is nevertheless a welcome contribution to the ethnography of the Chiripá who have been largely ignored in the English language literature of lowland South America. His critique of dependency theory and his case for cultural persistence of the Chiripá people, despite involvement in a market economy, are well argued in the introduction. His descriptions of the principal sacred and secular rituals, ceremonial speech, religious leadership, and kinship organization seem solid and convincing in a comparative context. His basic mastery of the Chiripá language is also evident throughout the text. The book makes an important contribution, therefore, to South American ethnography; and it is a significant work with regard to defining a "complex frontier society" that maintains a "distinct ethnic identity" (p. 10). It will be important reading for specialists in the field of ethnicity studies. But it is not a definitive and not a prophetic account of Chiripá agroforestry. Perhaps Reed's next book will be.

## **Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government, by Nicholas Thomas. Cambridge: Princeton University Press, 1994. xi, 238 pp.**

**Reviewed by Gregory Eliyu Guldin, Pacific Lutheran University**

Colonialism and colonial ways of thinking persist stubbornly in our late twentieth century world. Thomas' book is a good antidote to all the *au courant* talk of postcolonialism, when he reminds us that neocolonial domination in international and interethnic relations is undeniable and ranges in scope from nasty jokes and pervasive inequalities...[to] frequent military assaults against Third World states to enforce First World Domination. The focus then is on understanding colonialism in our neocolonial world.

The argument is based on the assumption that colonialism is not best understood primarily as a political or economic relationship. Instead, it should also, "equally importantly and deeply" be seen as a cultural process. "Colonial cultures are not simply ideologies