

Partial Power, Partial Knowledge: Accounting for the Dis-Integration of a Costa Rican Cooperative

SUSANNAH R. McCANDLESS

Clark University Graduate School of Geography, Worcester,
Massachusetts, USA

MARLA R. EMERY

U.S. Forest Service, Northern Research Station, Burlington, Vermont, USA

Drawing on the writings of Foucault, we argue that the multiple-service cooperative at the core of a Costa Rican highland municipality failed due to an incomplete transformation from sovereign to governmental regimes at the regional scale. The cooperative challenged sovereign power, held by the local patron and private biological reserves, with a governance model based on the individual as a unit of productivity, principles of democratic participation, and maintenance of social well-being in a market context. The recent institutional disintegration of the cooperative into smaller autonomous organizations stems from the co-op's incomplete enforcement of cooperative codes of accountability in participation and participation in accounting, exacerbated by global-scale factors. The Foucauldian lens illuminates the history of CoopeSantaElena, showing how well-intentioned agents need transparent, enabling structures to shape sustainable trajectories on the economic, social, and biophysical landscape.

Keywords accountability, accounting, coffee production, cooperatives, Costa Rica, Foucault, governance regimes, governmentality, Monteverde, power/knowledge

Andaba en la montaña cuando me di cuenta que algo me seguía. Se acercó hasta que pude sentir su aliento en mi espalda. Cuando ya no lo aguantaba, ¡fla! me di vuelta y puse mi mano en la pura boca del tigre. Extendí mi brazo al último, hasta el puro punto del rabo, lo agarré y ¡fla! lo puse completamente al revés. El pobrecito se fue corriendo, carne afuera, pelo adentro. Allí anda hasta hoy en día, molesto por los zopilotes.

[I was walking in the deep woods when I realized that something was following me. It got closer and closer until I could feel it breathing down my neck. When I couldn't stand it any longer, ¡fla! I whirled around and stuck my hand straight into the mouth of the jaguar. I stretched my

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Address correspondence to Susannah R. McCandless, Clark University Graduate School of Geography, 950 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01610, USA. E-mail: smccandless@clarku.edu

arm in as far as it would go, down to the very tip of the tail. I grabbed it and ¡fla! I turned that jaguar completely inside out. The poor critter took off running, fur side in, gut side out. There he wanders still, tormented by vultures.] (Mario Pérez Céspedes, co-op member and smallholder farmer, 1998; translation by author)

But in thinking of the mechanisms of power I am thinking rather of its capillary form of existence . . . a regime of its exercise *within* the social body, rather than *from above* it. . . . This . . . modification was made possible only by a fundamental structural change. The mythology of the sovereign was no longer possible once a certain kind of power was being exercised within the social body. The sovereign then became a fantastic personage, at once archaic and monstrous. (Michel Foucault 1980, 39)

The Santa Elena Multiple Service Cooperative, or CoopeSantaElena, is caught between regions dominated by export-oriented cattle ranching and conservation-based ecotourism. The co-op serves a highland area just south of Guanacaste, Costa Rica's Northwestern Pacific cattle ranching province, and borders the 27,500-hectare (ha) Monteverde private biological reserves, the largest complex of such reserves in Central America (Figure 1). CoopeSantaElena found a concrete expression of its philosophy in Finca La Bella, a community farm and sustainable development initiative. La Bella serves 100 people, or one-quarter of the citizens of the town of San Luis, an hour's hike south and 300 sudden meters downslope of the co-op offices. CoopeSantaElena and La Bella fall between the large ranches (*latifundios*) and reserves, both spatially and as a model of development. This generates tensions in material and governance terms. The co-op project attempts to turn inside out the regional structures of power, creating a community governed and disciplined from within, instead of one governed by hierarchical structures of control from above (Foucault 1980; 1991).

Costa Rica's 1948 populist constitution "represents one of the few successful challenges to the longstanding dominance of the large agriculturalists, within a fully capitalist framework" (Winson 1989, 6). The government generated popular support for interventionist programs, among them the 1968 Law of Cooperative Associations, which promoted producer cooperatives as an effective way to channel scattered rural smallholder production to the service of liberal democratic state formation. State-backed co-ops organized smallholder participation in the export economy formerly dominated by large estate owners, converting peasants into productive citizens, or *productores*, of the reconstituted nation. In the 1980s, supranational agencies and the United States, Costa Rica's primary trading partner, increased pressure for trade liberalization and privatization in the country (Davis and Coleman 2001). Costa Rica's social welfare-driven state experienced economic crisis (Edelman 1991), and governmental supports for cooperatives gradually weakened. In 1989, the International Coffee Organization (ICO) failed to reach a new agreement, sending world coffee prices into a series of increasingly volatile downward swings (International Coffee Organization 2003). Diversified smallholder production of the kind supported by the Santa Elena Cooperative allowed smallholder highland Costa Rican farmers to survive, but required continuing supports from the state (Sick 1997; 1998) or alternative institutions. The volatility of the globalized economy and the forced retreat of the welfare state render the services of

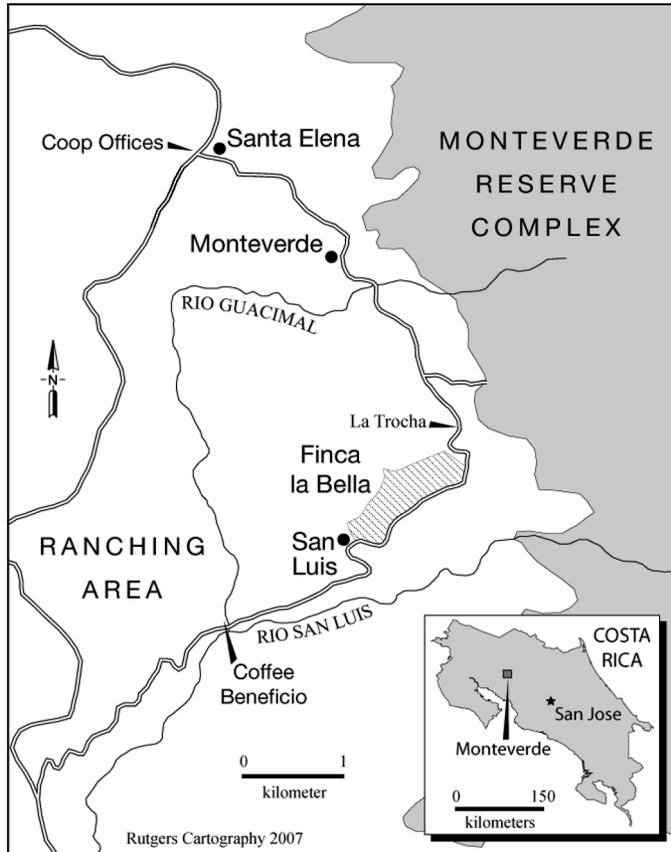


Figure 1. Locations of cattle ranching, cooperative, and conserved lands in the Monteverde, Costa Rica, region. The spatial interposition of the cooperative between ranch and reserve has consequences for landscape and governance. Copyright Rutgers Cartography (2007).

strong rural institutions ever more necessary for smallholders, and an understanding of their failures and shortcomings ever more critical.

This article examines the decline of one such institution, the multiservice CoopeSantaElena, in terms of an incomplete transition to Foucauldian governmentality. While Foucault's governmentality refers to the historically particular form of the modern European state and associated institutions, this article seeks to shift and stretch the concept to a Latin American local-regional context. In particular, we focus here on the Foucauldian power/knowledge regimes surrounding the governance of CoopeSantaElena within a "nexus of objects [of inquiry], criteria, practices, procedures, apparatuses, and operations" (Fraser 1989, 20; Foucault 1980). This nexus includes environmental conditions, productivity, and questions of accounting and accountability.

Foucault's Governmentality

In his 1978 essay on governmentality, Michel Foucault (1991) traces the roots and disjunctures of present forms of governance, constructing a historically specific

analysis of the changing loci and forms of power in the development of the modern European state. The concept of governmentality integrates Foucault's earlier genealogical explorations of discipline through surveillance and regulation (Foucault 1979) into an investigation of state and institutional formation and maintenance (Foucault 1980; Hannah 2000).

Foucault first examines pastoral power, the model of the good shepherd overseeing his flock, so effectively incorporated into Christian dogma as the care of souls (Gordon 1991). In Renaissance Europe, pastoral power gave way to the idea of an external and transcendent Machiavellian prince, who mastered the art of government, manipulating relations of force to protect his subjects and territory and to enrich himself. Sixteenth- and 17th-century critics of Machiavelli's bare-knuckled treatise defined the ideal sovereign as a moral individual who governs the state based on the household model of the good *pater familias* (Foucault 1991). This prince and his agents transmit well-ordered governance down to his subjects through a program of self-sustaining government rationality (Foucault 1984, 241). The sovereign "governs a complex of men and things" and has as his aim "the common welfare and salvation of all" (Foucault 1991, 94).

Next, Foucault traces the intensification of agricultural production and the attendant shift in enumeration techniques (but see Curtis 2002). Statistics, once used to track the accumulation of wealth in the sovereign's treasuries, became a technique to monitor, direct, and control the population. The welfare of the populace and the wealth of the state were gauged in terms of measurable characteristics: birth, mortality, and productivity (e.g., Demeritt 2001). The marshalling of productivity statistics in the ledgers and balance sheets of empire demanded the modernization of accounting. Successful accounting reconfigured troublesome, disparate objects and measures as orderly, comparable, visible facts, governable individually and in the aggregate (Kalpagam 2000). As a measurable aggregate, the population was at once the subject of needs and hopes, and the object of governmental manipulation (Foucault 1991, 100; Hannah 2000). In particular, the family (and distinctive gender roles within it) was repositioned, not as a model for governance, but as the basic unit of production.

Once the domain of the family economy became political economy, the new problem of governance was "to ensure that the pursuit of self-interest by individual economic actors was compatible with the reproduction and useful employment of the population" (Kalpagam 2000, 419). Successful governmental regimes required that the modern state establish and enforce reciprocal contracts with its citizens. These individuals must be self-disciplined, willingly subjecting themselves to surveillance, and cooperating in the reproduction of the state. In exchange, citizens receive the benefits of security, participation, and services.

Foucault's writings describe the pervasive, capillary nature of power in this modern form and its presence in the micropolitics of quotidian practice. Everyday life is permeated by regimes of power and knowledge reciprocally created through speech-acts, especially expert discourses that work through societal institutions to constitute dominant truths and enforce the behaviors dictated by them. Infused with power from within, such a social body challenges the exercise of sovereignty from above. This new societal form manages the body politic through the constant exercise of social visibility to create productive, self-disciplining citizens (Foucault 1979; Hannah 2000).

The critical attention to the evolution of modes of government that Foucault directed to the histories of small European states centuries ago also can be focused

Table 1. Competing governance regimes in rural highland Costa Rica

	Ranch	Cooperative	Reserve
Governance regime	Sovereign	Governmental	Sovereign
Environmental regime	Cattle ranching	Smallholder farming	Conservation & ecotourism
Locus of power	<i>Patrón</i>	Knowledgeable members	Scientists
Legitimizing discourse	Care for service	Productive participation	International scientific expertise
Project (intent)	Enrichment of <i>patrón</i>	Smallholder livelihood & social well-being	Land for biodiversity & aesthetics

on frontier lands under *latifundista* control in mid-20th-century Costa Rica. In the Santa Elena/Monteverde area, ranch, co-op, and reserve differ as models of governance: as creators of opportunities for participation, for livelihood, and for land use (see Table 1). Both ranch and reserve are sovereign models that limit participation, accountability, and decision-making power. The co-op and its sustainable development initiative are conceived of as a participatory, accountable, self-disciplining (i.e., governmental) model.

Spatially, the governmental model of co-op and farm is held in tension between the sovereign territories of ranch and reserve, between cattle and conservation. These three regimes compete over the proper use of land lying at the continental divide and the boundary between Costa Rica's Central Pacific highlands and the dry Northwest. Regimes differ over who constitutes a proper citizen of these spaces. For the *latifundio*, it is cattle and their men. The co-op admits *productores*, productive men, women, and some adolescents, as decision-making members, under the motto, "the land belongs to those who work it." The reserves enclose biota and their scientists, guides, guards, and spectators, and exclude most other human activities.

Methodology

The research that generated this article was participatory in nature (Firehock 2003; Stringer 1999). Between 1997 and 2005, the first author lived in San Luis de Monteverde for an aggregate of more than 2 years, residing with 22 of 24 Finca La Bella *parcelero* families as well as other *sanluisenses*. Consistent with Wallerstein and Duran's (2003) review of participatory action research, during this time the parcel holders (*parceleros*) defined the research problems in discussions at their assemblies and board meetings and through ongoing, in-depth conversations over shared field and domestic labor. The *parceleros* contracted with the researcher to work with them on two projects: a biodiversity census of the farm, and support to ensure continuance of Finca La Bella as the cooperative disintegrated. In the course of their shared efforts, community members and researcher exchanged tools and knowledge, including geographic information system (GIS) maps, plant censuses, archival documents, and extensive personal and group analyses of local and regional

institutions. The first author also worked with or attended meetings of the co-op and reserve, as well as those of a local Quaker community and the Monteverde Institute, a research and education organization that has a local community development agenda. The researcher almost always accompanied a representative of the *parceleros* on these occasions.

The analysis presented here is the product of collaborative interpretation (Wallerstein and Duran 2003). The community and researcher worked together to analyze the intentions and outcomes of co-op accounting practices, management decisions, and legal actions. *Parceleros* fears stemmed from the possibility that the co-op's failure would have direct and potentially catastrophic consequences for the disposition of their homes and livelihoods. Finca La Bella was owned and administered by the co-op for 9 years; at least one member of each *parcelero* household was initially a co-op member, and many served on co-op councils and committees. Although they did not call for a Foucauldian approach by name, *parceleros* clearly articulated discomfort with the micropolitics of power within the cooperative, strongly suggesting such an analysis to the authors.

Results of joint community and researcher efforts (Finn and Jacobson 2003) have fostered ongoing social and environmental change within Finca La Bella, gradually facilitating more autonomous control and oversight of former co-op assets through selection of appropriate legal tools. The partnership between researcher and community also opened direct lines for communication and intervisitation between project participants and North American funders. Ultimately, the collaboration linked local and extralocal knowledge and networks (Bebbington 1997), with the researcher providing support to the *parceleros* as they negotiated the farm's transition away from the co-op.

Findings

Regional History: Three Regimes¹

Cattle. Since the 1950s, *latifundio* owners have found the lower elevations surrounding Santa Elena and Monteverde ideal for large-scale, extensive "monocrop" cattle production for export (Edelman 1985). Under cattle capitalism, the forest, shade coffee, and shifting agricultural lands in the San Luis Valley and surrounding slopes were consolidated into the hands of a single *patrón*. These lands were enclosed and burned over to foster the growth of invasive African pasture grasses. Small farmers were forced to move their holdings up the mountains onto steeper slopes.

The *patrón's* territory was extensive enough to give him sovereign local power at a scale that he and his family could control. With the exception of dairy production, he dominated the bulk of the local economy, granting usufruct rights to plots of land. Adult males in landless families could sharecrop or work as day laborers in the *patrón's* pastures or coffee fields. Those who could afford some land found the *patrón* still dominated dry goods sales, owned the local *beneficio*, or coffee processing plant, and acted as principal moneylender. Small farmers' lands were collateral for those loans, and the *patrón* enforced loan conditions strictly. Farms were often forfeit following a bad harvest or a year when international coffee prices were low, resulting in further consolidation of land. The *patrón* also maintained the common welfare by transporting individuals to the distant hospital and paying their

fees in times of illness and need. In exchange, he received faithful service, concessions, or other forms of indebtedness.

Conservation. In the early 1970s, pressure on small farmers in and around Monteverde arose from a new source. Land at the continental divide, which the Monteverde Quaker community had set aside to protect its drinking water supply, was converted into the nucleus of a private cloud forest reserve. Members of a pacifist and communitarian religious sect, Quakers had come from the United States after the Second World War, attracted by the new Costa Rican constitution's prohibition of a standing army. They joined Costa Ricans at the frontier, settling the Santa Elena/Monteverde area, and began dairy farming and cheese production. Over time, a few North American scientists worked with Quaker residents to expand the conservation of cloud forest land, starting at the continental divide and moving downslope toward the small farms and latifundios. Two private nonprofit organizations, the Tropical Science Center and the Monteverde Conservation League, caught the imagination of Northern donors with images of quetzals, jaguars, and other bright, beautiful, and ecologically fragile creatures (Vivanco 2001). Pennies and pfennigs poured in from faraway schoolchildren bent on saving the rainforest. An ecotourism boom brought increasing numbers of visitors to the cloud forest reserves, rising from just 500 in 1974 to 47,500 in 1996 (Vivanco 2001; Beletsky 1998, 9). Over this time period, the reserves grew, parcel by parcel, gradually reconfiguring the regional landscape through changes in land values, cover, and tenure.

The administrators of the privately held biological reserves, who are both Costa Rican and North American, govern their territories and the complex of species and habitats within them using a sovereign model with the expressed goal of maintaining and restoring biodiversity. Guards police for the welfare of the reserve's nonhuman citizens (trees, jaguars, quetzals), and discipline and punish infractions against them by human noncitizens of the reserve. The purview of the cloud forest police also extends beyond the reserves' boundaries: When a disgruntled farmer illegally cut trees on the co-op farm down in San Luis, these guards, not the police department, were called in to document the infraction.

Cooperative. At approximately the time the reserve was established in 1971, Quakers and other residents founded a co-op grocery store, introducing a form of governance to challenge the patrón. *Cooperativismo* promoted a new ideology of participation, representation, and social well-being only loosely governed by the state, through the national co-op corporation, Fedecoop. CoopeSantaElena expanded over the years, serving at times as the primary credit union, hardware and feed store, and grocery. In 1989, the co-op entered the coffee processing arena when it purchased the patrón's San Luis coffee *beneficio* (CooCafé 2001). The cooperative also provided processing, retail, and export marketing services to farmers and craftspeople, who engage in small-scale, intensive, diversified production for subsistence and local and tourist markets.

The co-op operated on a modern, governmental model. It emphasized principles of democracy, representative participation, and service to the population in exchange for organizing and promoting the individual as a *productor*, a productive body serving the organization. Because of its relative independence, the cooperativist project depended heavily on the skills, dedication, accountability, and vigilance of its members and employees, a largely rural *campesino* constituency. Initially open to direct participatory interventions by all members, when membership

grew to over 700 in the early 1990s, the co-op shifted to representative voting at assemblies, which, members and administrators now say, weakened democratic participation.

Finca La Bella was established in 1992 as a 24-family cooperative farm and forest to provide for diverse smallholder livelihoods as well as diverse flora and fauna. Carlos Vargas Leitón, the respected founding manager of CoopeSantaElena, convinced a small North American Quaker organization, the Friends Committee on Unity with Nature (FCUN), to commit to the purchase of one of the *patrón's* San Luis properties, the 122-acre (49-ha) cattle and coffee farm called Finca La Bella. Title to the farm would be held by the co-op. This action responded to many San Luis residents' needs and hopes concerning inequities in the distribution of land in the valley. Concerns about the concentration of land tenure had intensified in the early 1990s when North American venture capitalists purchased some of the *patrón's* prime valley farmland for an ecotourist hotel and biological study station, driving San Luis land prices still higher. The state played a key, if indirect, role in encouraging the sale of Finca La Bella. According to La Bella's resident historian, Gilbert Lobo Navarro (interview, July 21, 2004), the *patrón* was willing to sell the La Bella land because he feared losing it to the state, due to proposed national legislation that would have limited the maximum size of an individual's holdings in any locality.

La Bella *parceleros* hold 25-year renewable leases with usufruct rights within the terms of land use set by a coalition representing a variety of groups in the San Luis-Monteverde area; changes are made by ratification of all participating groups. Since 1995, *parceleros* have been restoring coffee plantations and reclaiming windswept slopes from burned-over ranchland, literally creating shade coffee plantations from pasture. Land use diversity in the La Bella territory has increased with length of smallholder tenure, and initial analyses suggest that species diversity follows a similar pattern (McCandless n.d.). On La Bella, at least, the co-op's land management regime has produced a high level of coexisting human and nonhuman diversity in the reserves' buffer zone (see Rocheleau et al. 1996).

In spite of high hopes and a quarter century of success, however, by 2001 CoopeSantaElena was teetering on the verge of bankruptcy. Membership declined from a high of 700 in the early 1990s to less than 100 members at the time of the June 2001 annual assembly. Mounting debt forced the sale or closure of the grocery, feed, and hardware stores and the credit union; Finca La Bella and other viable co-op elements have withdrawn to protect themselves from foreclosure. What factors brought about the fall of this respected backbone of the local economy?

Incomplete Transitions in the Co-op Regime

Production. In addition to providing goods and services to its own membership and the local community, the production regime of the co-op attempted to accommodate and capitalize on the environmental ethic that emanates from the reserves and reserve-based tourism, while increasing participation in global markets. A fundamental contradiction arose in the co-op's efforts to engage simultaneously with environmental ethics and global commodity markets. CoopeSantaElena advertised "coffee grown in harmony with the cloud forest" on its Café Monteverde label. Yet the co-op possessed neither the capital to adequately reward alternative production nor the facilities to process small volumes of organic or shade-grown coffee separately. Through its staff agronomist, for years the co-op promoted

small-bush, high-yield, shorter lived, full-sun, high-agrochemical-input *Coffea arabica* var. *Caturra* and, until the late 1990s, the accompanying government agrochemical package. In 1999, the co-op still planted only *Caturra* in its seedling nurseries for sale to member growers, and used heavy agrochemical inputs to speed growth and minimize labor costs. Local producers further were discouraged by sustained (up to 7-year) decreases in yield when returning or converting to organic production, a trend substantiated by national-level research (e.g., Lyngbaek et al. 2001). As of 2004, the co-op had achieved Fair Trade certification but was still working on organic certification and the additional price premium attendant on it.

When the co-op bought the *patrón's* San Luis processing plant (*beneficio*), it committed to coffee as a major source of external revenue and export. It also incurred significant debt, basing the decision on a short high in world coffee prices and a corresponding surge in local acreage planted in coffee. Producers have since faced continuing record low prices on the world market (International Coffee Organization 2003; Oxfam Great Britain 2001). Since nearly all the coffee that CoopeSantaElena sells is Fair Trade, price floors have provided a measure of protection to its producers. However, they, like producers elsewhere in Costa Rica, track daily news updates on open market prices, and can predict them up to 6 months ahead with an accuracy comparable to that of coffee futures traders (Hazell 2000). The continuous intonation of bad news in televised national price reports may have been hard for a small cooperative to absorb. As the *beneficio* manager noted, the steady drumbeat of bad news about prices “had an indirect impact among coffee producers . . . demotivating them . . . and [creating] a certain fear that the co-op depended heavily on the fair trade market, which . . . has not grown rapidly [enough] to accommodate the rate at which new producers and [large] cooperatives have entered [that] market” (G. Vargas, CoopeSantaElena general manager, by phone, September 15, 2005). By 2001, the CoopeSantaElena *beneficio* processed less than a fifth of its optimal 5000-quintal capacity (Coocafé 2001).

The coffee sector also placed large additional strains on the co-op accounting structure. Employees at multiple receiving locales had to impartially grade quality, quantify yield, and record production for more than 400 producers of the coffee fruit, a fresh, perishable commodity that changes value rapidly, even during the delivery process. Administrators had to establish and track schedules of payment and processing for export that adequately reflected both volatile world market conditions and individuals' needs. CoopeSantaElena's instability came partially from rapid extension into too many sectors, and from overinvestment in infrastructure, but entrance into the coffee sector stretched the co-op's financial regulatory mechanisms, particularly its accounting capacity, to the breaking point.

Accounting and Accountability

Discrepancies in power and knowledge were played out in questions of accounting and accountability in CoopeSantaElena. Over the years, co-op committees and the board focused on sector-specific training and social welfare concerns, leaving financial management and the tracking of production and profitability statistics to the general managers and accountants. The expert knowledge required to set up, maintain, and effectively monitor accounts in a growing, multifaceted business enterprise was not disseminated among the board or the wider membership until the co-op was already in crisis.

Monopoly on knowledge of accounting/accountability of knowledge, or *savoir comptable*, allowed a series of extralocal, big-city-schooled accountants to manipulate funds and financial reports, largely without oversight from the board and membership. This went on until 1999, when the board began a mammoth effort to understand and overhaul the accounting system. By that time, however, the inconsistency and inscrutability of the accounting within an allegedly participatory organization led to increasingly ungovernable producers. Indebted individuals contested untrustworthy balance sheets, disputed lost credits, and alleged double charging of accounts. The membership held the board accountable for not knowing the state of the organization's finances, and increasing numbers left the co-op.

By the 2004 annual assembly, the co-op general manager was actively demystifying and sharing accounting information. He presented a crystal-clear, line-by-line explanation of the year-end financial statement. However, the co-op's earlier failure to translate the economic production and consumption of its membership into understandable accounts had led to loss of confidence in the multiple service structure, and the remaining members voted to become a coffee producers' cooperative only.

Lapses in accountability also played a role in CoopeSantaElena's disintegration. Co-op debts arose from mismanagement of credit from feed and grocery suppliers, as well as unpaid home construction and improvement loans extended by the credit union. In the case of the latter, the co-op did not have the institutional will to hold its members accountable for defaulted loans when the collateral was usually the member's home. Repossession and eviction ran counter to the goal of improving *campesino* livelihoods. Finally, the co-op was forced to end credit, but did so universally because the management did not possess accurate enough accounting to cut off credit to major debtors, while keeping credit open to members in good standing. This approach further alienated members accustomed to the institution's stated, social need-influenced credit policies. Accusations of favoritism, nepotism, and even embezzlement were leveled against current and past employees and board members.

Governmentality Between a Ranch and a Reserve

The uneasy accommodation between *latifundio* and reserve governance regimes also has had important organizational and landscape consequences for the communities in the Santa Elena/Monteverde region. Both the prior existence of the *latifundio* model and the establishment of the reserves impinge on the inhabitants' modes of participation in governance and livelihood activities. Attempts by local institutions and citizens to promulgate participatory democratic governance have struggled to avoid reproducing the patron-client power relationship. When the community replaces the *patrón* as owner of the store and lending facility, the former peon who successfully maintained some independence as a farmer and cleverly extracted what he could from a reluctant sovereign is asked to change his way of operating. The skill set for survival and profit under the *latifundio* regime does not necessarily overlap with that of a successful co-op member (P. Jiménez, former CoopeSantaElena board president, via e-mail, February 26, 2002).

In the buffer zone of the reserve complex, conservation projects may administer land and inhabitants for production and reproduction of habitat or its elements (e.g., tree seedlings). Yet residents worry that knowledge and power in these projects are not fully disseminated: Development project accounting, they complain, sometimes

allocates more to training a single reserve staff expert than for reimbursement of all participants in the San Lu s valley. One 1990s grant proposal, rushed in to meet a European deadline, angered San Lu s residents when the town council was featured as a signer although it had not yet agreed to participate in the project.

Different governance regimes yield different environmental outcomes as well, through the nature of participation and the conditions of access available within each. The geographical location of the co-op, sandwiched between ranch and reserve, affected the way it tried to integrate and transform regional market and livelihood possibilities. As the biological reserves grew, CoopeSantaElena, already pulled between social well-being and market production, began a further stretch, to attempt to integrate conservation and eco-tourism through coffee as well as crafts. Coffee, so close to the heart of the co-op, was the internationally volatile commodity the co-op was least able to control. The co-op found itself stretched too thin on its frame, in both material holdings and ideological compass.

Conclusions

This study strives to apply Foucault's idea of governmentality in a regional context, taking to heart his admonishment to create nuanced local histories of power:

Just as important [as discourses about institutions] are the discourses that arise within the [institution], the decisions and regulations which are among its constitutive elements, its means of functioning, along with its strategies, its covert discourses and ruses, ruses which are not ultimately played by any particular person, but which are nonetheless lived, and assure the permanence and functioning of the institution. (Foucault 1980, 38)

CoopeSantaElena ultimately was unsuccessful in maintaining a critical mass of productive, willing participants, in part because it was unable to maintain two key aspects of governmental power: effective surveillance and regulation of production through accounting, carried out mainly by experts (Hannah 2000); and the linkage between those experts and an informed, knowledgeable, trusting membership to whom the administration was accountable. As the co-op's services expanded, the institution and its constituency assumed an increasingly dual identity as both producers and consumers. Members produced coffee and crafts, and consumed loans and credit for foodstuffs, agricultural inputs, and construction materials. Delay between production and sales, poor accounting, and lack of financial liquidity affected member producers. For example, coffee producers who delivered their crop over a 2-month period were paid in installments over the course of the whole year. When producers could not buy against what they were owed, or payments to them came late, issues of accounting and accountability began to tear the co-op apart. When it failed to recognize and reward the productivity of members in good standing by extending credit to them, the co-op failed to uphold the governmental discipline by which productivity in service of the state or organization is reinforced to further build that organization.

Successful governmental regimes instill, enforce, and reinforce codes of conduct. The rendering of apparently impartial, normalizing judgments is a key step in this process (Foucault 1979). Operating in a small community, where personal, political, and business relationships are closely overlaid, co-op accounting failed to order

things so they could be governed in such a manner. All claims of impartiality were suspect. As the co-op grew, participatory codes of conduct were poorly maintained and enforced. Many benefits to members were eroded and eventually lost. The co-op was founded—and finally foundered—on the principle that people participate out of commitment to *cooperativismo* and practical benefits follow.

Nevertheless, the legacy of 30 years of *cooperativismo* and participation leaves profound effects. Thus when the co-op flew apart under tension in 2001–2002, the surviving pieces followed the cooperative governmental model. The co-op maintained its coffee production infrastructure, despite bankruptcy, with a renewed commitment to rewarding successful producers for quality and volume through transparent accounting. The La Bella Community Farm retains a participatory democratic model focused on the notion of productive citizenship. It has developed a rural farmers' association, is developing a land trust, and rewards productive and participatory actions through activities such as sending leaders to participate in agricultural exchanges with North American organic farms and sustainable development initiatives. La Bella has been successful in engaging its members, perhaps due to its narrower focus and smaller size. On the other hand, unproductive members, defined as those who fail to participate in community activities, maintain their level of production dedicated to the cooperative enterprise, or who impinge on others' productivity by their actions, may be censored or expelled from the group.

Can the set of theories we have attempted to engage here deal effectively with complex power relations in highly contested situations like Santa Elena/Monteverde, where global and local spaces collide in production and reproduction for agriculture and tourism, for conservation and development? We argue that the Foucauldian lens illuminates the history of CoopeSantaElena, showing how well-intentioned agents need strong, transparent, enabling structures to shape sustainable trajectories in the developmental, economic, social, and biophysical landscape. Foucault examines the genealogy of governance and the way power/knowledge regimes are embodied in the micropractices of life. We have considered these regimes through the constitution and governance of local institutions and accounting practices because we believe these offer strategic perspectives for research and researchers enmeshed in everyday practice.

Foucault's notion of governmentality lays out the ways in which willing, complicit agents constantly reproduce and alter structures of power in the modern state. We have described the shifts that result from a partial, regional transition to such a regime, one in which power, knowledge, and accounting/accountability have not successfully diffused to create full cooperation. Neither have they failed abjectly: The co-op governance model continues in coffee, crafts, and the community farm. Indeed, its success may be better measured by the model's ability to shift and reform as participants seek self-governance. Our perception of the nature of the beast, of the power breathing down our necks, and the ways in which we might take hold of it and turn it inside out, depend on our position and the terms of our engagement with the institutions of our communities.

Note

1. While space precludes an adequate examination of how gender operates in these three regimes, strong differences were evident. In particular, as women repositioned themselves as productive, as well as reproductive, citizens within the co-op regime, they produced tensions and new outcomes that will be explored elsewhere.

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