

>> SYNTHESIZE MOUNTAINS OF KNOWLEDGE <<

Submitted Abstract

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Abstract

In the Peruvian Andes, there are two different transhumance systems: agropastoral and pastoral systems. Agro-pastoral systems are developed in the humid puna, where grazing cattle and sheep in the highlands are combined with cropping systems potato-oriented in the lowlands. Here, Andean landscape is managed holistically and integrated (upper, middle and lower zones), given the geographic proximity between grazing lands in the highlands and croplands in the lowlands. They maintain short daily and seasonal movements, due to physiological limitations and behavioral patterns of livestock. Towards the southern Peruvian Andes, corresponding to the Peruvian altiplano, specialized pastoral systems are developed in the arid and semi-arid puna, raising exclusively alpacas and llamas, which are barely combined with sheep and cattle as a diversification strategy. These pastoral systems involve seasonal vertical movements on several stations and daily horizontal movements over long distances. Landscape management focuses exclusively on the upper lands since cropland is inexistant. During the last decades the most notorious changes in both systems have been at management level. The use of alternative management strategies like grazing by “turns” and by hired shepherds has increased in response to labor shortages due to migration caused by limited development options in the highlands and the low profitability of these systems. These strategies interrupt the transmission and application of ancestral knowledge and traditional conservation practices that ensure the sustainable management. The primary productivity of grasslands and bofedales (strategic wet grasses in dry season) have decreased and shrunk dramatically due to altered precipitation and temperature patterns caused by climate change. Livestock calendars organized according to seasonal rangeland production and seasonal labor availability, have not been adapted to these changes, leading to inappropriate management of overall system. What could be the future of these systems under labor shortage and climate change? The population in charge of the pastoral systems is mainly women and the elderly. Generational turnover is being lost because young people do not plan to continue pastoralism. There is an increase trend of management by “turns” and by hired shepherds, and to become dominant, leaving in charge only those people who are not connected to nature and their biocultural heritage. The rangeland law is a pending issue, since rangelands continue to be treated as croplands, which means that can be parceled out, exposing them to lose the management with landscape approach. Peruvian Andean pastoral and agropastoral systems require urgent attention and actions from all sectors.