

Diversity of small farmers' management based on natural and social environments in Peruvian suburban highland area

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Poverty in Peruvian rural areas has increased; even natural resources in those areas are plentiful. Lack of social infrastructures, education conditions and medical services is seen obviously compared with centralized cities. Recently a large number of populations from rural area migrate to capital city to find new job for better income. Small farmers in Andean highland area are in worse economic conditions than other areas in Peru. Peruvian land is generally divided into three different areas. Costa: desert area, Sierra: Andean highland area and Selva: tropical area. Small farmers in suburban highland area, however, continued their agricultural managements.

San Mateo de Otao village is one of such suburban highland areas, located 120km east from Peruvian capital. Amount of small farmers in San Mateo de Otao own less than 1ha and produce avocados and cherimoyas that are traded high cost in domestic market. The superiority in accessibility to big market is one of reasons of their sustainable management.

From other point of view, the natural environment of San Mateo de Otao village gives small farmers opportunities to produce higher cost crops and that is another superiority point. Pulgar (1941), who is one of Peruvian geographers, divided Andean highland area to five different areas based on its different heights and diversity of natural environments: 1) Yunga:500-2300m, 2)Quechua: 2300-3500m, 3)Suni:3500-4000m, 4)Puna:4000-4800m, 5) Janca/Cordillera: 4800-6768m. Traditionally, people in higher than Quechua area live by farming traditional crops such potatoes or corns, or by grazing llamas and alpacas. In Yunga area is available to farm traditional crops such potatoes and corns as in Quechua area, but also is available to farm untraditional crops that are such higher cost crops as avocados, lucumas and cherimoyas. This natural environment differs what farmers produce for selling in domestic market and limit farmers what they produce. At this point, small farmers in San Mateo de Otao village where located in Yunga-Quechua area, have superiority in natural environment to produce higher cost productions.

By researching small farmers in San Mateo de Otao village, however, I found diversity of each farm-management based on difference of micro natural and social environments. The height and environmental difference of farming land give opportunities to produce higher cost crops even in one village. At social point, the relationship between farmers and intermediaries is not the same individually. Sometimes intermediaries obtain financing service function. These different natural and social environments cause the diversity of small farmers' management in San Mateo de Otao.

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