

Land's End Study Guide
Tania Li, 6 November 2015

The questions I have posed here are quite challenging. They get to the heart of the core concepts that drive the analysis in the book. Using the guide will help you to read analytically, and to see how particular events, stories and details in the book are used to make arguments. I suggest you read a chapter first, then jot down answers to the questions. Think of the main outlines of an answer, and some empirical examples you could use to support it. If you find you are not able to answer, you need to go back and read again with the questions in mind. The answers may be found in more than one section.

Intro:

- 1 What are the main assumptions of modernization theory, and how does Land's End challenge them?
- 2 What is Li's definition of capitalist relations?
- 3 What are the main characteristics of highland areas as frontiers?
- 4 What were the main steps in Li's research process?

Chapter One

- 1 What were the cultural schemes through which desa headmen and other coastal people viewed highlanders?
- 2 Why did highlanders not gain in status through their productive work in "feeding" the coast?
- 3 Use the concept of power provided by John Allen (p19) to identify the sets of relations that connected highlanders to the coast in the period before cacao. I made a start on this in the lecture notes, so begin with my list and add more elements. Think about power not only in terms of how it dominates, controls, exploits, and coerces , but also in terms of how it forms people, creates desires, and enables actions.

Chapter Two

- 1 How did highlanders' view that work creates individual property shape the relations a) between husband and wife; b) between parents and children; c) among neighbours and kin?
- 2 What were the different ways that corn circulated between one household and another?
- 3 Why did highlanders find doing paid work for each other awkward?
- 4 Why was it so hard for highlanders to organize collective projects, like holding a community ritual?
- 5 How did highlanders attempt to protect themselves from attack by malevolent spirits?

Chapter Three

- 1 What were the different types of land/forest highlanders recognized under the swidden system, before the new term "lokasi" emerged?
- 2 What principles underlay highlanders' customary system for allocating rights to use and transfer land in the period before tree crops were planted?
- 3 Why did planting tree crops create new property relations among highlanders?
- 4 What were the practices through which highlanders made it into individual property?
- 5 How did highlanders justify excluding kin and neighbours from access to land to which they once had shared access?
- 6 How did a) claims to knowledge/information and b) government authority shape the enclosure process?

Chapter Four

- 1 How did the arrival of cacao change the pattern of social interaction in highland neighbourhoods?
- 2 Why did inequality among highlanders emerge so quickly and sharply?
- 3 Why couldn't highlanders who were failing in the cacao economy just go back to growing food?
- 4 What prevented the new landowners and moneylenders from sharing freely with their neighbours and kin?
- 5 In what ways were the capitalist relations that emerged among highlanders a) a good fit with highlanders' old ways of thinking and acting, carrying over easily from the days of swidden cultivation and b) a bad fit, causing ruptures and awkwardness among neighbours and kin?

Chapter Five

- 1 Why didn't Lauje highlanders who lost their land and became impoverished mobilize collectively to protest?
- 2 Why were suffering highlanders unable to get support from government officials or from NGOs or other solidarity groups?
- 3 Why couldn't Lauje highlanders who had lost the land just exit to find land or jobs elsewhere?

Conclusion

- 1 What are the main messages of Land's End for a) social movement activists; b) national and transnational development planners?
- 2 How can the experience of one set of people in a particular place inform policy? Is it "just a case study"? Or are you satisfied with Li's argument that every place is specific, so our understanding can only be built upon embracing specificity, and deepening our understanding of the elements that give each conjuncture its particular form? To answer this question, it would be helpful to go back to re-read the introduction, especially the section on the analytic of conjuncture.