

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE IN TWO MESTIZO COMMUNITIES

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The distinctions between Indian and non-Indian communities in Latin America have received a good deal of attention from many able anthropologists. This paper focuses on a distinction between two types of non-Indian communities. The distinction is one of community derivation: among outwardly similar non-Indian communities, some were once Indian, and some were not. As one informant put it, "Unmarried girls with sizable waistlines may look alike, but it makes a difference how they came to be that way."

More specifically, this paper is concerned with the use of certain perspectives on time as a basis for comparing two Mestizo communities, one tracing descent from Indians, and the other from non-Indians. These communities are situated in the Popayán area of southern Colombia, where the criteria for Mestizo status are language, dress, and landholding pattern. Thus the members of both communities speak only Spanish, lack a native dress, and have no reservation land system. These criteria should be familiar to those who have studied Mestizos, Ladinos, or Creoles in other areas.

The pueblos to be considered are Coconuco, thirty-five kilometers southeast of Popayán, and Zarzal, twenty-two kilometers northwest of Popayán. The members of both communities are highland valley farmers whose general culture is similar to that described by Gillin* for Mestizo America. Both groups are

*Gillin, J. P., *Mestizo America* (in *Most of the World*, ed. by Ralph Linton. New York, Columbia University Press, 1949).