You are what you eat: Food as expression of social identity and intergroup relations in the colonial Andes

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Abstract: References to foodways are frequent in colonial texts, which aimed to provide an account of the American reality to a European audience. Applying a theoretical framework based on studies in cognitive science, especially social identity theory, this article analyses traditions of preparing and consuming food as indicative of the social identity and intergroup relations in the colonial Andes. A difference in foodways was considered a distinguishing factor that effectively promoted a separation between social groups. Emphasizing an analysis of the *Nueva corónica y bien gobierno* written by the indigenous author Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, this article points out that both European and indigenous groups often faced a challenge in defining their social identities in an unfamiliar environment while maintaining a positive self-concept. Considering this indigenous account in the context of texts authored by European Jesuits José de Acosta and Bernabé Cobo, and the mestizo writer, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, the political statement inherent in culinary traditions becomes evident.

Keywords: Andean cultures - Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala – foodways – opposability – identity – practical identity – social identity theory.

In many cultures food is a social practice[1]. Eating is, preferably, a social activity. Access to food, feasting, as well as commensal politics are indicators of social status. Culinary skills and choices often reflect social and personal identity. Similar practices and shared values regarding food – the ingredients considered edible, the method of preparation, and the conditions of food consumption and feasting – assist in the creation of a relatively homogenous community, or social

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group. On the other hand, differences in food related customs often increase polarization, or opposability, between social groups. In his *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* [1615], the indigenous chronicler, Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, evidences the importance of food in the indigenous Andean community. Under the Inca rulers, the Andean society revolved around agricultural practices, which played a fundamental role in both the politics and the spirituality of the Andean indigenous societies. The Inca received a significant amount of foodstuff harvested by the indigenous population to maintain his troops and administrators. Agricultural considerations also served as a justification for partially transplanting indigenous communities after they were conquered by the Incan troops while ritual commensality was a means of assuring the allegiance of subjected *curacas*[2] and their groups. Concerning the indigenous spirituality, the cycles of cultivation and harvest were the main organizing principle of the indigenous sacred calendar and offerings to the *Pachamama*, or the Earth Mother, and related deities intended to insure a good crop. The production, conservation and consumption of foods were, thus, important activities that determined social identity and values of the indigenous Andean community before and after the Spanish conquest. After the European conquest, however, the values associated with indigenous foods changed along with the social relations between the Spanish colonizers and the indigenous colonized. In this article, I explore what references to food can reveal about the social relations and intergroup behavior of these two distinct social groups in addition to the question of how food references can contribute to an interpretation of the social identity attributed to these groups. The main text for this exploration of intergroup behavior and social identity is Guamán Poma's *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno*. In order to expose how the interpretation of interaction between social groups and the social identity ascribed to them varied depending on the author who narrated them, I contrast the work of the indigenous chronicler with the *Comentarios reales de los incas* [1609], written by the mestizo writer Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and two *crónicas* authored by Jesuit missionaries: the *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* [1590] by José de Acosta and the *Historia del Nuevo mundo* [1636] by Bernabé Cobo.

I propose that colonial authors use references to food to create opposability between groups and to positively distinguish their own community, their in-group, from others, or out-groups. Additionally, food references contribute to the creation of a positively distinct group prototype and related social identity. To advance my argument, it is relevant to clarify the theoretical framework I employ to connect food, culture and social identity. My research is informed by concepts presented by cognitive scientists

[2] The term *curaca* has its origins in the Incan administrative apparatus. As Garcilaso points out, "para cada pueblo o nasción de las que [el Inca] reduxo eligió un *curaca*, que es lo mismo que *cacique* […]. Eligiólos por sus meritos, los que havían trabajado más en la redución de los indios, mostrándose más afables, mansos y piadosos, más amigos del bien común, a los cuales constituyó por señores de los demás" (I, 52). The concept of chosing a leader from among the conquered people to represent and enforce the interests of the conquerors was retained during the early years of Spanish colonization.

studying social identity theory. According to social identity theorists, categorization is "perhaps the most basic process of human judgment and cognition" (Brewer 4); categorizing helps us avoid overstimulation. However, the categorization and classification of stimuli often leads to oversimplification. The existence of groups – social groups, ethnic groups, families, etc. – is one manifestation of the human urge to categorize. While it is inevitable to acknowledge the social groups commonly accepted as major players in the arena of the early colonization of the Andean region (indigenous and European people) in order to offer a clear and concise analysis of intergroup relations, it is also necessary to recognize the fluidity of group identity and the overlap created between the social identities of separate communities. Group membership[3] is not solely based on cognitive processes and identification with often-arbitrary categories – such as race, gender, ethnicity, etc. – but behavior is an important aspect of group identification and social identity. Patrick Colm Hogan, a literary theorist who, in his own work, has connected research in cognitive science with literary theory and analysis, describes this "procedural component" of social identity as "everything from greeting practices to driving a car to professional activities"; he coins this set of skills "practical identity" (*Empire* 8). Shared practical identities, are the basis for the representation of the group as a prototype[4]. Traditions of food cultivation, preparation and culinary preferences are three sets of practical identities[5] that are relevant for my research in this article.

The representation of food production and consumption in colonial texts by authors of different cultural backgrounds offers a useful lens for viewing practical identities considered desirable, or prototypical, by the in-group and undesirable, or stereotypical by the out-group. Negative or stereotypical representations of practical identities associated with an out-group help to polarize the in- and out-group in an effort to create opposability. When José de Acosta introduces the discussion of plants and foodstuff as a new topic in his *Historia natural y moral*, he starts by establishing his Eurocentric point of view. Acosta, educated in the Jesuit order in Spain, arrives in Peru as a missionary in 1572. During his stay in the Peruvian viceroyalty, he travels to the

[3] According to Henri Tajfel, the existence of a social group is dependent on internal and external criteria. Concerning the internal criteria, or group identification, a group member needs to be cognitively aware of his membership, which needs to be "related to some value connotation" (Tajfel 2). Yet, there also needs to be "some 'outside' consensus that the group exists" (Tajfel 2) to allow for intergroup relations. Michael A. Hogg specifies that "social categorization is the cognitive basis of social identity processes" (118)

[4] Social psychologist Michael Hogg elaborates that, "from a social identity perspective, people cognitively represent a category or group as a *prototype*. [...] Prototypes describe categories and also evaluate them and prescribe membership related behavior" (118, emphasis in original).

[5] It is relevant, however, to indicate that according to social identity research these practical identities are the *result* of social identity and group identification rather than its cause (Hogan, *Colonialism* 9; Turner, "Towards" 26). Thus if group members - intentionally or unintentionally - face a change in their social identity, their practical identities would also change.

Andes for extended periods of time on three occasions. Thus, his work is an eyewitness account informed by his first-hand experience, although he did not complete his Historia until after his return to Europe. The resulting text is an example of the Jesuits effort to collect empirical data, which, ultimately, would facilitate the conversion of the indigenous people. Acosta introduces edible plants and food related traditions as follows: "porque las plantas fueron criadas principalmente para mantenimiento del hombre y el principal de que se sustenta es el pan, será bien decir qué pan hay en Indias y qué cosa usan en lugar de pan" (117). The last part of his statement – "qué cosa usan en lugar de pan" – makes obvious that paradoxically he is, at the same time, aware and oblivious of the fact that there is no bread, in the European sense, in the indigenous world. "Pan" here becomes a reference to the food product that is used as basic sustenance. Not surprisingly, there are many different manifestations of this most basic food across the vast American continent, as Acosta himself points out. Yet, as he uses a Spanish term to refer to a basic staple food that has little in common with European bread, his discourse obliviates all the different indigenous names used for staple foods. In this instance Acosta discursively establishes European political and culinary hegemony. Simultaneously, he partially subsumes the indigenous social identity into the colonial framework dominated by the Spaniards.

Regardless of the nomenclature used, Spanish colonizers, out of necessity, often consumed much the same foodstuff as the indigenous people. Hogan observes that "national cuisines establish commonalities of taste and consumption within a nation and differences of taste and consumption between nations" (*Nationalism* 84). Not only can different culinary tastes emphasize differences between social groups but they can also inspire strong emotions, such as happiness, affection and disgust (Hogan, *Nationalism* 94). These emotions might then be expanded from the cuisine to the members of the social group with which it is associated. Acosta expresses disgust when he relates the preparation of *chicha*, an alcoholic beverage made, mainly, from the staple food maize. Acosta describes different ways of preparing the *chicha* proclaiming that the method of preparation preferred by the Indians "es mascando el maíz y haciendo levadura de lo que así se masca, y después cocido. Y aún es opinión de indios que, para hacer buena levadura, se ha de mascar por viejas podridas: que aún oillo pone asco" (118). Acosta does not have to taste the *chicha* – for all he knows it might be delicious – since for him just *hearing* how it is prepared provokes disgust. Michael Owen Jones a folklore scholar suggests that bodily fluids and excretions in general are predominantly disgusting, yet "we especially tend to recoil from *other* individuals' secretions and wastes, particularly those of stranger" (57). Acosta cringes not at the beverage itself, he actually recommends a modified version of it for medicinal purposes, but he rejects it because of its contact with the spittle of the indigenous "viejas podridas." To explain the revulsion experienced upon contact with a disgusting object, Jones summarizes the argument of A. Angyal stating that "objects characterized by inferiority and meanness debase us through the intimacy of contact; they are "almost living", able to pervade

"inseparably everything with which they come into contact", and hence they are feared" (57). The consumption of food and drink constitute an aggravation of contact as these products have the disconcerting ability to penetrate the bodily limits. In many spiritual traditions, including the Catholic religion as well as the Incan spirituality, the ingestion of certain foods (i.e. the host in the Catholic tradition of the Eucharist) signified "comerse o apropiarse de la esencia divina que lleva dentro" (Houvenaghel 78). This concept of ingesting the metaphysical essence of something or someone associated with the prepared dish, applied more generally, might have created a fear of partaking of the other through food, and ultimately becoming like him. After all, we are what we eat, as Scholliers implies when he claims that the "incorporation [of food] touches upon the very nature of a person" (8).

While Acosta expressed disgust at merely *hearing* about *chicha* prepared in the traditional manner he praised the health benefits of *chicha* prepared in a more sanitary and, in his opinion, "refined" manner. "El modo más limpio y más sano y que menos encalabria, es de maíz tostado: esto usan los indios más pulidos y algunos españoles por medicina, porque en efecto hallan que para riñones y orina es muy saludable bebida" (Acosta 118). Aside from *chicha* Acosta indicates other foods that have been introduced into the diet of the Spanish in the Indies and in the Peninsula. One of them is *ají* (hot peppers). For Acosta the main motivation for eating the *ají*, which, depending on the variety, "pica y muerde reciamente" is its property of helping digestion if consumed in moderation (122). This medicalization of indigenous foods – *chicha* as well as *ají* are presented as having medicinal properties – serves to establish a cognitive distance between the indigenous who prepared and consumed these simple foods for sustenance and the Spanish who, using more "civilized" methods, prepared them for medical purposes. However, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, the mestizo author who with his *Comentarios reales,* seems to offer a cultural translation of indigenous customs for a Spanish audience, relativizes this idea communicated in Acosta's text. Referring to the consumption of *ají,* he observes that "generalmente todos los españoles que de Indias venían a España lo comen de ordinario, y lo quieren más que las especias de la India Oriental" (183). Garcilaso's statement has another effect as well. The spices of the Orient were part of the treasure that motivated Columbus's first voyage in search of a western route to Asia. According to the *Diario* the Admiral brought samples of cinnamon and pepper on his voyage, which he showed to the natives he encountered during his first voyage. The indigenous groups – falsely – indicated that these spices could be found close by (Serna 137), or maybe that was what Columbus wanted to understand given that he communicated with the indigenous population "por señas"(Serna 139). The economic and, consequently, culinary value of these spices is evident in Columbus's efforts of finding a route to lands rich in these resources. Consequently, Garcilaso's claim that the peppers from the Indies were held in higher esteem than the original pepper and other oriental spices increases the status attributed to indigenous foods and, by extension, to the indigenous culture. His argument,

supports his personal agenda to serve "de comento para declarar y ampliar muchas cosas que [los historidores españoles] asomaron a decir y las dejaron imperfectas por haberles faltado relación entera" (I, 49). Garcilaso, as the son of a Spanish *conquistador* and an Incan *ñusta*, or princess, struggles in his text to establish a social identity for himself. Culturally and ethnically a *mestizo*, Garcilaso does not identify fully with neither the Spanish nor the indigenous social group. His "interpretation" of the historical and cultural account of the conquered Incan empire not only intends to correct the misunderstandings of which he accuses previous historians. More importantly his *Comentarios* aim to redeem his indigenous ancestors and by doing so he asserts his own belonging to an expanded social in-group.

Just like the hot *ají*, potatoes, with a "temperamento […] frío y ventoso" (Cobo I, 362), were introduced in Spain soon after the conquest according to Bernabé Cobo, a Jesuit missionary and official. Born in Spain in 1582, Cobo embarked to the Indies when he was 14 year old. In 1599 he traveled to Peru from Panama with the *visitador* of the Jesuit Order in Peru, Padre Esteban Páez. After gaining respect among the Jesuits for his intellectual curiosity, Cobo was accepted as a novice in 1601. Between 1615 and 1630 Cobo spent several years in different important cities of the Peruvian viceroyalty first as a missionary and later as the rector of various Jesuit *colegios* (Pardo 7-9). Cobo, not surprisingly, attributes medicinal merits to the potato and its products as well, seemingly justifying their consumption despite their association with low status indios. Acosta even declares that the tubers introduced to the Spanish kitchens "se comen por cosa de buen gusto" (120). However, even though Spaniards ate potatoes in Spain and in the Americas, the methods of preparing the basic ingredient for consumption vary significantly from the indigenous ones. The anthropologist George Gumerman confirms that while distinct social groups often consume much the same basic ingredients, "often the method of preparation rather than the specific food item is critical in defining distinct foodways" (115). Spanish women, according to Cobo, use *chuño*, potatoes that are dehydrated by using a traditional indigenous process, toast it and then grind it to make "una harina más blanca y sutil que la del trigo" (361-62) with which they prepare *bizcochuelos* (Spanish sponge cake). They also use fresh potatoes to make "regaladísimos buñuelos" (fried dough balls, similar to doughnuts, Cobo 362). The use of potato products as ingredients in traditionally Spanish confections deviates significantly from the methods employed by indigenous people in the preparation of potato dishes. In Andean culture, the potato is a staple food used in many simple dishes. The strong association of the food item with the indigenous community and thus with an inferior social other marks the potato as a low status food in the Spanish community. Jones indicates that foods carrying negative association such as poverty or low status might seem distasteful to consumers (54). It is thus no surprise that the Spanish women transform the indigenous potato into something decidedly European, which almost defies recognition of the product as being based on the common indigenous staple food consumed primarily by indios of low social standing. This transformation, however, also

creates—at least for European readers—a new association of the potato with the fine cuisine of those with social and economic power.

Another stereotype presented by Cobo, relates to food production rather than its preparation. In his *Historia del nuevo mundo* [1636] Cobo criticizes "la falta de institución y crianza de los hijos, porque [los indígenas] los crían sin género de doctrina ni enseñanza en virtud, policía ni costumbres loables, dejàndolos su padres ir creciendo, á guisa de unas bestezuelas á beneficios de naturaleza" (III, 28). However, Guamán Poma, the indigenous chronicler who presents himself as a *cacique principal* in the manuscript he addresses to the king, Felipe III of Spain, and whom literary critics have described as a *ladino* Indian who learned to read and write Spanish and who worked closely with the colonial authorities[6], negates Cobo's claim. In contrast, Guamán Poma describes the education of indigenous children in several chapters of his *Nueva corónica* detailing their chores and clarifying the motivation behind the activities assigned to the children (154-177). Both boys and girls from 12 to 18 years of age, for example, were responsible for herding the community's livestock. Boys were also responsible for hunting birds for their meat and their feathers, while girls completed more domestic tasks such as the brewing of *chicha*, cooking and cleaning. He concludes that "todas estas diligencias se hacían por amor de la república" (154) indicating the value placed on the collaborative effort of the community in obtaining their food supplies. While the perceived reality described by Cobo might be the result of cultural changes over time – given that he writes some thirty years after Guamán Poma concludes the composition of his manuscript – it is also possible that the Spanish-born Jesuit did not attribute the same positive values that were indicated by the *ladino* author to the activities assigned to the indigenous adolescents by their culture. The positive prototype, described by Guamán Poma, of children guarding livestock to contribute to their community's resources, constitutes a negative stereotype for Cobo who perceives the indigenous youth as idling outdoors and behaving like the beasts they are herding. The animalization of the indigenous population and the disregard for their method of managing human resources in order to assure the availability of food supplies increases the polarization of the social groups in Cobo's *Historia.*

Both Spanish and indigenous sources show that collaboration was valued highly in the early colonial and pre-hispanic indigenous communities of the Andean region. Communities worked together but they also shared the fruits of their labor with all members of the *ayllu*, the basic social and political organizational unit of the indigenous Andes. The two principal agricultural products of the Andes were *maize* and tubers, such

[6] In the introduction to the second edition of *Guaman Poma: Writing Resistance in Colonial Peru*, Rolena Adorno outlines the research on Guamán Poma's biography. This research has established that Guamán Poma served as an interpreter and witness in legal transactions between indigenous litigants and Spanish officials, and as a secretary to the natives' appointed representative (*protector de naturales*). Based on the inclusion of the title "don" with his signature on official documents, it is possible to deduce the noble status by which he was recognized. (Adorno xii-xiii)

as potatoes and *oca.* The anthropologist Gumerman concludes from his research that maize was an "ideal staple finance food among Andean and Mesoamerican state societies; … [and was] used by these societies to sustain non-food producers, such as administrators, warriors, and laborers" (118) because maize, is productive and easily storable, but also very transportable. In the Andes each harvest was divided into three parts, one of which was allocated to the Sun, their principal deity, and the *huacas* [7]; another of which went to the indigenous people who cultivated their own fields along with the land dedicated to the Sun and the Inca; a third part – the largest, according to Acosta (216) – was reserved for the Inca to be distributed to the above mentioned non-food producers. Also from the stores of the Inca "se les daba a los necesitados, porque siempre había allí grande abundancia sobrada" (Acosta 216). The distribution of foods highlights the emphasis on community that informed the Andean culture.

Poma de Ayala goes into more detail describing how the Incas mandated the caciques and all indios to eat in "la plaza pública" so that food would be shared among the rich and the poor (145). In an effort to accentuate the positive practical identity he associates with his own social in-group, he stresses that "[los indios] han tenido hasta este tiempo la ley de misericordia que ninguna generación de español, cristianos, moros y turcos, franceses, judíos, ingleses, indios de México y de la China, Paraguay, Tucumán, jamas comieron en publica plaza ni tuvieron fiesta en ellas como los indios de este reino." It is obvious that as well as the Spanish authors, Guamán Poma utilizes the strategy, of creating opposability with a social other, to polarize his in-group ("los indios de este reino") and the out-group (the rest of the world known to him). In the process, the indigenous author not only positively distinguishes himself from the diverse social others he mentions but also delineates the social identity of an in-group that was still in the process of being constructed: "los indios de este reino". Historical sources show that the indigenous groups of the Incan empire were divided by a civil war at the time Francisco Pizarro arrived with his small number of Spanish conquistadors. The division was aggravated by the arrival of the Spanish who enlisted allies from among the indigenous groups. Yet for Guamán Poma, whose implied intention is to raise awareness of the suffering and mistreatment of the indigenous population while emphasizing their value to the king, strength is in the numbers. In this instance, the indigenous chronicler discursively homogenizes the culturally and ideologically fragmented indigenous people, proposing a social group whose membership he defines more specifically in his *Buen gobierno* based on the behavior he prescribes for its members.

While the tradition of sharing food publicly seemingly unites the indigenous population of Peru in Guamán Poma's discourse, culinary traditions can not only

[7] According to el Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *huaca* "quiere dezir cosa sagrada […]: esto es, los ídolos, las peñas, piedras grandes o árboles" (I, 72). The *huacas* were revered in rituals that "consisted of reciprocity among beings of all classes, human and nonhuman, it implied communication among beings of unlike ontological standing" (Salomon 11).

contribute to bringing together people of different social groups but also to their division, as I have established in the discussion of Spanish attitudes to indigenous foods. Anthropologist E.N. Anderson also indicates "separation" as one of the main messages of food: "Food marks social class, ethnicity, religions, and virtually every other socially institutionalized group. […] Naturally, one group can try to use food to separate itself, while another is trying to use food to eliminate separation" (125). Paradoxically, Guamán Poma who, as I have discussed, establishes separation between the indigenous people who live in the territory of the old Incan empire and the European newcomers as well as other out-groups based on the tradition of publicly sharing food, in other instances uses references to food to decrease separation, or opposability, between the colonizer and the colonized while increasing opposability with certain indigenous out-groups. In the *Buen gobierno* part of his letter, Guamán Poma painstakingly lists the foods unjustly taken from the indigenous people by the Spanish *encomenderos*[8](441) as well as by Spanish *padres* (452). The two lists read very similar, however the foodstuff and other products taken by the clergy are elaborated in more detail. According to Guamán Poma, both secular and ecclesiastic authorities

> comen sin costa y no le paga del trigo y de maíz , y de papas, y de carnero, gallinas, pollos, huevos, tocino, manteca, candela de sebo, ají, sal, tamos, caui chochoca, chuño, quinua, porotos, pallares, garbanzos, habas, pescado, camarón, lechugas, coles, ajo, cebolla, culantro, perejil, hierbabuena, y otras menudencias y comidas y frutas, leña, yerba, de todo no se lo paga aunque todo monta media docena de patacones cada día, y de ellos se le paga a veces cuatro reales por descargarse la conciencia, y no hay remedio… (452)

This list includes unprocessed Andean comestibles such as potatoes and maize, but also prepared indigenous foodstuff such as *ají*, *caui* and *chuño*[9]. Guamán Poma, however, also includes foods that did not exist in the prehispanic Andes; bacon, chicken and lettuce are just three of these imported products. By including these latter aliments in the list, he indicates that the indigenous people produced and, presumably, consumed both foods of Andean and European origin as they were able to provide them to the colonial authorities. The implied message of this catalog of culinary products seems to be a reduction in opposability between the two social groups. The sharing of food

[8] The *encomienda* system dates back to Columbus third voyage in 1498. It refers to the allocation, or *repartimiento*, of an indigenous chieftain and his people to an *encomendero*. The indigenous people thus distributed were obligated to work whatever properties the *encomendero* held. The *encomienda,* therefore provided guaranteed excess to cheap labor while also increasing the social status of the recipient (Burkholder and Johnson 43).

[9] *caui* – dehydrated oca tubers; *chuño* – dehydrated potatoes; see Mauricio Mamani "El chuño: Preparación, uso, almacenamiento" for a description of the processes involved in the preparation of *chuño*.

communicates solidarity (Anderson 125), but in the case of Guamán Poma the solidarity created by a common list of ingredients for culinary production is upset by the fact that the food is not really shared but taken. It is also essential to reiterate that foodways are defined not solely by shared ingredients but, more importantly, by collective methods of preparing foods. A close reading of colonial texts, however, evidences that both indigenous and Spanish communities were reluctant to go beyond the adaptation of new ingredients. Foreign foods were incorporated into the traditional diet by way of traditional dishes in which few of the original ingredients had been replaced by a foreign substitute.

The resigned exclamation issued by the author at the end of his list of foodstuff – "y no hay remedio" – suggests that he had accepted the hegemonic power of the Spanish colonizers, a notion that is confirmed in his text, when he places himself, and the indigenous population in general, inside the colonial framework of power (Pease XIII) deferring to the king as the supreme ruler even when he refuses to recognize the, according to him, corrupt secular and clerical authorities in the Americas as legitimate representatives of the Spanish Court[10]. If we consider Guamán Poma to embody a larger indigenous social group his attitude indicates that by 1615 the indigenous in-group, which he presumably represents through his manuscript, has accepted and internalized a social evaluation of themselves as inferior. According to social identity theorists, consensual inferiority reduces the occurrence of intergroup conflict (Tajfel and Turner 11). Yet, in the above mentioned case described in the *Buen Gobierno* this seems to be to the benefit of the representatives of Spanish authority only who take advantage of the indigenous population without facing opposition.

Tajfel and Turner claim that individuals belonging to a subordinate group might employ different strategies to enhance their self-concept upon being confronted with a challenge to their positive self-concept. Individuals might decide to leave their existing group (social mobility) to avoid negative social identity. These disintegrative processes may eliminate the prospect of a positive change in status for the entire group. Alternatively, a challenge to a social group's positive self-concept can stimulate social creativity. Determining alternative means of establishing positive distinctiveness[11] for the in-group, its members might compare it on a new dimension to other relevant social

[10] For example, he complains "que los dichos corregidores de este reino no quieren defender a los indios, que los padres de las doctrinas se le entra en la posesión de sus chacras, y solares, los dichos padres y curas de las dichas doctrinas de los indios tributarios, diciendo que les dejó en su testamento, se le ha entrado y vendido como cosa suya, y así los indios […] ¿a dónde han de sembrar y sustentar si le quita la dicha posesión? […]que no se entrometa español, ni a mestizo, mulato, en todo este reino conforme las ordenanzas del gobierno" (387).

[11] Marilynn Brewer (*Intergroup Relations*) indicates that social comparisons are a common behavior. Most judgments are relative rather than absolute and comparisons are intrinsically competitive. In order to validate a positive perception of myself or my social in-group, it is not good enough to be good in an absolute sense but to be *better* than others, thus *positively distinct* from other individuals or social out-groups. See also Hogg, "Social Identity Theory" (122).

group(s) or change the values associated with attributes or practical identities assigned to their community (Tajfel and Turner 19-20). Both, disintegrative processes and social creativity, are patent in Guamán Poma's text.

The disintegrative processes are manifest in two forms in the *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*. Disintegration can be the result of (intended) upward social mobility where members of the subordinate social group intend to gain acceptance in the dominant one; but it can also be the consequence of group members disassociating themselves from all social groups involved in the hegemonic intergroup interaction. An example of the latter are "[los indios que] se ausentan y se están en las punas, […] metidas, y así no se confiesan ni vienen a la doctrina ni a misa, ni les conoce el padre, el corregidor, ni cacique principal, ni obedecen a sus alcaldes y caciques principales, y comen carne cruda y vuelven a su antigua idolatría" (Guamán Poma 445). These indigenous people who revert, as Guamán Poma implies, to their old "uncivilized" traditions are presented as a social other to both the social group of indigenous who accepted the colonial framework and to the Spanish colonizers. It is interesting that one of the attributes that mark their status as outsiders is the reference to their consumption of raw, unprocessed meat, an aliment that both Incan and European societies considered unrefined.

On the other hand, Guamán Poma himself can be mentioned as an example of those indigenous people who sought upward social mobility within the colonial society. For example, it might seem surprising at first that the indigenous author demanded "que los indios no han de beber chicha mascada con la boca que ellos llaman moco, acto, haca, mocchi, Paruro, por ser puerca cosa sucia, sino que beban una chicha de maíz nacida que ellos les llaman sara, asua, para que los cristianos la beba y aprueba, y las ollas y tinajas, y coladera y cántaros sean limpios" (Guamán Poma II, 727). Guamán Poma in this passage echoes one of the stereotypes commonly held by the colonizers: namely, that the indigenous people are unclean and unaware of the value of cleanliness[12]. More importantly, though, his statement reflects the same attitude indicated by Acosta to the traditional method of preparing *chicha*, which he denounces as "puerca cosa" while demanding a more "civilized" process. Although a direct influence cannot be proven, it is possible that Guamán Poma, who finished his manuscript twenty-five years after the publication of Acosta's *Historia natural y moral de Indias* and who seemingly had access to several other *crónicas*, as Franklin Pease indicates in his introduction to the *Nueva corónica* (XIV-XXII), reacts to Acosta's text in the passage cited above. The indigenous author who emphasizes his status as a "cacique y principal" (Pease XII) might wish to be considered one of the "indios más pulidos" elevated by Acosta from the less refined group of indios. A rejection of the tradition associated with pre-conquest values and low status indigenous people thus seems to be

[12] i.e. Bernabé Cobo, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo* III (34).

a sensible move: Guamán Poma shows that he is willing to adapt without giving up his social identity as an indigenous *cacique*.

Presenting himself as an authority among the indigenous people, Guamán Poma suggests important changes to the political system of colonial Peru. In his assumed role as political reformer, he criticizes both Spanish and indigenous authorities who, in his opinion, do not contribute to the spiritual enlightenment of the indigenous population. Neither do they support, according to Guamán Poma, the economic prosperity of the crown and the sacred goals of conversion proclaimed by the Spanish kings of the colonial period. While he criticizes Spanish authorities for exploiting indigenous labor and resources, he denounces the abuses of indigenous *caciques principales* based on their habits of consumption.

> Que los dichos caciques principales en esta vida la chicha y el vino, y la coca y el juego, y de estar siempre borracho, desvanecidos, y se echan a perder y hurtan la plata del rey […] todo se lo hurta solo para emborracharse y comer coca y todos los días están jugando borrachos, mochan guacas, ídolos, y con los demonios estando borrachos se vuelven en {su} antigua ley. (Guamán Poma 631)

It is significant that Guamán Poma does not blame them for abandoning indigenous customs but for turning to prehispanic traditions. Rejecting practical identities associated with traditional indigenous social identity, he does not focus on criticizing the caciques' consumption of products extraneous to prehispanic indigenous foodways. Instead he denounces the overconsumption of traditional Andean aliments such as *chicha* and coca along with their participation in vices associated with European influences, such as gambling. Conversely, the *caciques* reject Spanish ideals, possibly in an attempt to negotiate their loss of effective control, by (re)turning to their "antigua ley" and the veneration of indigenous "guacas" over the Catholic God.

Guamán Poma establishes a clear division between the indigenous groups who revert to prehispanic "idolatry" and the social group he proclaims to represent: a group of indigenous people who accept Spanish hegemony and the Catholic religion, while maintaining a certain level of economic and cultural autonomy. His negative attitude to the indigenous groups who defy the Spanish authority relativizes the seemingly inclusive definition of membership in the group he purports to represent: the "indios de este reino." The contradiction between the assertion of an all-encompassing social group of indigenous people and the specific practical identities he stipulates for the members make the group necessarily a theoretical rather than practical construct[13]. In spite of – or maybe rather because of – the hypothetic nature of the social group presented in the

[13] However, for the sake of coherence with the original colonial sources and simplicity, the simplified concept of a congruous social group of indigenous people has been applied in much scholarly research including this article.

Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, he establishes the positive distinctiveness of the prototype associated with the group in several occasions. In particular, "caridad" and "misericordia" are mentioned as characteristics, which positively set apart the indigenous group from the Spanish. As mentioned earlier, in the prehispanic Andean culture the whole community assumed responsibility for supporting those of its members who could not, or had difficulties to, support themselves: widows, orphans, the elderly. Said support was rendered mainly in the form of provisions and the sharing of food in communal meals. Guamán Poma employs strategies of social creativity when he attests to a strong opposition with the Spanish as he proclaims "la gran misericordia que había en este reino, lo que no han tenido en toda Castila no lo tendrán por ser tan bellaca gente" (I, 174). Interestingly, the adoption of the Catholic religion serves as a means for (re)designing a positively distinct prototype for members of the indigenous social group. The rejection of the traditional indigenous spirituality and the simultaneous embrace of the foreign religion, its values, and traditions are prescribed for the indigenous community in the *Buen Gobierno*. Denouncing the offenses of the Spanish against the Catholic Church as well as the king, Guamán Poma actually introduces the prototypical *indio* as the *better* Catholic. While he concedes political hegemony to the Spanish authorities, he claims moral superiority for the indigenous social group. Based on this creative use of different parameters of comparison he succeeds in asserting positive distinctiveness for his in-group.

Guamán Poma does not hesitate to polarize the indigenous and Spanish social groups by insulting the Spanish "bellaca gente." He positively distinguishes his in-group by praising the charity of communal meals. Nevertheless, he rejects other indigenous traditions (i.e. the traditional preparation of *chicha*) to decrease opposability between the indigenous and the Spanish communities. This contradictory attitude manifested in Guamán Poma's references to food indicates the difficult position of the indigenous population, especially the indigenous elite, who tried to maintain a certain level of power and authority under the Spanish colonial regime without completely renouncing the attributes that constituted their social identity prior to the Spanish conquest. However, even those *indios* who, like Guamán Poma, did assimilate some of the practical identities of the Spanish colonizers found it almost impossible to realize their ambitions of upward social mobility as they met the opposition of the Spanish people who were negatively predisposed based on the stereotypical attributes they associated with the indigenous people.

Despite the fact that Spanish colonizers and indigenous elites disapproved indigenous practical identities, various of these traditions, including certain methods of food preparation and consumption, survived into the twenty-first century beyond their textual representation. The continued existence of recipes and methods of preparing foodstuff suggests the pride the indigenous community places in traditional foodways. The fact that these communities have resisted significant culinary changes over centuries can be (and has been) interpreted as one strategy to reclaim some power over

a life dominated by colonial authorities. The preparation of *chicha* and *chuño* are two examples of traditional methods of preparing indigenous foods that are still practiced today. Both *chuño* and *chicha*, the two main indigenous culinary products considered here, represent important aspects of indigenous culture. The emphasis placed on both products in several colonial texts composed by indigenous and Spanish authors points to the central place these two aliments occupied in the indigenous diet and in that of the colonizers.

Whereas the colonial Spanish women used the dehydrated potatoes in the preparation of confections, thereby using the potato as just another culinary resource, many indigenous people considered the potato their "daily bread," to use this European idiom. The emotional value associated with the potato is different for the two groups. In this context, it is interesting to go beyond a textual analysis concerning the representation of indigenous foods in colonial texts and consider their value as cultural artifacts[14]. The potato, especially prepared as *chuño*, represents some of the essential attributes that constitute the prototype of the indigenous people – or at least the stereotype of this group that has survived in colonial texts mostly written by Spanish authors. In order to prepare *chuño*, the potatoes are processed as follows: "en cogiéndolas, [los indios] las tienden en el suelo donde les dé de día el sol y de noche los hielos, y al cabo de doce o quince días […] para exprimirles toda el agua que en sí tienen las pisan muy bien y las dejan al sol y al hielo por otros quince días" (Cobo I, 361). Primarily, this product underlines the close connection of indigenous people with the natural world. The potatoes are transformed mostly by natural forces, even though these forces are controlled to some extent by the human factor; for example, the individual, or often also the community, decide when and how long the potatoes should be exposed to sun and frost. Nevertheless, the end product is the result of a concerted effort of humans and nature. Just as the *chuño* turned into a durable product after being exposed to extreme climates the indigenous people were considered resilient by the Spanish and ideally suited for hard work, which neither Spaniards nor even African slaves could perform, especially work in the mines. Finally, the preparation of *chuño* is, just like any other agricultural activity performed by the Andean indigenous groups, a community effort, which stresses the importance of community cohesion as an important aspect of the indigenous social identity. As a cultural artifact *chuño*, just like culinary traditions presented in Guamán Poma's *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno,* highlights the importance of community and the close ties between indigenous people and nature.

The traditional method of preparing *chicha*, described by Acosta as disgusting, also emphasizes the connection between the indigenous community and nature represented as deities. The *Saramamas*, Mothers of Corn, are one manifestation of

[14] Prown asserts that artifacts – objects made or modified by humans, thus, including processed and prepared foods – function as metaphorical expressions of culture" (18).

Pachamama, the Earth Mother. "Native men and women both gave offerings to the Pachamama, but only women forged a sacred tie with her" (Silverblatt 29). The chewing of maize, one of the sacred manifestations of the Earth Mother's forces and an emblem of female powers of creation (Silverblatt 27), can be interpreted as an expression of this spiritual connection between the goddess and women[15]. While *chicha* was produced in most communities, the production of this drink for the main religious and political celebrations was the task of the *acllacona* and *mamacona*, the chosen women living secluded in designated houses. These women, dedicated to the Sun, were daughters of the Inca and his immediate family, as they had to be members of the uncorrupted "divine" bloodline[16] (Garcilaso I, 185). The *chicha* prepared by these pure women, thus, incorporated the essence of the divine making its consumption an example of theophagy: the ritual ingestions of a god.

Furthermore, Hastorf and Johannessen, in their insightful study of maize in the prehispanic central Andes of Peru, expose the important role *chicha* played in the political system: "through a series of cargos or political offices men can build prestige and personal influence when their family provides *chicha* and food for feasts" (118). Yet the political ventures of the indigenous men are impossible to realize without the consent and active participation of the women reinforcing the ideal of the complementarity of male and female contributions to the social group. The traditional chewing of maize as one step in the preparation of *chicha*, thus highlights several practical identities that constitute the prototype of the indigenous Andean social group. First, it indicates the sacred connections established between humans and deities through preparation and consumption of everyday items, including food; and secondly, it substantiates gender complementarity as a socially and culturally relevant concept in Andean communities while simultaneously manifesting the establishment of social hierarchy based on commensality.

Returning to the fact that the method of preparation of ingredient(s) rather than the ingredient(s) used is decisive when defining a specific foodway or practical identity (Gumerman 115), it is interesting to point out that among the indigenous community methods of preparation persisted even as ingredients changed. Jane Mangan (76-82) records an important change that affected *chicha* production in Potosí. Starting with the arrival of maize in flour form around 1557, indigenous brewers started using this semi-industrial product instead of maize grains to make *chicha* production more efficient as they had to meet an increased demand for the traditional alcoholic beverage. Soon colonial authorities reacted to the upswing in alcohol consumption by banning the import of corn flour to Potosí in 1565. However, they had not counted on the ingenuity of the indigenous community, especially the *chicha* brewers, who, when faced with the

[15] Irene Silverblatt, *Sun, Moon, and Witches* (20-39); Hastorf and Johannessen, "Prehispanic Political Change and the Role of Maize in the Central Andes of Peru" (118); Bray, "Inka Pottery" (22).

[16] In the Incan spirituality, the Sapa Inca was considered a direct descendant of the Sun, the Incas principal deity.

lack of the main ingredient for their product, replaced it with wheat flour. Consequently, "Spanish town council officials revoked the corn restrictions rather than continue to lose the main ingredient in their bread" (Mangan 76). Even as the ingredients for brewing *chicha* changed, though, the traditional method for preparing this drink described by a disgusted Acosta did not. Cobo comments that, the indios consider the chewing of the maize "tan necesaria para darle el punto á la *Chicha*, que cuando el *Maíz* se muele para este efecto en nuestros molinos de agua, mascan la harina hasta humedecerla en la boca y hacerla masa" (I, 348). The fact that pre-hispanic products, such as *chicha* and *chuño,* and the methods of their preparation have survived almost unchanged into the present, indicate a permanence of indigenous culture that might not be obvious if we only consider the decline of their political and economic power after the Spanish conquest.

The interpretation of food as a cultural artifact and metaphor of the culture that produced it allows a modern reader to corroborate information about the cultural identity of Andean indigenous groups as presented in historical and anthropological research. More importantly, the application of social identity theory when applied to an analysis of references to food in colonial text reveals an important insight into the (re)formation of indigenous social identity and intergroup relations during the colonial period. References to culinary practices indicate that indigenous groups reacted to their changed situation after the Spanish conquest in a variety of ways. Guamán Poma's text exteriorizes the crisis of identity associated with this change. While some indigenous groups reverted back to prehispanic habits of consumption, others embraced aspects of the Spanish culinary traditions and thus their colonial hegemony. The latter's acceptance of their social inferiority provoked a change in the prototype associated with the indigenous group. Guamán Poma offers one example of membership related behaviors prescribed for the inchoate social group that, at least discursively, unifies the "indios de este reino." While food can be used to encourage rapprochement between two social groups[17] food references in colonial texts mostly indicate the separation of the indigenous and Spanish groups. Disgust at foods and drinks prepared by the social other increase the opposability between the social groups. The adaptation of traditional recipes to include new ingredients while at the same time maintaining the basic method of its preparation shows that the indigenous and European social groups were only moderately open to change. Foodways turned into political statements. Indigenous cooks, just like the Spanish women who ground up *chuño* to make Spanish *bizcochuelo*, transformed extraneous influences into something proper by way of modifying it according to traditional Andean methods of preparing foods. By way of this transformation, both groups symbolically rejected the other represented in their foods. The fear of ingesting otherness, which I proposed based on Acosta's adverse reaction to

[17] See Rodríguez-Alegría for an interesting argument proposing the use of food as a political tool for promoting intergroup alliances between indigenous groups and Spanish colonizers in Mesoamerica.

chicha prepared by "viejas podridas," was assuaged if the food was transformed from other into proper by way of its preparation according to recipes associated with the in-group. Culinary appropriations of the other within each community indicate the development of not one but various culturally mixed cuisines in which foods previously unknown to the traditional cuisine were adapted to the taste of each social group. This development, while seemingly erasing boundaries between the different social groups did not actually lead to a decrease in opposability. A culinary and cultural division remained separating the two principal social groups.

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