

Indigenous peoples in action beyond the state: the Lowlands of Bolivia, 1982-2002

By

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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As an indigenous leader and member of parliament questions: *“What good would having a hundred indigenous members of parliament be, if the system itself is not going to be changed, precisely if we do not propose a structural change? We have to break down the structural system if we really want democracy, if we want to move forward”* (Jose Bailaba, Bolivia, August 2003). The thesis looks at the strategies for governance of the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia. It is a journey with key informants from the indigenous movement of the Amazon basin that raises the manner in which strategies may vary among the peoples over time and in different contexts, while the vision itself remains constant: a vision of governance as nations. It situates their strategies in a context of transnational alliances and negotiations, with varying perceptions of the role of the state and its institutions. The research is based on six years of accompaniment of the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia, as well as on in-depth interviews with leaders who have held roles as community leaders, national leaders, municipal Councillors and Members of Parliament.

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Reference list / Acronyms

CIDOB: Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia (Lowlands indigenous organization, representing 34 peoples)

COICA: Coordination of the Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin

CONAMAQ: National Council of the Markas and Ayllus of the Qollasuyo (Highlands indigenous organization)

CPESC: Coordination of the Ethnic Peoples of Santa Cruz (member of CIDOB, representing four peoples in the department of Santa Cruz, leader of the “Eastern Block”)

CSUTCB: Confederation of Campesino Workers of Bolivia (Highlands *campesino* organization, today leading indigenous rights representation)

Eastern Block: Member organizations of the CIDOB who led a strategy of alliances with the CSUTCB and other actors across the country, as of 2000

Ibis or Ibis-Denmark: Danish non governmental organization accompanying the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands since 1992

IWGIA: International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (international group based in Denmark, instrumental in the development of today’s ILO convention 169 on indigenous rights)

MAS: Political party whose legal status was used by the CSUTCB, the CPESC, CONAMAQ and several other social sectors in order to run for national elections as social movements in 2002

UNPFII: United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

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My thanks to José Bailaba and Carlos Cuasace, of the Chiquitano people of Bolivia, with whom I feel I grew up in my thirties. Marisol Solano, Guarani young woman and leader, and Bienvenido Sacu, Guarayo, leader, musician and father of a handful of daughters, enriched my learning process, in my years working with the indigenous movement of Bolivia's Lowlands. Aurelio Ambrosio, of Northern Potosi, trilingual leader (Aymara, Quechua and Spanish), and José Bailaba built a bridge of interests between highlands and lowlands, showing the falseness of a history which attempted to oppose the Aymara civilization to the jungle "salvages."

My thanks to David Duffus who led me to discover the department of Indigenous Governance at the University of Victoria, which put into words and theories the practice I had lived in Bolivia.

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My topic of research is a living subject. It was initially groundbreaking news of what was going to happen in a country that one rarely heard about in Canada. As days and years went by, the country made international news, what we had seen as the seeds of had become reality, and the writing had to be changed. As Bolivia elected a Constituent Assembly, others wrote on what had happened, and made further projections. As time went by, I chose to write of the past, of the experience I shared with people, to document the slow, steady approach of indigenous peoples of Bolivia towards the recognition of their lives, their rights, their beings, their culture. It is not over yet. The new constitution will not be the end goal, but it is the fruit of steady, strong-minded concerted actions by

people from communities who knew they could one day govern themselves, and continue to know it.

The mostly male leaders I lived, travelled, worked with in Bolivia would likely thank the women in their lives who have allowed them to carry out their struggle. I thank the women who worked in our family home helping with household work and child-raising, while our children were in their early years. They are Liliana Huanca and Maricruz Poma, followed by Vicky and Lidia. Without them, neither I nor José Luis would have had the privilege of developing ourselves in the manner we did, working long hours and traveling incessantly. They are representative of combined ethnic*, gender, generation and class struggles which are ongoing. I particularly thank Basilia Catari, the first Bolivian executive secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of domestic employees. She knows why.

- * Terminology: this document recognizes that words carry ideological weight that differs according to social or geographical context – as well as over time. As one example of this, the use of the term “ethnic” is borrowed from the 2005 text of the Bolivian constitution, as well as from chapters drawn from the recent Constituent Assembly of Bolivia. In this context and at this time, it does not bear the connotations encountered by First Nations in North America.

1. Introduction

What good would having a hundred indigenous Members of Parliament be, if the system itself is not going to be changed, precisely if we do not propose a structural change? We have to break down the structural system if we really want democracy, if we want to move forward.

José Bailaba, Indigenous leader, Member of Parliament
2002, Member of the Constituent Assembly 2007, Bolivia
José Bailaba (interviewed August 11 2003)

The quote by José Bailaba which opens this chapter reflects the analysis I undertook over six years of working in support of the indigenous movement of South America. My experience in accompanying the Chiquitano, Guarayo, Ayoreo and Guarani peoples of the Department of Santa Cruz, in Bolivia, as well as the Quechua and Aymara population of Northern Potosi, leads me to present through this study arguments and testimonies that demonstrate the manner in which indigenous peoples of Bolivia have been seeking and continue to seek self-governance, over and above inclusion or individual representation in a state system that is not defined by them.

Background of the study

The peoples of Santa Cruz, organized as the Coordination of Ethnic Peoples of Bolivia (CPESC) have been a key actor in the coalition of social movements that led to the presentation of a new Bolivian Constitution based on plurinationalism and social economy. The peoples of the CPESC and in general of the tropical and subtropical Lowlands of Bolivia have implemented actions over more than two decades that, while increasing their level of governance within the state system, were strategies towards the

creation of a new state that would allow them to govern themselves and the territories they inhabited as nations in their own rights. They undertook a transnational, multi-scalar approach,¹ giving as much importance to the development of alliances with international non governmental organizations (NGOs), and to the negotiation of their rights with suprastate entities such as the United Nations as to negotiations with national state bodies and representatives. The geography and movements of the indigenous peoples can be said to be historically transnational in light of the fact that they precede the state delimitations of the last few centuries. Their struggle for survival as nations within the state of Bolivia has itself been increasingly transnational over the past few decades in light of the presence of international allies to support their cause, the weakness of the state and the presence of suprastate bodies addressing some of their priority issues, natural resource management among the first of these. The presence of multinational economic interests has further exacerbated their need to negotiate transnationally in order to ensure governance.

The peoples have consistently resisted colonization, and developed numerous strategies to that end over the course of nearly 500 years of colonization. While much of the struggle of the period of study, 1982-2002, has involved work on “rights”, obtaining rights has not been the end objective, but one more strategy towards governance in the context of the time: a rights-centered struggle has been one of the necessary mechanisms in the current political order. Electoral strategies have been as equally important, but

¹ Transnational relations and the notion of working simultaneously at different scales – a multi-scalar approach – are discussed in chapter 3 of the thesis. They refer to relations established at national, regional and global scales in a geography of networks and flows that are not contained by the state or the national scale.

again, the indigenous peoples' participation in spaces of national and municipal governance in the course of the '90s and early 2000's was not an end, but a means towards the vision of a redefinition of the state system to ensure their recognition as peoples or nations, over and beyond their inclusion within a given state. They engaged in alliances with other social sectors of the country, including the main organizations of the Aymara and Quechua population of the Highlands of Bolivia, in a joint strategy to develop a framework that would be favourable to their governance as peoples. It was a collective quest for self-governance or development with identity.²

1.1 Purpose of the thesis

I argue that the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia interact with multiple actors, nationally and transnationally, in a quest for governance as nations. Theirs is not a struggle for inclusion within a state: it is a struggle for recognition as collective identities. Their existence and vision precede that of the current economic order, and their struggle is not a mere reaction to current global or national economic trends. I underline the fact that the indigenous population of Bolivia is heterogeneous, and that while strategies towards governance have varied among nations, among leaders within nations, and in shifting contexts, the vision of governance has remained and continues to be their focus. I limit my analysis to perceptions of the four peoples of the Department of Santa Cruz who were the founders of the Coordination of Indigenous Peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia

² Development with identity is the phrase most often chosen by the indigenous communities and organizations of Bolivia, as opposed to the notion of self-governance, more frequently seen in literature on indigenous rights in relation to the state.

(CIDOB) in 1982 and who, once the CIDOB grew, re-organized as one of its regional members, the Coordination of the Ethnic Peoples of Santa Cruz (CPESC). The period of reference is that of 1982 – 2002, the period of intense development and political action of the organized movement of the 34 peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia which preceded and led to the current new social order of Bolivia, which today is embodied by a constitution that is plurinational and community-based. Underlying the thesis, are four basic research principles:

- 1) it is the set of actions of the indigenous organizations and communities over a prolonged period of time that can best speak for the peoples' position,
- 2) the perceptions of the leaders and community members of the different nations are the most valid vehicle to understand their quest,
- 3) it is necessary to effect a strong paradigm shift and dispel dichotomous analysis in order to listen to and learn from the indigenous actors of Bolivia, recognizing the multifaceted and dynamic character of social relations being constructed in an ever-shifting context, and
- 4) it is necessary to be permanently aware of the degree to which one's interpretation of people's voices may be shaped by one's own lenses, and of the degree to which individuals will shape their communication according to their relation to or knowledge of the researcher's positioning.

Why Bolivia?

An overarching reason for studying Bolivia is that it is currently an example that it is possible for a state to be redefined by its people, rather than shaping them to fit into the predominant system. It is only in the past few years that the country has come to the forefront of mass media, and that political scientists have demonstrated increased interest in this country's proposals for development and governance, but there were already at least three reasons in the 1990s for addressing the relation of indigenous people to the state and to the state system itself in the Bolivian context, as an inspiring experience for indigenous peoples the world over and a learning one for the "settler."

One key factor is the fact that the indigenous peoples make up the majority of the Bolivian population, between 60 and 70%, which should theoretically set the way for indigenous governance at the national level, as opposed to the inclusion of the indigenous peoples under the concept of the rights of minorities. Another factor sets Bolivia apart: it was focused on in the 1990s as the front-runner of neoliberal reforms in Latin America (PBS 2005:3) based on privatization and decentralization. Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Columbia University Earth Institute, and considered one of the world's foremost economists, was advisor in the 1970s and 1980s for the application of shock therapy in the economic restructuring of Chile, Poland and Bolivia. In an interview for PBS in 2005, he considers Bolivia to be the front-runner of neoliberal reforms in Latin America, stating that the combination of democratic reform combined with economic institutional change implemented in Bolivia in 1985 showed that one "could combine political liberalization and democracy with economic liberalization." (PBS 2005:11)

A third factor and reason to study Bolivia is of the economic realm: Bolivia became in 1995 the holder of the second largest reserve of natural gas in the continent, leading to a sharp increase in multinational corporations' interest in exploiting these resources. While legislation required that such economic enterprises be negotiated jointly between the corporations, the state, and indigenous peoples where their territory was to be affected, such legislation was often bypassed, leading to a critical questioning of the role of the state. With just these three factors, there was already, in Bolivia, an ideal case to study the relation of indigenous people with a state, in a context of liberalization of the state and a globalization marked by economic transnational interests.

What makes this study all the more pertinent at this time is the frequent misrepresentation by mass media and political analysts alike of recent political processes in Bolivia, often reducing these to a leftist shift or to that of an indigenous victory with little if no recognition that the indigenous population itself is not homogeneous: the 34 peoples of the Lowlands are a population of approximately half a million, while the majority Aymara and Quechua population, including the minority Urus and Chipayas, makes up an approximate 4.6 to 5 million people.

1.2 Recent Bolivian context – summarized update

As stated earlier, Bolivia underwent a shock strategy of economic liberalization in the 1980s and 90s. The pressure this created on an already impoverished population led to events that placed Bolivia in the forefront of international news between 2000 and 2003.

The Bolivian population successively dared to defy and obtain the rescission of contracts and agreements established by its government with the Bechtel Corporation (over water rights, April 2000), with the International Monetary Fund (over income tax issues, February 2003) and with U.S. energy companies (gas war of October 2003). There is a sense of a David and Goliath tale, with a struggle undertaken against the giants by a country of less than 9 million people, with an external debt which in 2004 stood at US \$ 1.8 billion, and close to 28% of export of goods and services directed at servicing the debt (World Bank 2004:1).

When I defined my thesis subject in 2003, an alliance between indigenous peoples of the Lowlands and the Aymaras and Quechuas had been struck and was moving ahead in the definition of proposals for a constituents assembly, together with a strategy for participation in the next national elections. As a consequence, in December 2005, for the first time since the country's return to democracy in 1982, a President was elected by an absolute majority of the votes (National Electoral Court of Bolivia 2006), and it was an *indigenous* President: Evo Morales, the union leader who had been chosen by the coalition of social movements to represent them in the elections. Citizen participation in the elections was the highest in 23 years of democracy, and the Vice-President was also elected by an absolute majority.

Although Evo Morales has been compared by the press the world over to presidents such as Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, or Fidel Castro of Cuba, what distinguished this electoral choice was that he was chosen not as a leader of a party, but as the chosen candidate of a coalition of social movements, with the mandate to represent their interests at the national

level. The coalition had come together as a decision to deny the legitimacy of the party politics electoral system, deemed to be unrepresentative, detrimental to the indigenous collective rights, and led by the minority elite of the country.

The election of December 2005 was a social and political landmark that, in the international corporatist media and leftist discourses alike, tends to be overlooked in favour of left-right discussions. On the one hand, the MAS is described as an “anti-capitalist” party (Hennigan 2006:1), and Evo Morales as a member of the “carnivorous left (funded by Venezuela’s oil) and clinging to a Marxist view of society and a Cold War mentality” (Vargas-Llosa 2006:1), together with Castro, Chavez, and Zapatistas. In that light, the people of Bolivia are seen to be manipulated by out-of-fashion Marxists exploiting ethnic tension. On the other, the left is celebrating an apparent shift to the left in Latin American politics, with Bolivia as one of the indicators of this trend. In both of these gross characterizations of Bolivia’s form of leadership, what is being forgotten or underplayed is the role played by the three-decade international indigenous movement that preceded it (Dunbar-Ortiz 2006). Doing so risks undermining the relationship between the Bolivian social movements and Morales, an already fragile coalition of interests between diverse indigenous peoples’ organizations, rural and workers’ unions. In the words of Evo Morales: “The MAS is a party of the social movements, and personal polemics do not play a transcendental role in the face of the historical perspective of our movement. The MAS does not belong to any one person, much less to Evo Morales...” (García Mérida 2004:1). It is therefore key to recover the experience of that “powerful and remarkable historic movement, which springs from generations of grassroots organizing” (Dunbar-Ortiz 2006:1).

In December 2007, a constituent assembly of 255 women and men representing all sectors of society approved a draft new constitution. On January 25, 2009, the constitution was approved by 60% of the population through a national referendum, and the country officially became a plurinational state.(Constituyente Soberana 2009)

1.3 Organization of the thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis and its argument. Chapter 2 presents the methodological framework, grounding my argument by revealing the lenses which have shaped it, discussion to challenge dichotomous analysis, and sections on ethical considerations and on the main research method, the interviews. Chapter 3 provides a theoretical background, introducing Fourth World theory and literature focusing on transnational civil society movements with relevance to indigenous peoples, together with research specifically related to the indigenous peoples of Bolivia, and the voice of Bolivian professionals and indigenous leaders, drawn from publications and proceedings of conferences. Chapter 4 traces the development of the indigenous organization in Bolivia with emphasis on both historical and modern strategies of resistance to the successive forms of government which have attempted to govern territories and spaces of the indigenous peoples. It addresses main differences in the Highlands and the Lowlands peoples' relation to the state over the past half century. It introduces the international context within which the movement of the Lowlands has developed its organizational structure. Chapter 5 presents the reflections and stories of the interviewees on identity, unity, alliances, regional and international relations, autonomy, democracy, and electoral

participation. It concludes with the presentation of examples that situate in practical terms discussions raised by the interviewees on election processes, negotiations with international corporations and supranational or international entities, and alliances with international non governmental organizations. Chapter 6 is the conclusion of the study, returning to the theoretical background presented in chapter 3, and to the historic context of chapter 4, to situate some of the discussions held by researchers in light of the results of the interviews carried out for this study. I have added an epilogue to present an update of relevant events of 2003 to 2009, following the period of this study, and which address very precisely the argument of my thesis.

2. Methodological approach

2.1 Ethics of the research

The University of Victoria's Ethics committee approved this research proposal early on (Project No. 488-03). It was, however, of even greater value for me to obtain the authorization of leaders I had worked with, not only to use part of the experience I had had with them, but to present my interpretation of their vision. I obtained not only consent, but in-depth open-ended interviews with eight key leaders of the indigenous movement of the Lowlands, as well as with six members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in support of the movement.

The interviews confirm the legitimacy given me in addressing the subject of indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia and their relation to the state. While all interviews were prefaced with a taped question and answer whereby the interviewee gave me authorization to draw on the interviews and our past lived experience for the purpose of my thesis, it was in the development of the interview, throughout the speech of each individual, that I came to know that I was given the right to present an opinion, an analysis, a thought on the position of indigenous peoples at different times over the course of the previous ten years. All interviewees, at one point or another, addressed me personally to request that I not forget to include one point or another of their struggle. Enrique Camargo, who had led the Guarani programs for recovery of the Guarani language, had been a leader for over a decade at different levels within the Guarani and peoples' organizations, and had been Vice-Minister of Indigenous Affairs, concluded "*Oye Anne-Catherine sinceramente, ojalá esto sirva para algo, yo espero, mucho*" (Hey Anne-Catherine, sincerely, I hope this will serve for something, and, I hope, a lot) (Enrique Camargo, interviewed August 1 2003).

In my personal acknowledgements, I refer to specific individuals. Here, I formally thank the many people I have worked with, both indigenous and non-indigenous, but particularly the Chiquitano, Guarani, Ayoreo, Guarayo, Mojeño and Cavineño leaders who have allowed me to present this *perspective* on their movement. It is my hope that my action, in undertaking this thesis, will be one of questioning and contributing to a more wide-spread challenge of current mainstream conceptions of the indigenous

peoples' quest for their collective rights, particularly those which are entrenched in colonial history and analysis through today's neo-liberal or imperialist framework³.

2.2 Action research

Two questions were posed when I first presented the subject of my thesis: was this to be participatory research? And would I be able to be objective?

The present thesis takes a humanist approach to research, and is deeply rooted in my experience sharing in the development of Bolivia's indigenous organizations. It is action research more than it is participatory research: it presents the voice of the individuals and communities who have expressed the wish to have their vision and objectives better understood by researchers. The study is a conscious action to support their objective, and is not, as is often proposed by participatory research a means defined by an external actor to "empower people to take effective action toward improving conditions in their lives"(participatory research as defined by Park 1993:12). The voice of this thesis is mine, though I of course draw on the voices of the actors themselves, based on over 40 hours of open-ended interviews held with a sample of 14 indigenous leaders and NGO staff in Bolivia.

³ The challenge to such frameworks is a common one in Bolivia: "in Bolivia, the people view neo-liberalism, colonialism and imperialism as major threats to their enjoyment of human rights" (Sacha Llorenti Soliz, Vice-Minister for the Coordination of Social Movements and Civil Society of Bolivia, United Nations Office at Geneva 2008:2).

The research employs testimony as well as being grounded in theory and in documentary analysis. My presentation of the indigenous peoples' relation to the state and to other actors is informed by:

- Personal experience, from the years I worked with the organized indigenous movement of Bolivia and South America from 1996 to 2002, accompanying their processes and struggles for recognition of collective indigenous rights, during which I took extensive ongoing notes;
- Testimonies and interviews: 14 in-depth, open-ended interviews carried out in 2003: eight with indigenous leaders and six with NGO staff;
- NGO and indigenous organizations' documents and processes, to which I had either direct and authorized access or internet access;
- Research on Fourth World theory, academic or public discussions from the fields of political geography, international relations, dispute resolution, sociology, and feminist theories, on transnationalisation, spatial scales and indigenous peoples;
- Articles and conference proceedings expressing the voice of the indigenous peoples of South America.

2.3 Interview method

Beyond the use of personal experience, I base this study on interviews carried out with indigenous leaders and staff from Ibis-Denmark, the international development NGO for which I worked that had accompanied the indigenous organizational development processes for over a decade. I have further gathered informal input from international NGOs working in alliance with the indigenous movement. Among the eight indigenous persons interviewed were present and past Members of Parliament (1), Vice-Ministers of Indigenous Affairs (2) Presidents of organizations (4), Secretaries of Territories (2), Municipal advisors (1), all of whom had held or continued to hold community leadership positions. They represent four of the peoples of the department of Santa Cruz: Chiquitano, Guarayo, Ayoreo and Guarani, and two peoples of the department of Beni: Mojeño and Cavineño. Only one of the indigenous leaders is a woman, which is a fair reflection of the composition of the leadership of the organization. The interviews, intended to be semi-structured, progressed into open-ended interviews and include life stories as well as reflexions on their identity in self-identified local, national and international spaces of governance or advocacy.

The interview sampling was based on a combination of criteria: type of actor (role), geography (department or region), identity (indigenous or other), timeframe (timing of leadership in relation to national context), as shown in Table 9, in appendix.

In 2002, a split occurred within the organized movement of the lowlands, between those organizations that favored dialogue with the state through the CIDOB as a national representation of indigenous peoples of the Lowlands, and those organizations, until then

members of the CIDOB, who favored alliances with other social sectors, including union organizations of the Highlands, in order to change the system, developing what would later become the platform for the Constituent Assembly and ensuing reform of the constitution. The latter were known as the “Eastern Block.” It was therefore important to ensure interviews with leaders from one and the other of these factions: five of the eight indigenous leaders interviewed were from the Eastern Block. In 2006, the member organizations that had broken away from the CIDOB due to this latter position came back to the organization and were participating in its leadership.

All except for one of the leaders interviewed have held local community leadership roles before assuming leadership at regional or national levels. The one who did not is also the only woman of the group. With the exception of this dynamic young woman, who has had to “tough it out” as a woman within an organizational culture that severely limits women’s representation (long absences from home, late night all-men meetings), all have also been involved in the management of projects related to territory, natural resources, or language at the local level, and three of the eight have been either Members of Parliament or Vice-Minister of Indigenous Affairs. The projects the woman leader has managed have been regional (larger scale) rather than local. All of the interviewed men have at some point in their story as leaders gone back to work and live at the community level before again participating as regional or national leaders. As explicitly agreed with each of the leaders, I refer to them by name when voicing their stories, perceptions or opinions.

Table 1: Profile of leaders interviewed in 2002

Identity: Nation	2002	Other roles carried out over ten years
Guarayo	Vice-President, CPESC (regional organization, 4 peoples)	Leader of productive cooperative (1984), Community leader Urubichá (1986), President of COPNAG, 2 years, (organization of the Guarayo people), community member (3 years), President CECU (community organization), President of CPESC, Secretary of Territory CIDOB (4 years)
Chiquitano	President, OICH, organization of the Chiquitano people	Community leader, Manager of project obtained in compensation for pipeline going through the Chiquitano and Ayoreo territories
Chiquitano	Member of Parliament, Bolivia	Community Mayor three times, founder of intercommunity soccer team, leader of the indigenous communities of Concepción, Vice-President CPESC, "Oficial Mayor" (Municipal Coordinator) of Concepción, President of CPESC
Ayoreo	President, CPESC	"Cacique" (Captain) of the community Rincon del Tigre, in charge of relations with the evangelical missions, Vice-President of CANOB (organization of the Ayoreos), chosen by CANOB to hold a seat at the CPESC, Treasurer CPESC
Guarani	Secretary of Organization, CPESC	Secretary of Communication, Vice-President, President of CPESC
Cavineño	President, CIDOB (national organization)	Secretary of Organization CIRABO (peoples of the Beni region) (4 years), President CIRABO (2 years), Secretary of Organization CIDOB (4 years)
Guarani	Vice-Minister of Indigenous Affairs (exiting)	Leader in Guarani education program (1988-92), head of the Guarani council, member of the APG Board (Assembly of Guarani peoples), External relations APG, President APG (1998-2000),
Mojeño	Vice-Minister of Indigenous Affairs (newly appointed)	Community leader (1983-86), President of the Mojeño communities (1987), President of CIDOB (1995-96), Candidate for Vice-Minister of Bolivia (1998), Vice-President CIDOB (1999-2002).

In my preparation for the interviews, choice of methodology, and definition of selection criteria, I chose a semi-structured format, including guidelines for myself with such key words as identity and relation to the state. Overall, I found that the interviews quickly turned into conversations, with the indigenous leaders referring me back to moments I

had shared or witnessed over the course of the development of their organizations. The interviews therefore became a renewed discovery or confirmation that the peoples' quest sprang from locally grounded visions of development with identity that faced *obstacles* from the state system and global markets for the peoples' territorial resources, and were not in any way spurred by what media depicted as "anti-capitalist" or "Marxist views," let alone a manipulation by "out-of-fashion Marxists exploiting ethnic tension," as noted in the introduction.

2.4 Positioning the researcher

The choice of first-person narration of the thesis is intentional and unavoidable, as so much of the research is based on practical experience and interviews. This circumstance leads me to include in this study a section which situates and positions my interpretation of the indigenous movement's experience, as recommended by Pamela Moss, who states that "reflexivity and positionality are two principal ways that geographers have used autobiography, to reflect on where they are located in the web of power relations constituting society and to utilize this positioning as a mediating relation in the interpretation of information gathered through the research process" (Moss 2001:5)

My position is best revealed by describing a years-long process which led me to recognize and shed the culturally engrained lens with which I viewed the inequities of the world: from a class-based analysis through to an understanding of a vision that was new to me, one of the quest for recognition of collective rights that transcended the individual

human rights framework, and that was not based simply on class or economic inequities. Shedding this lens required also understanding that it rested mainly on dichotomous analysis. A change of paradigm was required to understand the processes I was involved with, and to better understand the strategies and position of the indigenous peoples in their relation to the political and economic context. I describe, below, the journey that led to a change of paradigm, and to a challenge of dichotomous analysis, in order to position myself in relation to the indigenous peoples and their vision before proceeding with my analysis.

2.4.1 Positioning over the period 1987-1996

1987: a class-based approach

I started working in Bolivia in 1987 as a Project Officer and Gender Specialist in development projects for Canadian NGOs with a positivist, class-based approach seeking empowerment in the face of economic inequality. This position was anchored firmly in principles of human rights and equity. A key focus was to strengthen union organizations such as those of the *campesinos*⁴ unions, miners' unions, women's organizations, neighbourhood organizations. The strategy was based on capacity building: teach people their rights, train them in how to run assemblies and develop organizational charters, transfer project management skills, with the objective of increased capacity for representation as workers, the oppressed "classes" of Bolivia. A large part of this capacity building was oriented at increasing the participation of individuals in existing

⁴ Small farmers, peasants, rural populations.

electoral systems and their understanding of the choice of parties available. This perspective later became coined as the development or construction of citizenship: to ensure that people geographically or socially remote from the democratic state-system become fully active citizens of the state, on the hypothesis that they were excluded, wanted to be included, and that they would then have increased chances of their needs being met. My approach to human rights, justice and equity centered on the recognition of a physical-geographical expansion of capitalism, and its encroachment upon people's rights to govern their own lives, present and future. The approach was strongly economic. It was a state-centric world-system analysis "entrenched in a national-global couplet" that reinforces "nationally scaled forms of political and economic organization," to borrow from Brenner's critique of Wallerstein's long prevalent world-system analysis arguing for a single economically interconnected world (Brenner 1999:59).

1988: shift from a class-based lens to a gender lens, understanding the importance of relationships between social actors

While working with women's rights within this particular context, I began specializing in gender analysis, starting with Moser and Levy's methodologies of planning for gender (Levy and Moser 1986; Moser 1991; 1993). The existence of a set of tools that would help develop appropriate strategies for the empowerment of women did not so much signify a shift of paradigm as it did a logical qualitative step forward in my development work. It stood to reason that men and women would have differentiated practical and strategic roles, based on the different gender roles (see

Figure 1, page 27) assigned to them within their social, cultural, economic and legal contexts. It was also very clear that supporting women's strategic needs entailed policy development for a more sustainable change, systemic change. Working in gender and development (GAD) in the early 1990s, was, however, more often than not limited to a two-dimensional analysis. The International Labour Organization (ILO) states as a limitation of two of the main gender tools of the time, that Caroline Moser's gender planning framework "does not mention other forms of inequality, such as class, race or ethnicity,"(SEAPAT-ILO 1998:5) and that the Harvard framework for gender "ignores other underlying inequalities, such as class, race and ethnicity, encouraging an erroneous view of men and women as homogeneous categories"(SEAPAT-ILO 1998:5). Though the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) recognizes today that "gender, and its relationship with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability, and/or other status, is important in understanding different patterns of involvement, behaviour and activities in economic, social and legal structures," (Canadian International Development Agency - CIDA 2006:3) at the time the main contribution of gender analysis to development work was simply that of understanding that it was possible to view life, history, development issues through a *different* lens – a gender lens (Lipsitz Bem 1994). This approach added one dimension, but upheld dichotomies in practice. At the time, I essentially shed a class-based lens for a gender lens, shifting my focus from one oppressed population to another, still within a dichotomous form of thinking, though with an increased understanding of the need to understand the *relationships*⁵ between actors, and between them and a broader environment.

⁵ Gender analysis refers to "the variety of methods used to understand the relationships

1992: The recognition of multiple and complex social constructions of identity

In the course of my class-based work, then my gender-based work, I met up with indigenous women who had been organizing in La Paz and Cochabamba in defence of their rights as urban domestic employees. These women had no right as workers (class) or as women (gender), and were deemed to be lucky to have a roof and food provided by their *patron*, their employer. They were vulnerable to exploitation of their labour – living with the employer’s family seven days a week, available for work 24 hours a day. They were not recognized by labour laws, and even the national confederation of workers of Bolivia (Central Obrera Boliviana – COB) did not deem their work to be a profession or a trade.⁶ As Basilia Catari, the first President of the National Federation and President of the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Domestic Workers, states in her autobiography, “*nadie nos quería aceptar*” – no one wanted to accept us (Catari Torres 2000:23). These women, indigenous, young and old, who migrated to urban centres in search of work, could be fired with no notice, accused of theft to justify expelling them from the house, were easily the object of sexual abuse, and furthermore most often lost their relation to their culture and homeland in order to adopt the lifestyle of the families they served, as in the best of cases they were given a hand in becoming *civilized* by the woman of the household (Catari Torres 2000).

between men and women, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other, addressing the different patterns of involvement, behaviour and activities that women and men have in economic, social and legal structures”(Canadian International Development Agency - CIDA 2006).

⁶ I participated in meetings with leaders of the COB and witnessed the discussions to this effect in 1995.

The need for specific strategies and actions for the empowerment of women within a masculine society had been present in my class-based approach to development, but my experience with the leaders of the domestic workers opened my eyes to the complexity of combined gender, class and also ethnic discrimination.⁷ Women working for social rights could exploit other women based on their class status and identity as *Indias*. “Most of the women’s rights NGOs don’t place importance in our sector. If they talk about it, they do it superficially, because these women are also our employers.” (Catari Torres 2000:44)

The domestic employees were excluded from the male-dominated union system by gender discrimination, as well as being excluded from the mainstream power system by ethnic and class discrimination. And in spite of a growing national women’s movement, as well as a feminist movement, the professional women leading these movements had recognition and the capacity to develop their careers mostly because they could delegate their women’s tasks to other women, *Indian* women.

My relationship with the *Trabajadoras del Hogar* contributed to my shift away from absolutes, of a class or gender lens or mere combination of the two, in favour of the recognition of multiple and complex social constructions of identity (see

⁷ Through the *Trabajadoras del Hogar*, I met Lesley Gill, who had then recently published her book *Precaious Dependencies: Gender, Class and Domestic Service* (Gill 1994), which highlighted the complex composition of the domestic workers’ movement and the individuals within it, in terms of gender, class and ethnicity.

Figure 1, page 27). The domestic workers lived a combination of gender and class discrimination, compounded with existing discrimination against indigenous people, and with the stigma of migration and loss of identity with their place of origin.

1996: recognizing my cultural lens, understanding a new paradigm

From my position as Project Officer and Gender specialist in development projects for Canadian NGOs, I moved to the position of Programme Officer, and then Director for Ibis-Denmark in 1996, a Danish NGO accompanying the indigenous movement of Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, towards “a solid empowerment of the indigenous peoples in their rights to self-determination and incidence in local, national and international spaces that affect their interests.”(Ibis-Denmark 2001:18) Where being indigenous is understood to mean “ thinking, speaking and acting with the conscious intent of regenerating one’s indigeneity,” (Alfred and Corntassel 2005:614) for the peoples of the Lowlands, this regeneration required strategically, as documented by the Danish NGO for which I now worked:

- The institutionalisation of indigenous participation in the design of regional and local policies
- Indigenous participation and exercise of roles in Municipalities, Congress, Parliament, Territorial Management Committees, Negotiation Committees with Oil and Gas Companies, Education Coordinators
- The creation of organisational capacities towards a sustainable development based upon the territories
- The consolidation of the indigenous interests in the spaces of local power, on the principles of interculturality and participative democracy
- The implementation of new models of municipal management, democratic, participative, equitable and intercultural
- Knowledge of legal aspects of access and control over indigenous territories and resources, towards sustainable development alternatives, with specific focus on oil and gas exploitation (Ibis-Denmark 2001:26).

Work in this context, accompanying the indigenous movement's processes, was a leap into a new world, uncovering both the shared vision and fundamental differences within the indigenous movement of the Lowlands of Bolivia – comprised of 34 peoples over an area of more than 770,000 square kilometres⁸ – in their strategies and relation to the state. My value system had to change to understand that the context of any given communication was more important than the word itself, be it written or verbal: if a leader was denounced by the people – as was the case of the first Chiquitano leader I met in 1996 – for not having joined the key indigenous march of 1996, this did not signify an absolute. The accusation was valid at that moment, in that context, and in following years, with a changing context, his participation and leadership could be just as highly valued as in earlier years. My values, until that period of my life, would have led me to view this as a contradiction. I further was confronted with the fact that I deeply believed in the current democratic institutions: I might be disappointed in them, or in their implementation where there were cases of corruption, but until 1996, I fully believed in them without being consciously aware of that. The realization came by surprise, when I accompanied leaders of the Guarayo people who were planning to run for elections with political parties which to me represented the 'oppressive' forces, one party which was led by an ex-dictator, the other led by the main proponent of privatization of the country's resources. In a sharp turn away from my class-shaped lens of earlier years, I had to recognize that working with the indigenous peoples was not to be based on awareness raising about the political system and its parties, as had been most NGOs' plan in the 80s and early 90s, but rather called for listening and attempting to understand the logic behind the *use* of the parties for the indigenous peoples' objectives. Suddenly, I was

⁸ I have calculated the Lowlands area based on data by Raul Vera (2001)

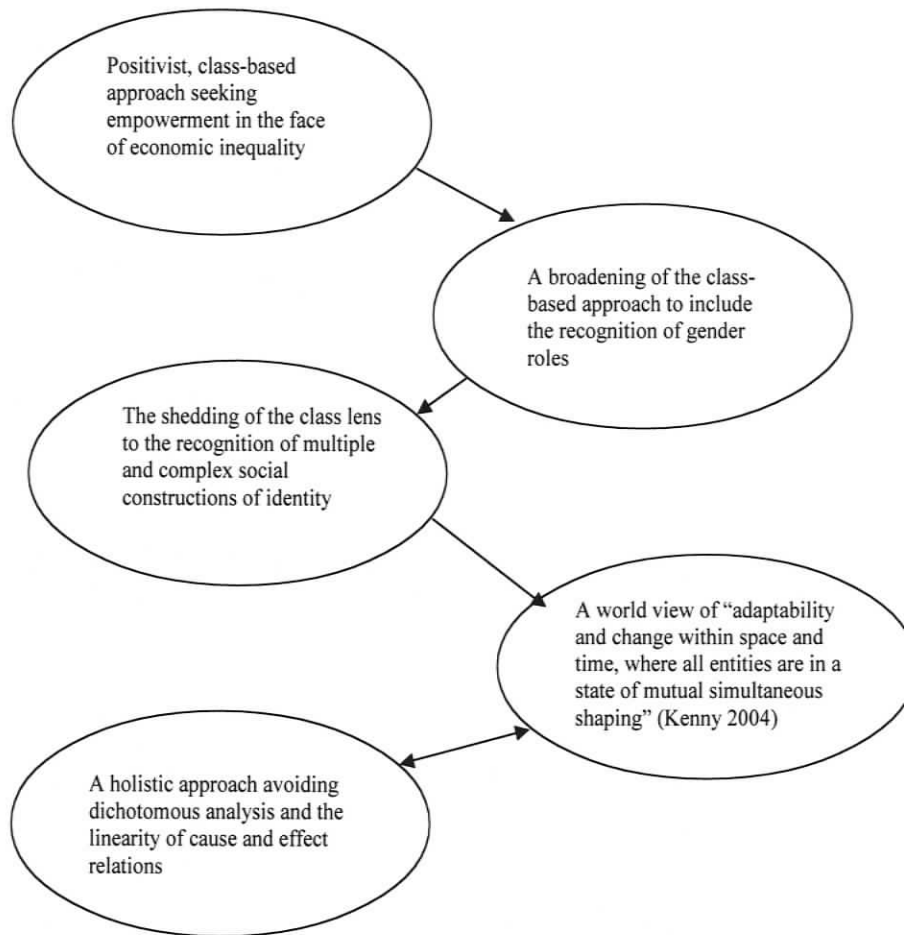
questioning the core institutions of the state, the very premise of the electoral system. In summary, the first deep changes in my view of the world was the recognition of paradigm as culturally-engrained and based on dichotomous analysis.

2.4.2 Change in paradigm

If a paradigm shift can be considered to be a major change in thoughts, perceptions and values, in retrospect mine was a gradual process, moving from a class-based approach in 1987 to one that included the recognition of gender roles in 1992, and from there gradually to the recognition of multiple and complex social constructions of identity where gender, class, ethnicity and generation in particular could not be viewed as separate from the other, but rather as “constructions of intersectionality.” (Yuval-Davis 2006:197) When I began working directly with the indigenous movement in 1996, I had already begun to shed part of my dichotomous analysis of social and human rights issues, with a practice-based recognition that all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping (Kenny 2004) and adopted, in what was to me a change of paradigm, a holistic approach avoiding dichotomous analysis and the linearity of cause and effect relations, a shown in

Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: From a positivist, class-based approach to the recognition of dynamic multiple and complex social constructions of identity



In practice, what caused a profound paradigm shift, a change in my worldview, in the unconscious lens through which I viewed the world, was the recognition, over the years I accompanied the indigenous organizations of Bolivia in their claims to collective rights (1996 – 2002), that:

- a) The human rights framework within which I had always lived was not an absolute, but was value-bound within the institutionality of liberal democracy. This realization came about when I was puzzling over why Guarayo leaders

would choose to run for elections with a right-wing party known to have caused the death and disappearance of hundreds of social activists. This decision did not fit in with my notion of the quest for social rights. In the context I came from, left-wing parties stood for social rights, and right-wing parties such as the one being discussed by the Guarayo leaders as a choice for the 1997 elections were there to uphold the economic interests of large landowners. Left was “good,” right was “bad,” in the set of values I had inherited.

- b) The written or verbal word was not an absolute, but to be viewed in relation to context and time. How could statements made by indigenous leaders in internal meetings, assemblies and for the public, regarding claims of the violation of cultural and territorial rights, change from one day to another or within the same framework of time? How could they one day denounce the Vice-Minister of Indigenous Affairs to me, and the next day hold meetings with him to strategize on territorial claims with apparent trust in him? In the context I had lived in, this situation seemed to be a contradiction of the organization’s own principles, and a betrayal of trust, given that I placed a fixed value upon statements made to me or to the public at large.

It took a process of separating my own values from the process of the organizations to understand a new or different set of values, and to view political processes from a different perspective: that of peoples who were not seeking participation in a state through existing political parties under the left-wing / right-wing spectrum of options, but rather the recognition of their nations as governing bodies; and that of leaders choosing

strategic communication in different contexts of space and time, borrowing when and where necessary the language used by the state institutions.

The shift of paradigm I underwent at the time can be understood to be, in terms of methodology, from a positivist or post-positivist perspective to a naturalist or constructivist approach: a holistic approach (see final section of

Figure 1, page 27) where words and statements are “time-and context-bound,” and all entities are in “a state of mutual simultaneous shaping.”(Kenny 2004:60)

**Table 2: Kenny’s Contrasting Paradigms (Kenny 2004:60)
 adapted by Kenny from Lincoln and Guba (1985)**

	Positivist / Post-Positivist	Naturalist or Constructivist
Nature of reality	There is a single, tangible reality that can be broken apart into pieces that can be studied independently	There are multiple realities that can be studied only holistically
Relationship of knower to known	The observer can be separated from what is observed	The inquirer and the “object” of inquiry interact to influence one another
Possibility of generalization	Time- and context-free generalizations are possible	Only time-and context-bound working hypotheses are possible
Possibility of causal linkages	Every action can be explained as the result of a real cause that precedes the effect (or is at least simultaneous with it)	All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects
Role of values	Inquiry is value-free	Inquiry is value-bound

2.4.3 Challenging dichotomies

In positioning myself, I came to recognize how dichotomies are used within international legal discourse in the domain of human rights, some examples of which are the opposition of objective to subjective, legal to political, logic to emotion, mind to body, culture to nature and so on. The first of a pair is seen as positive, the second as negative or lesser, and defined in relation to the first, rather than from its own existence and experience. The opposing element, or the population it describes, is effectively silenced as an actor in its own right. Charlesworth from a feminist analysis of human rights legal discourse, recommends paying close attention to the boundaries within each dichotomy: “The problem ... is not the drawing of ... distinctions as such...but rather the

reinforcement of ... inequality through the use of such distinctions. We need then to pay attention to the actual operation of boundary drawing and whether it ends up affecting ... lives differently.”(Charlesworth 1999:388) Where indigenous peoples cease to become silences in legal and political discourse, they remain a half of a dichotomy: they are “the other,” the lesser, referenced by the implications it has on the other. It is no wonder then that the indigenous quest for self-representation is so often addressed as a mere reaction to a dominant state, rather than as a proposal in its own right.

In the interviews carried out for this research, dichotomies abounded, among which the most frequent were:

- Union organizations / indigenous peoples’ organizations
- now / before
- ownership (of projects, processes) by NGOs / ownership by the indigenous peoples
- immediate needs at community level / strategic needs at national level
- ‘Carays’ (white people) / ‘indigenas’
- logical framework analysis / integral indigenous vision
- administrative norms / reciprocity

In all the cases, given the context of a shared vision for the collective rights of indigenous peoples among the interviewees, the second was deemed the strong one, the claim, the right one, at the time the sentence was stated, yet through each of the interviews, it was clear that these sets of two were complementary or intertwined. As examples:

- the rural union organizations are composed principally of Aymara and Quechua, indigenous peoples, and the development of these unions has contributed to the development of the current national indigenous organizational structures, who furthermore forge alliances with them;
- the present and the past built upon each other;
- ownership of processes was addressed as a shared matter, where alliances were formed, each party maintaining their identity, but acting together in some shared spaces;
- the indigenous organizations combined the response to immediate practical needs at the community or national level, while at the same time addressing longer term, strategic needs, from both the community and the national level;
- white (Caray) and indigenous became relative terms, as strategic alliances were recognized;
- project management required logical sequences of cause and effect which, though methodologically seeming to fragment a process, contributed to a holistic indigenous vision;
- administrative norms seemed to be an opposition to the notions of reciprocity, but contributed greatly to ensuring transparency and confidence in leaders' management of projects; at the same time, reciprocity was recognized to be a structured social system in its own right.

Carolyn Kenny presents one perspective on the risks of dichotomous positioning, for problem-solving, stating that it leads to "linear progressive strategies that can be

evaluated through time to monitor change and progress. This manner of thought not only fails to embrace holistic approaches, it positions itself *against* holistic world views precisely because they are not marked by linear progression and evaluative norms grounded in before/after differences.” (Kenny 2004:14) There is an irony in dichotomous thinking being opposed (dichotomously) to holistic thinking. Where the critique of dichotomous thinking strikes true, however, is when one considers that the dichotomies do not exist: they are the *expression* of categorizations defined from one actor (or group of actors)’s perspective. There is therefore no opposition placed between dichotomous thinking and holistic thinking. Dichotomous thinking merely masks known complexities, by choice, by intention, by need. Actors with holistic visions as their premise can also easily state or express themselves in a dichotomous fashion, a choice to include a political weight to their words. The dichotomy, dichotomous expression, is a political instrument. It is what produces policy discourse where “Aboriginal people are characterized as living in the past,”(Kenny 2004:8) with the intention of discrediting “their traditional world view that acknowledges the complexities of a holistic, interconnected life and embraces change.”(Kenny 2004:8)

Overall, the presentation of social processes through dichotomous lenses creates a weakening of one of the positions, by placing it as a mere reaction to the other. Are the indigenous peoples reacting to colonization, or have they not a vision of their own that is complex, rather than opposing? George Manuel (1972) states that

the exact route by which the different Indian nations will enter the Fourth World will be as different as our own past histories, and as different as the variety of resources available to us in the widely scattered corners of this continent. Many government officials and journalists have taken our different routes to be signs of

disunity and inner conflict, a clash of values and disagreement over direction. What they have seen is not a mirage. They have simply failed to see the forest for the trees. **The two points on which Indian people must agree are basic values, and over-all direction (...).** We do not want to live in isolation. We do want to live in our own houses where we can choose to keep our door open to the world. We do not want to have the whole river to ourselves but we do want to steer our own canoe without being rammed by the bigger ships around us.

The need to address paradigms and dichotomies in the course of this research arose in part due to the frequent appearance in academic journals of the phrases “globalization from below” and “globalization from above,” as different or opposing processes. Another key dichotomy in journal articles addressing globalization, or alternative democracies in South America, centered on whether the state is losing its role – when more complex articles will much more aptly discuss the changing role of the state, a topic taken up in section.

I have further chosen to present my personal journey in terms of paradigm and the need to challenge dichotomies, in order to parallel the manner in which principles and values upheld by international NGOs, international social rights movements and activists at large can become an imposition or an opposition to the visions and values of their stated partners, in this case, the indigenous peoples. NGOs with a mission to help or support “the other” have visions, values and a mission that are considered the immutable part of their identity. Strategies, projects and activities may vary, but the vision and values are upheld. If a change of paradigm at the individual level, as I have presented in this chapter, is a challenge, it is all the more so at the institutional level, where institutional vision, mission and values are to be affected. This subject gains importance when the indigenous leaders interviewed for this study raise the importance of their international

alliances or alliances with NGOs, while underlying the delicate nature of their role: the NGOs need to support and accompany, provide tools, but “the decision is *ours*. They do not tell us what to think... we may be old leaders, but we know, I know for example what my vision is” (Bienvenido Sacu, cited in section 5.1.5, below).

3. A theoretical framework: Fourth World theory, shifting boundaries and the role of the state

In the first part of this thesis, I positioned myself “as a mediating relation in the interpretation of information gathered” (Moss, cited on page 17). In doing so, a voyage, a story-line was developed, which resembles the process of “unsettling the settler within” (Regan 2006:7) described in research on decolonizing dialogues between indigenous and the non-indigenous, the settlers, within Fourth World theory. I further presented the need to recognize the importance of context, perceptions, and the risks of viewing or analyzing subjects from a dichotomous perspective. Recalling that the argument of this thesis rests on the role the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia assign to the state, and their multi-scalar approach to obtaining recognition of their collective rights, I now present an introduction on Fourth World theory, followed by a review of perceptions of boundaries, transnationalism, and the changing role of the state. The final section of this chapter intentionally includes grey material such as conference proceedings and reports. The combination of peer-reviewed literature and grey literature is paramount for this research, as indigenous voices expressed in reports and at conferences bring invaluable information free of external interpretation. These can further be considered to have

passed a rigorous peer-review: that of the constituents of the speakers or authors' communities, people, and organizations.

3.1 Fourth World theory

We must advance an agenda of social equality and political pluralism by
shining the light of radical truth through the fog of racial prejudice and
overwrought emotional attachments to colonial institutions that make up
the state and culture of colonial society.
Taiaiake Alfred (2005:104)

*Nosotros existimos y por último el estado tiene que sujetarse
a lo que realmente están exigiendo nuestros pueblos
indígenas y creo de que eso no hay que perderse /*
We exist, and in the long run the state has to fulfill what our
indigenous peoples are demanding, that's what we must
continue to be clear about.
Carlos Cuasace, Chiquitano leader, Bolivia (interviewed
August 12 2003)

It took a child to point out to the Emperor that he was naked. Immersed as we are in a world dominated by the state system, its static face and the conflicts created by this recent and artificial staticism, it takes much effort to shed the predominant paradigms and look at the world in a different manner: a world of people and peoples, on which a grid of states has been superimposed. At least for a while. This is where Fourth World theory becomes important to this study: we need to view the world from a different perspective, one that is not of opposition to a state or state system, but rather from the perspective of nations that preceded the creation of the states, and that continue to identify themselves as nations in their own right.

George Manuel, a Shuswap Indian leader from the interior of British Columbia, Canada, and activist for the unification of indigenous peoples of the world, picked up the term “Fourth World” from an African friend, who described the Indian renaissance of the 1970s as the beginning of a Fourth World. It was not meant to be a reaction to a third, or second or first world, but an indication of a different world, a reality that existed and exists beyond the current global political and economic order. Vine Deloria Jr, who had the privilege of introducing Manuel and Poslun’s book entitled *The Fourth World: an Indian Reality*, evokes Manuel’s thoughts in the following words:

What makes a “nation”? How do peoples come into existence? How do peoples relate to each other? These are some of the questions that plague us today. If we continue to view the world as the combination of political and economic forces of recent vintage which seem to control our lives and properties, we do violence to the very core of our existence. Thus it is that the Fourth World of George Manuel offers a vision of human existence beyond that of expediency and the balancing of powers and speaks to the identity crisis that has gripped every land and its peoples. No contemporary political and economic structure *has to be*. Whatever structures do exist must eventually find a reason for their existence above and beyond the political and economic values of today. (Manuel and Posluns 1974:xii)

Fourth World theory is essentially a liberation from the analysis of a single system of economic and labour dependency, recognizing cultural variability beyond an economic order deemed to be, in any case, temporal and brief in relation to the history of the indigenous peoples of the world. It is a theory that recognizes that

indigenous nations do not simply oppose modernization or progress. Instead, they assert the right to define and pursue development and progress in a manner compatible with their own cultural contexts. They champion the right to choose the scale and terms of their interaction with other cultures. In order to achieve and secure cultural, political and economic rights, sovereignty and self-determination have become some of the most important values sought by the international movement of indigenous nations. The rise of Fourth World theory offers one of the greatest challenges theorists will have to contend with this century. (Seton 1999:21)

Bernard Nietschmann presents Fourth World analysis as a point of departure for mapping geography, history, and politics based on the world's 5,000 nations, instead of focusing on states, regions, blocs, and superpowers as traditional analyses do. In what he calls traditional studies, the world is interpreted as enclosed by a fixed, legal network of some 191 international states. With a geopolitical perspective that differs so widely from the traditional one, Nietschmann calls for the examination of basic terms such as nation, state, people, and ethnic groups. A nation is a community of self-identifying people who have a common culture and a historically common territory. A people is also self-defined and is characterized by a common history, geographical location and territory, racial or ethnic ties, cultural or linguistic ties, religious or ideological ties, a common economic base, and sufficient individuals to maintain a common identity. Every people is a nation. A state is used to define a centralized political system within international legal boundaries recognized by other states, establishing one government to enforce one set of institutions and laws. It is imposed upon unconsenting nations, and creates a new history and geography to prevent all preexisting national claims to territory, people, or resources. (Nietschmann 1994) A response to this pre-empting of preexisting claims can be seen in the development of the Coordination of Organizations of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Basin (COICA), an international body aiming at reclaiming nations' claims to territory and resources. The COICA can be deemed a transnational organization on the one hand because it is formally structured with representation of indigenous peoples from a given number of states, and on the other hand because it represents nations that themselves span several countries, transcending state boundaries. Such is the case of the Guarani, whose population spans territories currently occupied by Bolivia, Paraguay and

Argentina, and who continue to work together in the development of strategies for self-government. (Fondo Indígena 2003).

Nietschmann identifies that a nation-state is rare, where a common people is internationally recognized as a nation-state, and cites Iceland and Portugal as two of those rare examples. He addresses the term “ethnic” as one that designates groups that are placeless minorities within a state, and recalls that the word originally meant heathen. While the peoples of Bolivia do not see themselves as either a minority or as heathen, there are cases where they adopt the term ethnic, or any other term needed at a given time to meet the language of the context, of the “other”, the interlocutor. In the case of the four peoples who share a territory superceded by the department of Santa Cruz, of the Bolivian state, they chose to work together as of the early 1990s as the Coordination of *Ethnic Peoples of Santa Cruz*, presumably under the influence of a group of anthropologists working in the region at the time of the conformation of this alliance. In other cases, it is the term “indigenous” which is adopted to match external interests: the *Federation of Originario and Indigenous Ayllus and Marqas of Northern Potosi* added the term “indigenous” in their name in the 1990s, in response to the increased interest of international agencies in indigenous matters, while the term “federation” was inherited from their previous relation to the union movement. “Originario” (originario) is the term of preference of the Aymara and Quechua people, as it indicates a sense of having been the original inhabitants of the region.

For a perspective on Fourth World *Geography*, Griggs and Hocknell take a look at nations in relation to states. In the post WWI era, 127 new states emerged with

recognized international boundaries and United Nations membership (Griggs and Hocknell 1996). These states may fragment into several nations, nation-states and other political structures, most often along the lines of pre-existing nations, *faultlines* of the states. In a case that illustrates the artificial character of the modern state boundaries and ensuing fragmentation, I witnessed a presentation by Enrique Camargo, Guarani leader, who during a public presentation in Denmark drew a map on a large flipchart which explained things succinctly and very pedagogically: the map was a rough outline of Latin America, with a couple of rough lines within it to illustrate Aymara/Quechua territory and Guarani territory. There were no countries. Enrique was, in effect, redefining social space in promoting the Guaranis' collective quest for self-government. State boundaries, and the role of the state system itself were being questioned.

For Alfred and Corntassel (2005), of the University of Victoria, Fourth World theory offers promise as a theory rooted in Indigenous cultural and spiritual principles, but it is remembering ceremony, returning to homelands and liberation from the myths of colonialism that are the decolonizing imperatives. "Indigenous is an identity constructed, shaped and lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism,"(Alfred and Corntassel 2005:597) and at the same time there is "a danger in allowing *colonization* to be the only story of Indigenous lives."(Ibid, p. 601) "Victimization" and "grievance" must not be seen as the cornerstones of Indigenous identity (Ibid, p. 606). In an on-going colonial assault, the strategy for today's eradication of indigenous peoples as peoples is their *integration* and their confinement to state-sanctioned legal and political approaches, which compartmentalize communities, and lead indigenous nations to "mimic the practices of dominant non-Indigenous legal-political institutions,"(Alfred and Corntassel

2005:600) in a process of politics of distraction. Decolonization must begin at the local level, with the regeneration of one's culture, language, relation to the land, and community relations or kinship relations. This holds true for the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia, with the nuance that since the most threatening colonization to identity, the state democracy's attack on the peoples' identity through integration strategies, is relatively recent in the Lowlands, the regeneration takes the shape of a *defence* of identities where culture, language, life with the territory and with the community continue to hold strong. In terms of politics of distractions, the need to dialogue with the state legal and political institutions did raise internal conflicts over the course of the two decades of study, as will be seen in chapter 5, but the influence of the state was recent enough, and the international context favourable enough to indigenous rights, that the collective objective of governance continued to hold strong beyond the temptation to accept proposals of inclusion within the state.

Fourth World sets the framework for this study, of a vision of human existence that cannot be reduced to the analysis of economic and labour dependency, and is anchored in the existence of nations for whom the current economic and political order and its institutions are a but a brief phase in history.

3.2 The role of the state, boundaries and transnational movements

With the declaration of the international decade of indigenous peoples in 1995, the concept of self-governance has been brought to the forefront. The indigenous peoples claim their rights to self-governance in relation to a given state, to a territory, but also in relation to international representation in global environmental, economical and political

issues. At community level, different peoples may share the same territory, and that single territory may overlap three municipalities and two departments. The territory may also overlap three countries, as in the case of the Guaraní (Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina) and of the Chiquitano (Bolivia, Brazil). It stands to reason then that the peoples' strategies for recognition of rights in relation to natural resources are coordinated nationally and regionally across neighbouring countries, to be further negotiated transnationally. The negotiations concerning intellectual property rights of cultural and natural resources, for example, are held at transnational levels involving states regulations but overshadowed by international economic and political interests which themselves transcend state boundaries. Beyond the historical roots of indigenous peoples' transnationalism, the presence of such transnational interests exacerbates their need to negotiate transnationally in order to ensure governance.

I argue that indigenous peoples' transnationalism precedes both the state and current processes of globalization, and is not a mere reaction to either the state or globalization: the indigenous peoples of the world can be seen to be transnational actors from both a historical perspective and from its present-day networking. For the purpose of this study, I choose to adopt the following definition of transnational relations: "regular interactions across national boundaries where at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization." (Risse-Kappen 1995:27) This choice is made based on a review of some of the current discussions on the limits of the state as a boundary-setting unit and on the emergence of global or transnational civil society movements by political scientists and international

relations scientists, as well as on current analysis on Latin America, and the analysis of Bolivian anthropologists, economists and indigenous leaders.

The emergence of transnational social movements in a context of globalization

It is recognized by most social movement analysts that “transnational social movements are emerging as a powerful new force in international politics” (Sikkink 1998:94; Risse-Kappen; Pagnucco) resulting in a “blurring of distinctions between domestic and global levels of politics.” (Ibid) It is understood that there is a context of growing democratization and increasing global integration that leads to converging values, and the proliferation of transnational organizations (Kriesberg, in Smith, Chatfield, and Pagnucco 1997).

The notion that this is a new phenomenon is contested by those who argue that it is only exacerbated in an increasingly globalized world. It can be understood that state power has never had “institutional fixity on either theoretical or historical grounds,” (Trouillot 2001:125) and that the crossing of political borders is inherent to economic history. A similar view is that relations never actually were a system of rungs of a ladder, with the middle rung, the central state, mediating between civil society and a wider, international environment (Brenner 1999). Such analysts propose that transnational relations both preceded and follow a market which has always been transnational and where the lack of fixity of state power and effect has merely been exacerbated by globalization: the perceived emergence of transnational social movements occurs as a logical consequence

of “respatialization of markets and of various state functions.” (Trouillot 2001:128) The relations established by the peoples are of national, regional and global scales, in a geography of networks and flows that are not be “supplanting the inherited geography of state territories,”(Brenner 1999:60) or denying the role of the state as a “major locus of social power,”(Brenner 1999:41), but are rather leading to a “rethinking of the meaning of both state territoriality and political space in an era of intensified globalization.” (Brenner 1999:41)

There are those who present civil society as a site of opposition in international relations, providing a “permanent site for legitimate opposition to all forms of associational life,” (Frost 2002:92) viewing individuals as citizens within a system of states and within a state. This is a view of “non state actors” as a resistance, or reaction “from below” to globalization, in a challenge to the state system and its international institutions that opaques or negates the possibility of populations that have a vision of their own, reducing them to mere opposition.

The role of the state is at times discussed in terms of its demise: if civil society is the core of democracy, rather than the state, the state becomes superfluous (Grugel 1999), as civil society increasingly addresses suprastate bodies rather than their state (European Union, WB, IMF). Brenner specifically critiques researchers who focus on deterritorialization for presenting this subject in dichotomous terms, focusing for example on the disappearance, obsolescence or demise of the state, rather than on changes in flows and scales.

A strong focus is at the same time placed on transnational social movements based on *networking* of activists at a transnational level (Smith, Chatfield, and Pagnucco 1997),

and on processes of expansion from national boundaries to collective work on issues common to civil society belonging to specific states (Tarrow 1996:22). Sikkink, well known for her analysis of 'transnational advocacy networks', identifies transnational social movements as "sets of actors that generate coordinated and sustained social mobilization in more than one country to publicly influence social change, ... often through the use of protest or disruptive action." (Sanjeev Khagram 2002) The focus, again, is on opposition, rather than on the defence and presentation of proposals for governance or self-governance.

Of more interest, and closer to the vision of the indigenous movement, some do underline that global civil society is not oriented exclusively toward the state: it does challenge the concept of the nation-state as being the exclusive space of democratic action and mediator of social values, but over and beyond that it holds the potential for forging new forms of democracy and social mediation on a global scale, as the nature of the issues around which social movements converge goes beyond "state-centric liberal pluralism." (Turner 1998:32) With this analysis, the meaning of citizenship cannot be seen as mere participation in the conventional institutional processes associated with nation-states, (Ibid) nor with supra-state bodies, when global citizens instead adopt an approach that "seeks to transform the parameters of institutional legitimacy through democratic action on a global scale," (Ibid:33) challenging the state's monopoly of authority.

On a similar note, Catherine Eschle, in her analysis of development theories in relation to globalization and social movement (Eschle and Maignashca 2005), brings up the risk

that, when viewing global social movements as a mere reaction to globalization, one may contribute to opaquing a deeply engrained social movement which is not strictly anti-capitalist, or anti-globalization, or an oppressed class, but rather a movement of identification of common platforms among peoples of different and multiple identities (Eschle 2005). This description well reflects the case of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia, their organizational processes among several distinct and often geographically distant peoples, and their development of alliances with other organized social movements or sectors. Eschle provides a dynamic definition of movements, as existing when activists claim they are part of one and participate in “ongoing processes in which diverse actors construct a common frame of reference... [resulting in] the formation of a collective identity.”(Eschle 2005:20)

Indigenous peoples organize together in transnational social movements, based on shared values and visions that precede the existence of the state system and the current economic order. The presence of such movements cannot be reduced to a mere reaction to globalization. While the movement of Bolivia and the South American region may share with global social movements some of the issues brought about by economic globalization, and the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands may coordinate tactics with other indigenous and non indigenous social movements of Bolivia to reverse the country’s neoliberal policies, a key difference is that they “are not interested in reforming the system. Rather, they are interested in autonomy and preserving their own political-cultural space to remain different. In this sense they are often deeper challenges to neoliberalism than other movements.” (Fenelon and Hall 2008:1873) They are “alternative constructions of civil society and citizenship.” (Ibid:1889) They are

“sovereignty-free organizations capable of exercising an independent role in world politics.” (Rosenau, cited by Grugel 1999:122) While much of the struggle involves work on “rights”, obtaining rights within a state or through supranational bodies is not the objective, but rather a *means* towards governance: a rights-centered struggle is one of the necessary mechanisms in the current political order.

3.2.1 Indigenous peoples and transnationalization

A number of writers link transnationalism to indigenous peoples in ways relevant to my research. For Assies (Assies, Haar, and Hoekema 1999), under an increasingly global market, while some of the functions of the state are assumed by transnational mechanisms, this does not signify an exhaustion of the state – the state continues to have a role, for example, in investments within a competitive world. While social competencies of the state are reduced, the reforms it undergoes, albeit under different forms of pressure, cause it to continue to have a role in the exercise of democratization processes. Constitutional reforms result in divergence, convergence and negotiation between different interests and social forces which provide a framework for the state’s reconfiguration. By eliminating subsidies for the agrarian sector and attracting international interests in the indigenous territories and resources, for example, market liberalization and political liberalization have provided an opportunity for a larger-scale organization of the indigenous peoples. The presentation of customs and traditions as the nucleus of an immutable identity of the indigenous movement should, however, be understood as a political strategy and part of a culture of resistance, and tendencies of a

reification of identity could lead to a potential interethnic polarization and closure. Assies, Haer and Hoekema recommend a balance between participation and autonomy – rather than promoting one or the other – as complementary aspects in the definition of “emerging multicultural regional models.”(Assies, Haar, and Hoekema 1999:122)

Donna Lee Van Cott is a much cited author of studies on democratization and indigenous rights, who identifies, in both Bolivia and Colombia, the potential for normative transformations that reach further than the mere transformation of the state regime (Van Cott 2001). She further raises key elements to my research, such as the fragmentation of indigenous organizations that initially occurred when they entered party politics (through non-indigenous parties). She points out that where indigenous peoples obtain spheres of autonomy within a state, rather than debilitating it, it “is a strategy for strengthening the state itself, by increasing its capacity to dispense justice and protect rights.” (Van Cott 2000:278)

Through the examination of nine cases of claims to politico-territorial autonomy in five countries of Latin America, Van Cott identifies two key factors of success: (1) channels of access to decision-making power being opened for indigenous autonomy claimants, and (2) an influential ally emerging to support these claimants (Van Cott 2001:44). In this, she recognizes that social movements themselves cause changes in political opportunity structure, and adds three variables that may also have contributed to the success of autonomy claims: decentralization, population size and cohesion, and organization of indigenous populations. In her study of ethnic autonomy regimes, she, however, avoids transnational discourse, presenting claims within a given state and in

relation to it. She addresses cross-sectorial alliances without referring to international or transnational issues networks.

Sarah Radcliffe, Nina Laurie, and Robert Andolina (2002) deal specifically with transnational relations and the mesh of different levels and scales involved in relation to indigenous peoples of Bolivia and Ecuador. The view of the authors is that the entanglement of relations between local and international social actors on issues including class, race, gender, profession and culture is neither problematic nor a reduction of the state's role. To the authors, the state becomes vital in transnationalization as it establishes and reproduces local and transnational relations. The authors observe that the indigenous movements involve diverse levels simultaneously, in a trans-scalar manner, understood to mean the crossing of body, local, national, regional, and international scales and boundaries. Transnationalism is then seen to be as much about discontinuous space as relational space. Globalization emerges from below, as local actors embark on multiple relations, which are met by globalization from above. All the while, there is a recognition of a greater complexity than that of the dichotomous below/above, with "entanglements around gender hierarchies, political affiliations, notions of professionalism, and cultural authenticity." (Radcliffe, Laurie, and Andolina 2002:3) Radcliffe et al state that indigenous discourse often couches cultural ambiguity in the language of "unity within diversity" (Ibid). There is both divergence and convergence around culture. A key element of convergence is the anti-colonial ethnic identity. The authors remind us that while the *ethno-development* issue network is bound by culture in a timeless notion of rural ethnic lifeways, the Andean indigenous movement "rests upon webs of meaning that involve transnational actors, indigenous peoples, and nation-states.

The *indigenous development* issue network, in turn, has been constructed from rural settlements through national bureaucracies, bilateral and multilateral agencies, with cultural boundary setting taking place at the crossing of levels, and at different levels simultaneously” (Ibid). The combination of these two issue networks becomes the transnational political sphere of action of the indigenous movement in their quest for development with identity. The authors complete their analysis by demonstrating that the interests, agendas and practices constitutive of the indigenous transnational issue networks are radically heterogeneous: the notions of discrete social divides between groups “from below” and “from above” are analytically redundant.

Writing from yet another perspective, Deborah Yashar (1999) depicts ethnic movements as challenging ineffective or incomplete neoliberal citizenship regimes. The state is challenged by indigenous peoples’ proposals of a more complex political geography for defining units of representation and governance. These proposals affect the neoliberal assumptions of national identity, unit representation and state structure. Yashar analyzes a recent wave of literature theorizing on democratic consolidation in third-wave democracies, recognizing this literature’s contribution to the field of study but critiquing what she perceives as its generally “narrow, dichotomous and teleological misrepresentation of democratic consolidation.”(Yashar 1999:98) Her critique is similar to that of Brenner’s critique of deterritorialization researchers. In her words, the concept of democratic consolidation seems to rest on the “*absence* of regime breakdown following two consecutive and democratically held elections,”(Yashar 1999:98) but there are no identified characteristics of what delineates democratic consolidation. By narrowing their studies to democratic consolidation and the analysis of the political

institutions, instead of studying democratization politics, analysts fail, in the view of Yashar, to focus sufficiently on the states and the social forces as independent variables that are neither fixed nor homogenous, and therefore on the dynamic relation between the two. For Yashar, the new ethnic movements are challenging state institutions more than they are the state: they are “contesting institutional boundaries and practice of citizenship,”(Yashar 1998:24) contributing to democratization processes in the development of a varied scope, depth and blend of democratic reforms.

In Yashar’s analysis of indigenous movements in postliberal Latin America, she identifies, as Van Cott and others have also done, that the liberalization of the 1980s and 1990s provided an opportunity for the organization of indigenous movements: the removal of rural subsidies, state-backed access to land and credit, and the decreased entry points for peasants to gain access to the state, given its less prominent role in social provision, provided a context in which the peasant organizations weakened. These organizations had arisen in earlier decades in a context where rural men and women “assumed a peasant status before the state and practiced an indigenous identity derived from and structured by local practices.” (Yashar 1998:33) Combined with an increased threat to territorial resources – not just land, agriculture or credit – the weakening of the peasant organizations led to a favourable environment for Indians to turn to local forms of political identity and participation.

3.2.2 Bolivian indigenous leaders and allies, on boundaries

It has been difficult to find academically refereed articles from the indigenous peoples of Bolivia themselves. The articles introduced here are from indigenous peoples' representatives and professionals intimately related to the indigenous movements of Latin America, and are mostly the proceedings of presentations at conferences. They exemplify well the need to recognize strategic communication in the face of multiple power relations; I therefore present them with some reference to the personal and political contexts of the authors. The articles raise issues of administrative boundaries between territories and municipalities (Pessoa 1997), of common law justice, international human rights and national laws (Orellana, 1997; Iturralde, 1993), and of indigenous peoples' relation to states in 1997 (Cardenas 1997) and in 2005 (Garcia Linera; Mamani Ramirez; Solano 2005).

Vicente Pessoa was, between 1987 and 1997, President and Vice-President of the Indigenous Confederation of Lowlands of Bolivia (CIDOB), President of the Chiquitano People's organization, Municipal Councillor and Mayor of the municipality of Concepción, and Member of Parliament. In a paper he presented at the Colloquium on Indigenous Peoples and States organized by the International Fund for Indigenous Peoples and the Simon Bolivar University of Ecuador (Pessoa 1997), Pessoa narrates the processes of indigenous political and citizen participation in spaces of municipal government and development, with a very factual rendering of steps taken by different peoples affiliated to the CIDOB. His presentation remains focused on Lowlands indigenous organizations in relation to local and to some degree national spaces of governance, and he makes no reference to the numerous cross-sector alliances that his organization established over the course of the same period, nor of the multiple use of

international spaces of negotiation that his people, the Chiquitanos, made over the course of the 1990s and early 2000s. There is a sense of linearity, with Pessoa presenting his election to municipal government followed by his participation in national government as a natural progression, as if seeking compliance with the rungs of the ladder exposed by Brenner. In this sense, his presentation is one that modestly – or politely – fits into what he perceives as his audience's view of state order, rather than reflecting the complex multi-scalar activities and relations developed by the Guarayo and Chiquitano organizations in the course of their territorial defence of the 1990s. The one conflict that Pessoa does refer to is one that while internal to the organization became publicly known and is often cited in Bolivia as an example of the indigenous movement's diverging strategies for political participation. He presents in broad and neutral strokes the division within the movement at a time when major splits occurred, with a charismatic leader pushing for the unity of the indigenous peoples behind one single party, while the Guarayos and Chiquitanos, among others, protested that the best strategy was to use different parties in different localities, based on multiple criteria that would allow indigenous candidates to hold seats in municipal councils with the least possible party influence: parties that demanded militancy and obedience were not to be accepted. The Chiquitanos and Guarayos sought unity in choosing this strategy, rather than forcing a semblance of unity with a party. With Pessoa's presentation we see that in 1998 already, the indigenous movement was recommending a constitutional reform, in light of the fact that political representation could only be had at the time through party membership. A strategic number of steps needed to be taken: 1) use the current legislative system, participating in whatever party allowed indigenous leaders to have seats in government,

2) from Parliament have a law allowing for reform of the electoral system approved by one government, and 3) in the next government have the actual reform carried out, which would allow for peoples' self-representation without parties in yet a third government.⁹

Pessoa concludes with an argument of strength for the peoples to focus on

generating instruments of organizational and institutional coordination and proposals, with technical capacity to develop and implement strategies for municipal development and regional participation that would be comprehensive and adequate to the new political scenarios and the new legal framework; these would be validated and appropriated by the organizations through mechanisms of social consultation, participation and decision-making by the social actors themselves. (Pessoa 1997:190)

Where Pessoa speaks of the relation between the Chiquitano territory and municipal units, he raises questions, but softens the accusations customary to his local organization: he avoids being explicit on the subject of corruption, and on the violent conflicts between municipalities, indigenous peoples and the private sector, deemed to be in large part a result of overlap of political and administrative boundaries. This presentation is an example of strategic communication, given that the public he addresses is one with which the Chiquitanos seek alliances. Pessoa's explanation of election strategies, however, does dare to present the political parties as an artificial, enforced vehicle for citizen participation in a state, rather than a valid instance of representation of interests in democracy.

René Orellana, a lawyer for an NGO supporting the indigenous peoples of Santa Cruz, similarly to Yashar, denounces the falseness of state institutions whose roles are

⁹ The reform of the constitution has often been attributed to President Evo Morales. In fact, it was a proposal of the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands, which they pursued and shared with popular organizations and sectors of the Highlands, both indigenous and non indigenous, until an alliance of these organizations chose Evo Morales to run for President with the constitutional reform as their key platform within the electoral campaign.

“unidimensional and homegenizing of society within a legal order.” (Orellana Halkyer 1997:15) His focus is on indigenous justice and the justice systems of democratic regimes, through which he offers an interesting turn on transnationalization. He presents the possibility of ensuring complementary judicial systems, combining traditional common law with the official state laws; locally administered traditional common law would be regulated or normed by the international charter of human rights, thus bypassing the state. The state, and specifically its institutions, are seen as constraints. Orellana describes the relation between local and global societies, as well as the concept of spatial scale, strictly from the case at hand, that of Bolivian indigenous local judicial systems or customs.

Diego Iturralde, anthropologist and longtime activist in Latin American indigenous affairs, is a frequently cited source on indigenous peoples and the state, and in particular Bolivia. While his writings continue to be published, I sought his views from 1993, a time when Bolivia was in full-fledged liberalization processes, and the indigenous movement of the Lowlands was beginning to build up the organizational processes and technical capacity referred to earlier by Pessoa. His studies are rooted first and foremost in a deep knowledge of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia. In his article on uses of law and uses of custom, (Iturralde G. 1993) he presents the indigenous form of organization and its transgression of the present national models as a transformation of the organizational framework on which the state is organized. In a similar fashion as Orellana’s article, transnationalization arises almost accidentally in the presentation of what initially was meant to be proposals of reform to the state justice system in relation to traditional indigenous judicial customs. He is, however, intentional in addressing the

relativity of the state of Bolivia: “the indigenous peoples and communities, who have led uncountable episodes of resistance over five centuries, have undergone transformations, but have never ceased to be distinct and today bring to the forefront the following historical result: an incomplete nation, essentially unviable.” (Iturralde G. 1993:127).

The first formal indigenist appearance on the national political scene in Bolivia was that of Victor Hugo Cardenas, who was elected Vice-president of the country in 1993. He was touted by the international press as an indicator of the indigenous presence in Latin American states, and remains a well-respected figure in indigenous circles, even though he was at the time criticized by indigenous organizations for not being an elected representative of indigenous peoples. He addresses the changes in the relation between the indigenous peoples and the states in Latin America in a paper prepared for public presentation in international forums. In much the same manner as Pessoa, he presents a very diplomatically and strategically softened position, demonstrating much respect for national states and their progress in recognizing indigenous rights. He highlights the specific presence of indigenous persons in national and municipal seats of government, in apparent compliance to a fixed set of pathways and boundaries leading from municipal to national governance, and only then to international relations, perhaps fearing that the “complex mosaic of superimposed and interpenetrating nodes, levels, scales” referred to by Brenner (1999:69) might seem too much of a defiance to the state order. Cardenas does transcend the national scene, underlining the importance of Treaty 169 of the International Labour Organization, the international Indigenous Fund, and indigenous rights declarations made by the United Nations and the Organization of American States. He follows this with an immediate reference to the “new practices of international

cooperation,”(Cardenas 1997:30) initially that of international NGOs, then followed by bilateral and multilateral funding and technical assistance agencies as having been instrumental in ensuring the direct participation of indigenous peoples in development projects, in the development of technical capacities, in the strengthening of grassroots indigenous organizations and in the promotion of their rights. There is a promising scene, today, for “a new style of relations between indigenous peoples, the states and international cooperation itself.” (Cardenas 1997:31) His presentation of 1997 is a seemingly non-challenging presentation, alluding mostly to inclusion and human rights, and yet there is a quiet thread running through it of a quest for a regional construction of democracy which would better reflect the regional movement of indigenous peoples.

A more recent collection of papers and presentations by indigenous people and allied scholars, entitled *Indigenous Movement in Latin America: resistance and alternative project* (Escárzaga and Gutiérrez 2005), has Alvaro Garcia Linera, current Vice-President of Bolivia, addressing the need to “suppress the mono-organizational structure of the current Bolivian state” in an article written shortly *before* his election (Garcia Linera 2005:287). Carlos Mamani, Aymara historian, points out that the struggle of the indigenous peoples has irradiated throughout the country over the previous six to ten years, and that the recent actions best known internationally – the gas war of 2003 and the water war of 2005 – have generated a) territorialized collective action strategies, b) anti-state discourses, c) indigenous leadership and d) societal projects (Mamani Ramirez 2005:43). Action and discourse abound and are diverse, ranging from belligerent to less radical, and there are evident moments of fragmentation of the indigenous organizations, but overall “new social imaginaries have been created,” (Ibid:48) and with the election of

Evo Morales a new sociopolitical configuration is expected. In the same collection of articles, Marisol Solano, Guarani leader within the department of Santa Cruz, identifies three enemies of the indigenous people: the political system, transnational corporations and private entrepreneurs (Solano 2005:89). She states that even though since 1975 many different peoples have managed to come together to defend their common interests, these enemies have “managed to infiltrate our organizations and although we have many very good leaders, there are also those who have been very fragile and succumbed to cooptation by those three enemies” (Ibid). While she doesn’t state it in the article, she has led indigenous organizations since 1996, with a particular focus on the need to bring in allies from other regions or countries, be they indigenous or not, as instruments that may help pressure the state when needed, ensure the monitoring of international extractive companies, and in general, support the development of the capacity of the indigenous organizations to simultaneously negotiate within a national legal framework and within an international human rights and collective rights framework.

I close this review of some of the literature on transnationalization, the role of the state and indigenous peoples by observing that the closer the author or subjects involved in a paper are to the populations whose positions are presented, the more probability there is of a strategic form of communication which may disguise key arguments or proposals. Once more, the context is as important as the written or verbal communication. Grugel and Trouillot, for example, do not have difficulty in challenging theories. Yashar uses some level of diplomacy to ensure that she does not create conflicts between herself and the indigenous organizations, while maintaining sufficient objectivity for the academic demands of her paper. Pessoa and Cardenas have to be read in the context of their role

and of the public they address, as previous Member of Parliament and Vice-President, respectively as well as in their role as recognized Chiquitano and Aymara public personalities. Marisol Solano mentions enemies in a very broad manner and avoids pursuing the subject in a public forum.

4. A historical context: indigenous peoples of the Highlands and Lowlands of Bolivia

The preceding chapters introduced Bolivian indigenous peoples' positions in relation to the state. Although the histories of the peoples of the Highlands (Aymara and Quechua, Uru and Chipaya) and the Lowlands (34 peoples of the Amazon, the dry tropical forests and the 'Chaco' region) and their relation to the Republic and to the state are markedly different, they converge at the beginning of the new millennium, under joint proposals of indigenous representation.

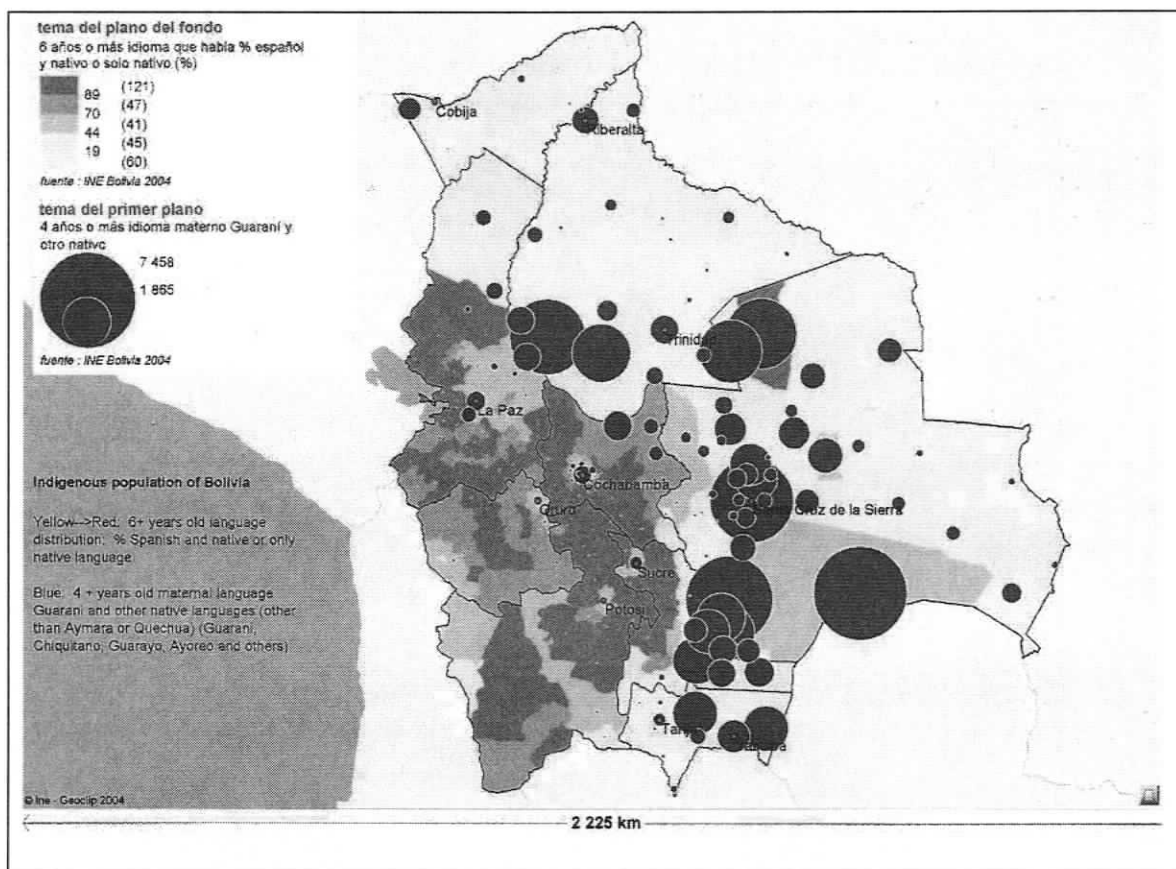
I set here the context for the analysis of the indigenous peoples of the Highlands' quest for a new state based on collective rights rather than mere inclusion, by presenting an overview of the indigenous peoples by region and main activities, colonization in the Highlands and in the Lowlands, historical processes of resistance to colonization, the influence of unionization in the Highlands in the 20th century, collective indigenous representation in the Lowlands, and the peoples' relation to an international movement for collective indigenous rights.

4.1 Indigenous peoples by ecoregion and population

Bolivia is a country of physical diversity, composed on the one hand of the Andes, with high plateaus, valleys and mountain chains, and on the other hand of the Lowlands which accounts for 62% of its area¹⁰ and is comprised of tropical amazon zones, savannahs and the arid Gran Chaco. Bolivia is land-locked, an enclave between Peru, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Brazil. Successive governments have been in turn clamouring and promising to recover the access to the sea lost to Chile in the War of the Pacific of 1879. The population of Bolivia is estimated at 9 million in 2006, in an area of 1 million square kilometres. The National Statistics Institute of Bolivia indicates a density of 8.5 persons per square kilometre, with an annual growth percentage of 2.24 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística de Bolivia 2009). Only two of Bolivia's nine departments (17 percent of the total area) have a population density of 16-20 persons per square kilometer, while 59 percent of the total area has a density of less than 3 persons per square kilometer -- the Lowlands of Bolivia in particular.

Map 1: Identification of Lowlands peoples by first language: native languages that are not Aymara nor Quechua (Instituto Nacional de Estadística de Bolivia 2009)

¹⁰ Calculation based on data from Montes de Oca (Montes de Oca 1997)



Map 1, above, shows the percentage of the population (6 years and up) who speaks a native language or is bilingual (native language plus Spanish) – the darker the area, the higher the percentage. The circles superimposed on the map illustrate those whose first language is a native language (4 years and up) other than Aymara or Quechua, with or without Spanish as a second language: this helps situate geographically the Guaranis, Chiquitanos, Guarayos, Ayoreos and other non-Aymara or Quechua populations, who reside principally to the East of the Andes, in the Lowlands or tropical areas of Bolivia. The Lowlands are situated in the Eastern departments of Santa Cruz (capital city Santa Cruz), Beni (capital city Trinidad), Pando (capital city Cobija) and parts of Chuquisaca (capital city Sucre) and Tarija (capital city Tarija). The East of the departments of La Paz and Cochabamba also lies in the Lowlands, with sub-tropical or tropical climate.

While the National Institute of Statistics of Bolivia has an indicator of ‘self-identification as indigenous’, it is interesting to note that this identification is often significantly lower than what language denotes. During the national population census of 2001, which included several questions to help identify the indigenous composition of the country, I witnessed an Aymara friend stumped by one of the census-taker’s questions, responding: “what do you mean, am I indigenous?” The young man, continuing with his list of questions, noted that her maternal language was Aymara, and chose to return to the previous question and mark her as indigenous, leaving my friend perplex: “why do they want to call us indigenous? I speak Aymara and I come from my ‘pueblo’ and we live in Bolivia.”

Table 3, below, presents data collected by Wigberto Rivero, one-time Vice-Minister of Indigenous Affairs, on the population of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia, the ecoregion they primarily inhabit, and the main activities by population.

Table 3: The indigenous population of Bolivia by region, department, people and main activity
Table composed Anne Catherine Bajard, 2006, based on data gathered by Wigberto Rivero (Rivero Pinto 2006)

	Total population	Eco-region	Department	Number of communities	Linguistic family	Main activity
Chiquitano	184,248	Amazon	Santa Cruz	Over 200	Chiquitano	Agriculture
Moxeño	76,073	Amazon	Beni	Over 200	Arawak	Agriculture
Movina	10,152	Amazon	Beni	Over 200	-	Agriculture
Chimán	8,528	Amazon	Beni	8 plus	Chimán	Fishing and gathering of jatata
Tacana	7,056	Amazon	La Paz, Beni	6 plus	Tacana	Agriculture
Maropa	4,498	Amazon	Beni	Several	Tacana	Cattle raising, agriculture and forestry
Joaquiniano	3,145	Amazon	Beni	7 plus	Arawak	Agriculture
Itonama	2,940	Amazon	Beni	8 plus	Aislada	Agriculture
Lecos	2,763	Amazon	La Paz	11 plus	Leco or Lapa Lapa	Cattle raising, agriculture and forestry
Yuracare	2,755	Amazon	Cochabamba, Beni	8 plus	Yuracaré	Agriculture
Ayoreo	1,701	Amazon	Santa Cruz	9	Zamuco	Agriculture and gathering
Cavineño	1,677	Amazon	Beni, Pando	15 plus	Tacana	Gathering, agriculture and cattle raising
Mosetén	1,601	Amazon	La Paz, Beni	2	Not classified	Agriculture
Baure	976	Amazon	Beni	12	Arawak	Gathering cocoa, agriculture
Cayubaba	645	Amazon	Beni	14	Cayubaba	Agriculture and cattle raising
Canichana	420	Amazon	Beni	5	Not classified	Agriculture
Sirionó	308	Amazon	Beni	2	Tupi guaraní	Hunting, fishing, honey
Yuquí	220	Amazon	Cochabamba	1	Tupi guaraní	Hunting, fishing, gathering, crafts
Yaminahua	188	Amazon	Pando	1	Pano	Gathering, hunting, fishing
Machineri	155	Amazon	Pando	1	Arawak	Agriculture, gathering, hunting, fishing
Araonas	112	Amazon	La Paz	1	Tacana	Forest products, hunting and fishing
Moré	101	Amazon	Beni	2	Chapacura	Agriculture
Guarasugwe	31	Amazon	Santa Cruz, Beni	1	Tupi guaraní	Hunting, fishing, gathering agriculture
Pacahuara	25	Amazon	Beni, Pando	2	Pano	Gathering and agriculture
Guarayo	9,863	Chaco-Eastern	Santa Cruz	18	Tupi guaraní	Agriculture and animal raising
Guaranis	133,393	Chaqueña	Santa Cruz, Chuquisaca, Tarija	Several	Tupi guaraní	Agriculture
Weenahayek	2,020	Chaqueña	Tarija	6 plus	Weenahayek	Fishing, gathering and crafts
Tapiete	63	Chaqueña	Tarija	2	Tupi guaraní	Agriculture, fishing and gathering
Ese Ejja	939	Northern Amazonic	Pando	3 plus	Tacana	Hunting, fishing and gathering
Chacobo	501	Northern Amazonic	Beni	7	Pano	Gathering and agriculture
TotalLowlands	457,097					
Quechua	2,556,277	Andean	Chuquisaca, Cochabamba, Potosí, Oruro, La Paz	Numerous	Quechua	Agriculture
Aymara	2,098,317	Andean	La Paz, Oruro, Potosí	Numerous communities and cities	Aymara	Agriculture, cattle raising, mining, commerce, fishing, labour
Uru	2,383	Andean	La Paz, Oruro	3	Uru	Agriculture, labour, domestic animals, crafts
TotalAndes	4,656,977					

The term “amazon” in Rivero’s data refers to both moist and dry tropical forests, including areas of transition towards the drier thorny scrub forests further south in the

Chaco. The more common denominations for the Lowlands are “Amazonia” (wet tropical forest), “Oriente” or Eastern lowlands (the transition area) and “Chaco” (savannahs).

The term “gatherer” is also used indiscriminately by Rivero to designate hunter-gatherers, harvesting, and work in cacao groves or rubber plantations. It is, however, the most recent detailed data available on actual population, and the activities field does provide an idea of the peoples’ way of life. The data illustrates well the presence of indigenous populations, communities, peoples, in those areas of the country which were divided into large estates for a handful of private owners. By Rivero’s data, there are an estimated 457,097 members of 30 indigenous peoples in the Lowlands, dedicated mostly to agriculture, hunting and gathering, and 4,656,997 members of the Aymara, Quechua and Uru people of the Highlands, dedicated mostly to agriculture, commerce, mining, cattle raising and crafts. The Chipaya are presumably included in the data as Urus. While Aymara and Quechua are the dominant languages in the Highlands, the Uru-Chipaya have maintained their language over 4,500 years of successive conquests by other peoples, including by the Aymara and the Spaniards. While most of the peoples of the Lowlands have maintained their language, it is the Guarani language that has the highest profile, given the size of the Guarani population, the early recognition of the Guarani alphabet and the recognition of Guarani as one of the official languages of Bolivia, together with Aymara and Quechua.

4.2 The Highlands: pre-Inca, Inca, colonization, unionization

The Inca history of the Highlands of Bolivia is more widely known than that of its Amazon peoples. The Tiahuanaco Empire (300 BC to 1000 AD) was followed by regional lordships of the Qullasuyo (1100 to 1450 AD) (De Mesa, Gisbert, and Mesa Gisbert 2003). The Qullasuyo, conquered by the Inca, became a part of the Inca empire, a society characterized by law, order and ethnic plurality (Taller de Historia Oral Andina 1999), a political structure of alliances and a central imperial bureaucracy, a Confederation of nations. It is only in 1538 that the Confederation of Inca nations are conquered and colonized by the Spaniards. The Spaniards extended their model of political organization, including taxation, to the population, but established a system of “reductions,” by which the Indians were reduced to their communities of origin, where no Spaniard could live. Studies abound on the internal structure of the different nations of the Inca Empire and their relation with the Spanish colonial administration. What is pertinent to this thesis is the perdurance of the Andean *ayllu* organization (Quechua and Aymara, acknowledging also the presence of the Urus and Chipayas, conquered earlier in history by the Aymara, but still present today and claiming their rights as nations) through and beyond colonial rule, the Republic (1825), the Revolution of 1952, the organization of rural communities into unions of rural “workers,” and the neoliberal phase of 1985 to the present, with its laws of popular participation and decentralization. It is with these last two phases that the history of the Andean peoples and that of the Lowlands people meets up, as will be discussed later.

4.3 The Lowlands: from savages to be evangelized to a movement for territorial rights

It is estimated that in prehispanic times, the indigenous population of the Lowlands surpassed a million (APCOB 1994). The indigenous population was reduced by the 21st century to an estimated 330,000 persons, consisting of approximately 34 indigenous peoples, through successive processes: the penetration of the Spanish conquest, the establishment of reductions and Jesuit and Franciscan missions, rubber exploitation, wars (Guerra del Acre, Guerra del Chaco), the exploitation of oil and gas, the construction of roads and railways, the occupation of territories by ranchers, intensive agricultural industry and the lumber and mining industries. The indigenous peoples were, however, left relatively unaffected by successive forms of *government*, from colonial rule to the beginnings of the Republic, the revolution of 1952 with its ensuing agrarian reform, and the successive dictatorships of the 1970s.

While Bolivia's agrarian reform of 1953 aimed for the equitable distribution of land to those who work it, nationalizing the large haciendas of the Highlands and distributing the land to rural communities and individuals, it actually had the contrary effect in the Lowlands: it consolidated a system of large estate owners and servitude by indigenous peoples.

Carlos Romero, at the time Lawyer and Director of an NGO providing legal support to the indigenous organizations of the Lowlands of Bolivia, then Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, and currently Minister of Autonomies explains in his interview with me:

As part of a plan for post WWII mutual collaboration, a North American economic mission had presented a plan to improve bilateral market relations between Bolivia and the U.S. The report, called the Bohan plan, called for the diversification of the economy, developing agriculture and lumber in the Lowlands, to supply produce and goods to the Highlands, whose mining production depended on food import from Argentina, Peru and Chile. To this end, improved communication and transport between the two regions would be necessary, and large agroindustrial complexes would be set up in the Lowlands. The U.S.'s interest lay in the development of a market for machinery and manufactured goods. The Bolivian state was to play a strong role in setting up these large complexes, channelling technology, credits, subsidies, and labour to this end before transferring them to the private sector. So, contrary to the logic of the agrarian reform of the Highlands – equitable distribution of land to those who work it – the existing haciendas of the Lowlands should be converted to capitalist enterprises. In 1950, 10% of the Lowlands (approximately 3.6 million hectares) was already in the hands of a few private owners. The 1953 agrarian reform consolidated this structure of inequitable land tenancy, which had been conceived under colonial rule and pursued during the Republic with feudal aspects to it, converting it to large rural agricultural enterprises (Carlos Romero, interviewed August 13 2003).

Romero adds that this shift was compounded by the drug trade which was at its height between 1974 and 1980: drug trafficking lay out a structure of economic and political influence which resulted in large extensions of land being given by the state to private individuals in the Lowlands. These lands served merely as camouflage for the illicit trade, as the processing of cocaine actually takes up very little space.

All the while, neither the agrarian reform nor the traffic of influence took into account the indigenous population, even as a rural population. Romero states in the interview that

in any case, even the ILO Convention 107, previous to Convention 169, considered the indigenous peoples to be tribes who had no juridical capacity to manage themselves, and it was recommended that religious groups act in their name. Thus, if land was destined for indigenous peoples, it was through these missions, whose role was to assimilate the peoples into the Western way of life. There did exist measures within the agrarian reform which would guarantee the restitution of communal lands, but it did not state the mechanisms to do so. Restitution was thus not possible. There are several factors to take into account: the fact that there was a highly exclusive, racist and discriminatory conception, but also the fact that it was considered that the

indigenous peoples of the Lowlands were not sufficiently organized to carry out the model of the agrarian reform. There was also the perceived risk that the indigenous peoples of the Highlands would advance geographically and take over the Lowlands under the logic of the agrarian reform. It is thus not surprising that extensive areas of San Ignacio de Moxos, Santa Ana [in the Beni], San Ramon, San Javier, Montero, Portachuelos [in Santa Cruz], Vallegrande, Mormoro and Comarapa [in the valleys of Santa Cruz] became the private property of a few individuals (Ibid).

Romero concludes by affirming and confirming that “it is first through the Bohan plan, and then through the power of the drug trafficking and infiltration into the state structure, that the Lowlands generated a system of large estate owners, where the indigenous peoples were not taken into account” (Ibid).

4.4 Rebellions and massacres: an overview of key dates between 1538 and 1974

Before proceeding to the differences in articulation with and incorporation into the state, it must be noted that processes of resistance by indigenous peoples of both the Lowlands and the Highlands have been a constant in the history of the country and region. The Guaranis, Mojeños, Chiquitanos, Ayoreos and other 30 peoples of the Lowlands, the Quechuas of Northern Potosi, the Aymaras of the Altiplano, even while establishing some level of relation with the state, have shown a marked resistance right through to the present. Defence of the Highlands nations, or uprisings against the colonial invaders, have been well documented and appear in Bolivia’s formal history books: Tupaj Amaru in the XVIth Century, Tupaj Katari in 1871, and Zarate Willka in 1899 are some of the best-recognized heroes of Aymara and Quechua resistance. Resistance in the Lowlands, by the Amazon peoples, is less-well known.

Table 4, below, combines milestones expressed by the indigenous movements (CIDOB 2008; CSUTCB 2003) with moments inscribed in Bolivian history (De Mesa, Gisbert, and Mesa Gisbert 2003), as a way of illustrating for the purpose of this thesis the processes of resistance through times of oppression, marginalization and exploitation, in both the Highlands and the Lowlands (in bold letters).

Table 4: Milestones of the indigenous peoples within Bolivian history, from the Spanish conquest to 1974
Table composed by Anne Catherine Bajard based on data from CIDOB and CSUTCB (CIDOB 2008; CSUTCB 2003).

Year	Historic events
1538	Conquest by the Spaniards
16 th cent.	Resistance by Tupaj Amaru in Willkapampa and Taki Unquy uprising
1550	Jesuit missions founded in Santa Cruz (la Vieja) near San Jose de Chiquitos
1616	Uprising of Zongo
1675	Jesuits obtain spiritual submission of indigenous peoples through missions, reductions
1692	First reduction of San Javier by the Jesuits. 40+ different indigenous peoples brought to 10 reductions of the Chiquitania. Father Eguiluz counted 37 "nations" in the Prairies of Moxos.
@1700	The Jesuit reductions set up indigenous "cabildos", for each people/mission
1727	Uprising of Aruma, Guaraní chief, to expulse the soldiers, missionaries and merchants
1767	The Jesuits are expelled, and mestizos (half-breeds) enter the area marking the beginning of enslavement of the indigenous populations, which would last until the Republic.
1781	Rebellion of Tupaj Katari
1810	Pedro Ignacio Muiva, Mojeño Chief, leads rebellion against the Spaniards in the Beni
1811	Juán Manuel Cáceres mobilizes thousands of Aymaras, who carry out a siege of La Paz.
1825	Independence of Bolivia, Simón Bolívar President
1880	Height of rubber exploitation, thousands of indigenous persons die in the plantations of Ñuflo de Chávez and Velasco; others taken to the departments of Beni and Pando
1879-84	Bolivia loses the sea to Chile
1887	Andrés Guayacho, a Mojeño born in Magdalena, Beni leads an uprising against the Patrones (bosses) who held them in slavery on their rubber and chestnut plantations
1892	Led by Apiawayki Tumpa, Ava Guaraní warriors initiate a war against the Patrones who were stealing their lands and against the missionaries who were stealing their culture. On January 28 1892, in Kuruyuki, slaughtered by troops of Coronel González.
1899	Pablo Zárate Willka, leads fight for defense of territory and of the Originary State, uprising includes Taparí and Peñas (Oruro) the altiplano of La Paz, Northern Potosí, border with Chile
1904	Uprising of Pomata
1920	Indigenous rebellion
1921	Uprising and massacre in Jesús de Machaca
1923	Violent repression of a rebellion by the miners.
1927	Three uprisings in Northern Potosi, Chayanta at the centre of this.
1930-33	Eduardo Nina Quispe fought for a Republic of Nations and Originary Peoples
1935	Massacre of campesinos in Pucarani, in order to force them to go the war of the Chaco.
1932-35	Bolivia loses the War of the Chaco

Year	Historic events
1914-39	Santos Marka T'ula (representing the Ayllus of Qallapa, and all Orinary Communities and Nations), fought for the restitution of the Land and Territory of the Ayllus
1942	The Bohan plan for development and economic diversity (agroindustry in Lowlands)
1945	During the First Indigenous Congress, the elimination of servitude was approved.
1952	Campesina (peasant) and mining revolution beats military regime. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, President. "Pact of reciprocity" with the revolutionary State.
1953	Agrarian reform
1964	Military coup by then Vice-President René Barrientos
1967	The USA help campesinos in supressing the movement led by Ernesto "Che" Guevara
1969	Vice-President Siles Salinas replaces Barrientos (killed in a plane crash), but army takes over
1971	Military coup by Hugo Banzer Suárez
1974	Banzer postpones elections, forbids all political, union activity, following failed coup.

The resistance has been continuous, as has the oppression and massacre of indigenous peoples, from the XVIth century and through the agrarian reform of 1952. To cite just a few from the Lowlands, Aruma, a Guarani chief, led a move to expel soldiers, missionaries and merchants in 1727, Pedro Ignacio Muiva, a Mojeño captain, initiated in 1810 a rebellion against the Spaniards in the Beni region, and in 1887 another Mojeño, Andrés Guayacho, led an uprising against the *patrones* who had enslaved his people in the rubber and chestnut plantations. In 1892, The Ava Guarani warriors led a war against the *patrones* who had stolen their land and the missionaries who had stolen their culture.¹¹

To my surprise, through the interviews I carried out in 2003, an Ayoreo leader gave me the gift of the retelling yet another moment of recent resistance: the Ayoreo's resistance to the New Tribes Mission in 1986, in Paraguay, where Ayoreos killed between 5 and 7 missionaries who were evangelized Ayoreos. The Ayoreos, characteristically a warring people, traditionally followed a war strategy of ambushes and quick actions under the leadership of a chief or *dakasute* of prestige. The motives for war were, in general,

¹¹ Kuruyuki, the site of the ensuing massacre of Guaranis by the Spanish military, continues to be a place of celebration of Guarani identity.

vengeance for offenses made to them or the need to obtain iron from the white colonizers (Broda 2006:308). In this case, the Ayoreo interviewee described the event in terms of wariness, mistrust and fear of the evangelical missions who had previously caused the death of some of their people:

For two days, they walked, in the forest, they followed them, then after two days, when they were close, this group was a warrior group, they protected themselves by digging deep ditches around them at night, deep ditches, this wide, and half-covered them with dirt and leaves. They were scared of the other people, and this way, the others would fall into the well and they could then kill them. The missionaries arrived around 7 in the morning, yelling "Here we are, we are the New Tribes group, we come in peace, to talk with you, come and live with us!" and they put down their machetes. But no, you are not Ayoreos, you are Coñonos – that's how we call the white people – you wear shirts. And others, ten years before, the same had happened, the Coñonos had betrayed and killed an Ayoreo 'Cacique', you could be doing the same, so then they shot them with arrows, lances, I can't remember how many they killed, 7 right away.

4.5 Unionization and party politics in the Highlands

As stated earlier, the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia had a significantly different history from that of those of the Highlands, in that they were largely ignored as citizens by successive forms of the state, and had little or no direct inter-relations with the state. Another major difference between their histories is unionization in the Highlands, following the 1952 revolution, based on the Aymara and Quechua's role as miners – *obreros*, or workers – within state enterprises, and a left-wing urban vision of empowerment of the rural poor as unionized agricultural workers. The peoples of the Lowlands, in contrast, were largely unaffected by union organizations, and as a consequence, from party politics; they largely continued a life of subsistence or a life of

servitude to large estate owners, with more contact with landowners and religious missions than with a state presence.

Vicente Pessoa, Chiquitano leader and founding member of the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia – *the Lowlands peoples* – places political participation as an organized movement in the years ranging from 1989 to 1995, and initial processes of direct participation in 1996-97 (Pessoa 1997). Victor Hugo Cardenas, Aymara intellectual and Vice-President of Bolivia from 1993 to 1997,¹² shares that view with the statement that “in these past few years, we have been moving from a period of systematic exclusion to one of progressive political incorporation of the indigenous peoples.” (Cardenas 1997:35) This statement could be misleading: the Aymara and Quechua people of the Andean region – *the Highlands peoples* – had established precise administrative relations with the colonial state (Taller de Historia Oral Andina 1999), and from the 1930s, through to the revolution of 1952 and agrarian reform of 1953, and on to the present, had participated actively in relation to the state through representation as “campesino unions,” (Garcia Linera, Chavez Leon, and Costas Monje 2004:109) with specific demands such as that of education. Through the collective identity and discourse as *campesinos*, peasants, the Aymara and Quechua played a strong role in agrarian reform, consolidating as a Confederation of Unions, the CNTB in the 1960s, which in turn became in 1979 the Confederacion Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB 2003:5), member of the Central Obrera Boliviana (national workers’

¹² It must be noted that Victor Hugo Cardenas participated in the elections as leader of an indigenist party, but not as a representative of the indigenous movement or organizations. In more recent years, the indigenous movement has chosen their candidates to national elections in representation of their interests and then moved on to choosing the given party that might allow the candidates to win a seat.

union). Their political articulation with the state dates from the time of the colony, and their political incorporation, *as a union movement*, predates by half a century that of the organization of indigenous peoples of the Lowlands.

From union leadership to indigenous leadership in the Highlands

This nuance is key, as in the last decade, representation and incorporation as unionized workers has given way to a growing indigenous movement within the Aymaras and Quechuas. By 1996, discontent between traditional authorities and union leaders of the Highlands had grown sufficiently to give rise to a new organization, the Confederation of Ayllus and Marqas of the Qullasuyo, the CONAMAQ, based on the traditional authority system.¹³ Concurrently, the union movement became characterized by an increasingly indianist discourse, with experienced union-trained Aymara and Quechua leaders such as the much publicized Felipe Quispe, known as “the Mallku,”¹⁴ Evo Morales,¹⁵ leader of the coca producers, and Alejo Veliz, leader of the Cochabamba federation, delivering scathing speeches on the oppression of Aymaras and Quechuas by colonial regimes.

Internal conflicts aside, a summary of the move away from a collective peasant identity

¹³ Ibis is cited as supporting the CONAMAQ, dedicating “an increasing amount of work to ‘rescuing’ the *ayllu* from political or social erasure in terms of non-governmental advocacy (Lucero 2006)

¹⁴ The CONAMAQ had been painstakingly developing as a representative national organization, based on local traditional communities’ needs for representation on the basis of their identity (Aymara or Quechua), in respect of the traditional authority system which includes turns as Mallku, meant to be both a leadership and an obligation of service to the community. In 2000, Felipe Quispe, Executive of the CSUTCB, *nicknamed* “Mallku” without having gone through the steps of traditional roles through to the “turn” as Mallku, gained international prestige through his scathing speeches and the mobilization of the union members against the State, reclaiming the history and rights of the originary nations.

¹⁵ Evo Morales led the coca producers against measures promoted by the United States of America, against the Drug Enforcement Agency and their intromission in national affairs, and against Law 1008, by which one is guilty until proven innocent in any accusation related to drugs or even the purchase and transportation of gas or sodium bicarbonate, both elements used in the production of coca-base paste.

and towards a more heartfelt indigenous identity – as Aymara, Quechua or “*originarios*,”¹⁶ but adopting the term indigenous where so called upon by international actors – is illustrated by the CSUTCB with the following chronology:

Table 5: Development of the union in rural Bolivia (CSUTCB 2003)

<p>1936 Dawning of Unionization (17 years) 1953 Managed by the Comandos of the MNR (11 years) 1964 Managed by the Military-Campesino Pact (6 years) 1970 Free, led by Katarists (15 years) 1985 Managed by left and right political parties (11 years) 1996 Start of own management</p>
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4.6 Organization in the Lowlands

In the meantime, while an organized union system involving the Aymaras and Quechuas was being promoted both locally and by non-governmental organizations and political parties, the indigenous peoples of the Amazon had been, again, largely left to their own. It is in 1979 that a process of unification of the indigenous peoples of the Eastern Lowlands began, under the leadership of the Capitan Grande Guarani, Mburuvichaguasu Bonifacio Barrientos Iyambae, focusing on territorial rights. The Central of Indigenous Peoples of Eastern Bolivia (CIDOB) was founded in 1982 by the Chiquitano, Ayoreode, Guarayo and Guaraní people. In 1989, the organization grew to include the organizations

¹⁶ The term “originarios” is one presented with pride by Aymaras and Quechuas, equivalent to the term “First Nations” in Canada.

of the Chaco and of the Amazon, and became a national Confederation representing 80% of the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands.

The national context changed significantly during this period, with a new form of invasion: the implementation of two generations of liberal reforms in Bolivia in the 1980s and 90s. The first, known as the New Economic Policy (NPE in Spanish), was applied as a shock measure in the 1985-89 government, to reduce hyperinflation. It was dictated by Supreme Decree and included the immediate privatization of a number of state companies, including the mines of Bolivia. The second reform program, known as the Plan for All (*Plan de Todos*), was administered by the same political party in a later government, 1993-1997, through a complex legislative process which included privatization, capitalization, decentralization, participation and institutional reform of the state apparatus, towards a market-based economy. (Mora Contreras 1998)

Decentralization would bring about pushes from political parties for a greater inclusion of the indigenous peoples. Opportunities for local governance began to appear, and state presence became a stronger daily reality. Privatization would lead to increased international economic interests in the natural resources of the Lowlands. The call for participation in electoral processes and the need for indigenous communities to defend their territories and natural resources set the way for an increasingly organized movement.

By 2002, the CIDOB was composed of a set of regional organizations, which in turn represented up to four different peoples each, where these shared the same geographical space:

Table 6: Founding dates of the organizations of indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia
 Table composed by Anne Catherine Bajard, using data from the CIDOB (2008)

1987	The Assembly of the Guaraní People (APG)
1989	The Central of Indigenous Peoples of the Beni (CPIB)
1991	The Indigenous Central of the Amazon Region of Bolivia (CIRABO)
1992	The Organization of the Weenhayek Capitania (ORCA WETA)
1994	The Coordination of Ethnic Peoples of Santa Cruz (CPESC)
1997	The Central of Indigenous Peoples of La Paz (CPILAP)
1997	The Coordination of Indigenous Peoples of the Tropics of Cochabamba (CPITCO)
2001	The Indigenous Central of Amazon peoples of the Pando (CPIOAP)

Typically, a regional organization begins with communities, inter-communal organizations or central of communities, the specific people's organization itself, on to the regional one (for example CPESC, which represents three nations and part of a fourth), then on to CIDOB. The CIDOB elected leaders respond to an executive commission formed of the President of each of the regional organizations.

The 34 peoples that compose CIDOB each have their own form of organization and relations with Western society. Some, such as the Pachuaras, with a population of less than 30, and the Yukis (220) are at risk of disappearing, while others such as the Guaraní (134,000) and the Chiquitanos (184,000) have a high level of organization, and have achieved a formal alphabet for their respective language. Overall, it is estimated that the

indigenous population of the Lowlands reaches 450,000 (CIDOB 2008:1). They inhabit seven of the nine departments of the country.

Representation of the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands through the CIDOB was consistently as indigenous peoples, albeit through organizational structures with union-style elections, but contrary to the Aymara and Quechua's Confederation of Unions, maintaining *identity* as the principal factor of membership. The CIDOB's mission is to

defend the rights of the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia by representing them with public and private organizations, and [it] seeks to strengthen its representative organizations in the quest for their effective incorporation and participation in political, social, economic and cultural decisions of the country, at local, regional, national and international level. (CIDOB 2008:1)

While in early years the organization had adopted a representation that matched the political-administrative divisions of the country – by department – the organization very quickly reconfigured to a representation of single peoples or collectives of peoples where the geographic region made it feasible and necessary.

It is with the “Indigenous March for territory and dignity” of August 1990 that the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands appeared on the national scene, it being a “political window which provided them an extraordinary opportunity to inform society of their historical problems and pressure for a solution to these problems.” (Garcia Linera, Chavez Leon, and Costas Monje 2004:233) In 1990, Bolivia “discovered” the indigenous peoples of the Oriente, as they walked 640 kilometres, from Trinidad to La Paz, from sea-level up past 4,500 metres altitude, in a march that for many was the beginning of the process for a constituent assembly (La Razón 2007:1).

4.7 The international context

The peoples of the Bolivian Lowlands were not alone: the indigenous peoples of the Amazon had begun organizing a few years before the CIDOB was founded. The Peruvian organization, AIDSESEP, began in 1979, closely followed by the CONFENIAE of Ecuador. In 1984, the Coordination of Organizations of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Basin (COICA) was founded by the peoples of Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia and Brazil. By 1989, the organization further included French Guyana, Guyana, Venezuela, and Surinam. This was the birth of a regional organizational context within which Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru stood out:

- the indigenous populations included within these countries' administrative boundaries were not minorities
- the countries counted indigenous or originary peoples in both Andean and Amazon regions
- there was significant presence of indigenous peoples inhabiting areas that overlapped into neighbouring countries, rendering all the more explicit the arbitrariness of the political and administrative boundaries.

Table 7, below, presents a chronology of the development of the organization of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon, side by side with the international indigenous rights context between 1957 and 1989.

Table 7: Organization of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon, international rights context 1957-89

Composed by Anne Catherine Bajard, 2003, for Ibis-Denmark

	Foundation of national Amazon indigenous peoples' organizations	International agreements / rights context
1957		The ILO approves the first international legal instrument about indigenous peoples and their rights, Convention 107 on indigenous and tribal peoples (substituted in 1989 by the Convention on indigenous and tribal peoples # 169)
1968		IWGIA, the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs, was founded in 1968 by human rights activists and anthropologists in 1968, based in Copenhagen, Denmark.
1970		In response to reports of human rights violations, the Subcommission of prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the United Nations recommended that an extensive study be carried out on the situation of indigenous peoples (1971).
1977		The reports of the study started in 1971 raise increased attention on the situation of indigenous peoples. In 1977, close to 200 indigenous delegates meet in Geneva to attend a conference of non governmental organizations, to treat the subject of discrimination against indigenous peoples
1979	AIDSESEP, Peru	
1980	CONFENIAE, Ecuador	
1981	FOAG, French Guyana	
1982	CIDOB, Bolivia	The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations creates the Working Group on Indigenous Populations as a subsidiary of the Subcommission, with the mandate of examining events related to the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples' human rights and fundamental freedoms, paying close attention to the evolution of norms. Shortly after its establishment, a unique arrangement is established within the United Nations, for indigenous peoples to participate in sessions of the Working Group
1984	COICA is founded in Peru, with the participation of AIDSESEP, CONFENIAE, CIDOB, ONIC (Colombia) and UNI (Brazil)	
1989	COIAB, Brazil CONIVE, Venezuela APA, Guyana	ILO Convention 169, on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in independent countries (1989) -- ratified by Bolivia in 1991
To 1995	OIS, Surinam (1992) OPIAC, Colombia (1995)	

The COICA was founded and strengthened in a context that included influential international allies (see Van Cott, cited on page 48). The International Labour Organization (ILO) had approved in 1957 the first international legal instrument about

indigenous peoples and their rights. In 1968, the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA, based in Denmark) had been founded by human rights activists and anthropologists who maintained a strong relationship with the peoples of the Amazon. In 1970 and 1971, in response to reports of human rights violations, the Subcommission of prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the United Nations had requested that an extensive study be carried out on the situation of indigenous peoples. The report raised increased attention on their situation, and in 1977, close to 200 indigenous delegates met in Geneva to attend a conference of non-governmental organizations, to treat the matter of discrimination against indigenous peoples. Mechanisms and processes towards indigenous rights were set from the multilateral organizations before the respective states had begun to recognize these rights. Local leaders were already crossing scales in their quest for the recognition of their collective rights, drawing on international agreements and allies as much as on national laws, and drawing on a human rights approach to do so.

4.8 International allies

It is in the 1990s that the international context gained momentum. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) was the starting point for numerous treaties and conventions related to indigenous peoples' interests. The year 1993 was officially declared the International Year of Indigenous Peoples of the World, and 1995 marked the beginning of the International Decade of Indigenous Peoples. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) such as Ibis-

Denmark¹⁷ gradually identified the potential for international incidence when working with indigenous peoples of the South American region. In Ibis-Denmark's case, friendships between members of Ibis and of IWGIA spurred an early and well-planned strategy of support to the indigenous movement of the region.

The development of alliances with international actors and NGOs seems to precede alliances with other social sectors of the country, perhaps in part due to the initial lack of resources for travel and communication within the country, and in part due to their minority status. They were relatively unknown populations of a distant and scarcely inhabited land in the eyes of the Aymara and Quechua, and in turn the Highlands of Bolivia meant little to the peoples of the Lowlands, given the limited intrusion of the state in their way of life until the 1980s and 1990s. Since at least 1992, the indigenous movement of the Lowlands has had direct access to projects and funding from international NGOs, to support them in production, literacy, capacity building in rights and legislation, territorial claims and in territorial management. A group of international NGOs, including HIVOS and SNV (from the Netherlands), Oxfam-UK, Diakonia (Sweden), Oxfam-US, and Ibis (Denmark) maintained their support to indigenous organizations for sustained periods, in Ibis's case for over 20 years. It has not been possible to collect information on all the projects supported by these NGOs, but a presentation of processes supported by Ibis is indicative of the indigenous movement's sustained process towards governance. Appendix 4, on page 178 presents an overview of Ibis-Denmark support to indigenous organizational development in the Lowlands and Highlands of Bolivia, who led their own projects for territorial management,

¹⁷ Members of Ibis-Denmark were interviewed for this thesis in 2003.

organizational development, capacity building in national legislation, and international lobbying. Between 1992 and 2002, Ibis supported at least 43 projects with indigenous peoples of the Lowlands, and from 1997 to 2002, another 7 projects with the non-union indigenous organizations of the Highlands. At least eleven of the 43 projects with the Lowlands were sustained over seven to ten years. For most of these projects, the organizations combined fundings from Ibis-Denmark and the above-mentioned NGOs.

Thus, by the 1990s, a new context was set for the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands to not only react to encroachment of their lands, as in the rebellions of previous centuries, but to develop proposals of governance: the international context was favourable, alliances were being developed with international NGOs and their constituencies, the Bolivian population acknowledged the Lowlands peoples' existence, and relations were developing between peoples of the Lowlands and the Highlands as well as between the more than 400 peoples of the Amazon across nine countries.

5. The indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia, in a continued quest for self-governance / development with identity

The main thrust of this study has been to demonstrate that the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia, in particular those of Santa Cruz – Chiquitano, Ayoreo, Guarayo and Guarani – seek self-representation by implementing actions towards governance within or of the state as one of several strategies, rather than as an end. The indigenous peoples recognize and utilize multilevel scales and spaces to promote their collective interest in development with identity. The state itself is not considered the summum of empowerment for governance, neither is the state system. The quest for roles within government through the electoral process or through constitutional reform is a strategy towards a transformation of the state, and of the state system, along the line of Fourth World theory. It is not a quest for assimilation or compliance with the state, nor a claim for isolated self-government, but a quest for social and political resurgence¹⁸ in its own right. The study is further based on a hypothesis that to understand a political process such as that of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia, it is necessary to shed pre-existing lenses, recognize and avoid dichotomous thinking, recognize that strategies are dynamic in relation to time, space and relational context, and that alliances are often strategic, rather than in compliance with the ally of the moment.

This chapter presents the reflections and stories of the interviewees of 2003, and relates them to the theories presented earlier, demonstrating the manner in which the peoples of

¹⁸ Taiaiake Alfred's thoughts on indigenous pathways of action and freedom, *Wasáse* (Alfred, 2005) have contributed to my wording.

the Lowlands of Bolivia have acted. Even while implementing actions over two decades that would increase their level of governance within the state system as it stood, they, and particularly the four peoples organized as CPESC (Santa Cruz), were seeking, and continue to seek self-governance or development with identity. Their strategy in the 1980s and 1990s included increased participation within the state system, the development of a proposal for the creation of a new state based on collective rights and diversity as a governing principle, and even the creation of a mechanism for representation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations, as nations in their own right. Participation in the state was not a goal, it was a strategy: they did not and do not aim for mere inclusion in the state, nor do they restrict themselves to the national boundaries and spaces (or scales) of negotiation, but rather undertake a multi-scalar approach, jumping scales and redefining social space in order to attain objectives that are grounded locally, in territory and life as they define it, and that at the same time reach beyond the concept of state boundaries. As José Bailaba was quoted in the introduction: what good would it do to have a hundred Members of Parliament if we do not change the structure of the state system?

Through the earlier chapters, I have defined the degree of legitimacy of my perceptions by revealing the lenses which shape them. I have presented an introduction on Fourth World theory and context on theories related to transnational civil society movements that challenge boundaries. I have presented a history of the development of the indigenous organized movement, including in it both historical and modern strategies of resistance to the successive forms of government which attempted to govern territories and spaces of the indigenous peoples.

This setting allows me to return to my opening argument through the presentation of key perceptions expressed by the indigenous leaders of the Lowlands of Bolivia on identity, unity, alliances, the role of NGOs and advisors, regional coordination, self-determination, democracy and political participation. I follow these with the perspective of members of one NGO on the development of their program of accompaniment to the indigenous movement, and finally present brief examples to illustrate the peoples' diverse strategies for participation in municipal and national elections and their transnational or multi-scalar approach to the defense of their territories' resources and human rights.

5.1 Perception of the indigenous leaders interviewed

My pre-existing relation to the interviewed leaders is one of the key filters I have taken into account when drawing on the thoughts they shared with me in 2003. I had worked in very close alliance with five of the leaders from 1996 to 2002, and their answers can be understood to be based on long-term and well-tried trusting relationships. I had had just as close a working relationship with one of the CIDOB leaders, but with the difference that he knew that I had internal insights into moments of intense stress and division within the movement that had focused on the legitimacy of his representation. His talk with me was full of allusions to and winks-and-nods about those moments of tensions that I had witnessed or been involved in. We implicitly agreed not to pass judgment on those divisions. Of the remaining two leaders, one held respect for the years I had been involved with the organizations of the Lowlands, seemed to trust my commitment, but still deemed me to some degree an external actor, one who could potentially be

strategically useful. He therefore provided me with extensive explanations of different processes of the movement, and of the divisions he knew I had witnessed, but avoided stating his position outright. His speech sought to redress some of what he considered my preconceptions, recognizing my closeness to the Chiquitanos and to the CPESC. The other had heard of me, but we had never worked directly together. He identified me as a friend of CPESC and its members, but also as a Dane who might have been or still be related to Danida's Indigenous Peoples Program, a program that had worked with at least three successive Bolivian governments. His perception of what could or should be said in my presence was a far cry from the deep analysis and critique of democracy that leaders who had known me for many years shared with me. His was understandably a polite speech made to an external person of whom he was not sure.

Among the eight indigenous leaders interviewed, three represented that part of the movement that had focused on inclusion within the state and with participation in political parties. Five had been leaders of the 'Eastern Block', that part of the movement that split away from the CIDOB from 2000 to 2002, as they sought to lead the indigenous movement into alliances with social sectors across the country to more effectively change the system, opposing the electoral law and seeking indigenous representation, rather than inclusion. They all spoke with pride of the achievements obtained between 1990 and 1999, presented the 2000-2002 period in terms of their specific position, and overall attributed the resulting process towards a constituent assembly to the CIDOB, *their* organization, regardless of the painful divisions of 2000 to 2002.

I choose not to address the details of the division in the present research. It is important to know, however, that the attacks became acutely personalized, with assemblies of the indigenous peoples presenting public declarations denouncing specific leaders as ‘traitors of the peoples’ at different times. It is the strength of the vision, of the ultimate goal of the leaders, that has kept them involved, regardless of damaging personal accusations and of the departure of the CPESC from the CIDOB in 2000. Accusations of corruption of specific leaders date back to at least 1996, yet those leaders have pursued the objectives of the movement, and have even been re-elected by their organizations at different moments. As stated earlier in this study, the written or verbal word was not an absolute, but to be viewed in relation to context and time (page 70).

Below, I present the voice of the interviewed leaders on identity, the unification of the indigenous peoples, their alliance with the peoples of the Highlands, with other sectors and with external allies, with the COICA and with the United Nations. I also present, in the words of the indigenous interviewees, their thoughts on autonomy, self-determination, democracy and the constitution, and participation and political parties.



José Bailaba: “Changing the constitution is one step at least....”
(interview of August 2003)

5.1.1 Of Identity in relation to the state

The discourse of all the indigenous leaders interviewed was a very pragmatic one. It related to their early childhood and young adulthood and to witnessing and living the violation of human rights from a collective perspective. They all spoke in terms of their identity first as Chiquitano, Guarani, Ayoreo, and so on, not in relation to a state, in opposition to a state, or with any left/right terms or reference to socialism or Marxism. Their nation was their identity, and to ask what nation they were was almost redundant: Ayoreo, of course! (or Guarayo, or Guarani...) Why ask? The label of “Bolivian” was only used to situate their nation in relation to political or physical geography when dealing with international agents. They focused on collective rights without much mention of the term “rights” except where the state infringed their vision for their own

development with identity, which is where it became an issue of rights (white speak or settler speak). Where the violation of individual rights came up, it was where José Bailaba was physically assaulted as a consequence of his role in the defence of the Chiquitano territory Territorio Monteverde. Overall, their identity was not built in relation to the appearance and reality of the state or of international economic interests, nor did they seek to go “back to the land.” They sought, rather than claimed, what is normal, governance in relation to their territories, and thus direct dialogue with those economic and political powers that wanted to have access to and control over their resources.

Bienvenido Sacu, Guarayo leader, adapted his learnings from the Bolivian military service to further his argument that he needed to defend his community:

In the military service, I learned something, I learned about “*patria*,” the fatherland, that I should be a defensor of the patria, that the fatherland is ours, it is a community where one is born, a school where one learns, a church, a chapel where we praise God, and that our fatherland is national, in this case Bolivia... I took what was important from that, to be a defensor of my fatherland, nobody can take that away from me or say “Bienvenido, you’re missing the point,” to me it meant defending especially my community [the Guarayo community], making sure that my brothers’ rights were protected, those whose rights had been violated ... hammock merchants grabbing my Guarayo brothers by the hair to demand more hammocks for them to sell... the work my relatives had to do, selling their labour for someone’s harvest, leaving their family behind, suffering and earning a misery, just food and a bit of clothes, arriving back home with nothing, no money, after 4 or 5 months working away from the family... this abuse is what led me to be a leader (Bienvenido Sacu, interviewed August 12 2003).

Bienvenido is from the town of Urubichá, a major center of the Guarayo community or nation, where I only heard Spanish spoken with outsiders such as myself. His reference to the defence of his community is that of the Guarayo people, not that of Bolivia.

Marisol Solano, Guaraní leader, before moving to the city of Santa Cruz, only knew her people, the Guaraní, and at that only those of the region of Charagua, where “everything is Guaraní, we speak Guaraní even now.” She recalls that “here in Santa Cruz, [as a child], I thought there were no other peoples, although we did know back home that there were other peoples, we’d hear comments of other peoples, but we called them something else, especially the Ayoreos who are always and still here, we had heard speak of them as forest people and all” (interviewed August 11, 2003). Her people, the Guaraní, are one of the three peoples that have consistently been recognized in Bolivian history, together with the Aymara and Quechua, so the perception of being the only nation, and the idea of forest people somewhere else is not surprising. Marisol further comments on her people:

Among the Guaranies, we always knew that there were three Guaraní nations: the Izozeños, the Simbas and the Abas, and that I’m from the Aba in the area of Charagua and Camiri, so I did know that the others existed and spoke the language, but it is here [in the city of Santa Cruz] that I saw them in person, that we had conversations, that it wasn’t just information, I actually saw it (Marisol Solano, interviewed August 11 2003).

José Bailaba, Chiquitano leader, was adopted by Chiquitano parents, but grew up outside of the Chiquitano communities:

What happens is that at two years of age, I left San Antonio de Lomerío¹⁹ to live in a more city-like community, middle class, where people don’t speak, and I returned to Lomerío when I was twelve years old, because my cousin who had come to study in Concepción – to be able to graduate – told me that my grandfather and grandmothers were asking to know me and asking why I hadn’t gone there before. Well, there was no transport to Lomerío, it had to be on foot, two days carrying my things on my back, and I went even though I sincerely didn’t speak a word of Chiquitano. My mother spoke, and so did my father, but I’m the adoptive son, right? I don’t know what happened in life but I never knew

¹⁹ San Antonio de Lomerío is 100% Chiquitano. Upon my visit there in 1997, I felt awkward and embarrassed to only speak Spanish.

my parents, and that has never interested me really, because what is most important is I adopted the name of those who raised me, that's what's fundamental... I felt uncomfortable, not speaking Chiquitano, and went back several times, every vacation, to Lomerío, but I also asked my mother to teach me. At first, she was uncomfortable with that because we lived in an environment where people didn't speak Chiquitano, so she felt they mocked her, let's say, if we can put it that way, but in the end she did teach me some (José Bailaba, interviewed August 11 2003).

By 2003, in his forties, José Bailaba had become one of the key Chiquitano leaders, the only Lowlands indigenous Member of Parliament in 2002, and would later also be a leader in the Pact for Unity which led to the election of Evo Morales and the development of the new constitution – again as the only Lowlands indigenous representative in the Constituent Assembly. When asked how he presents himself, his answer was: “well, first of all I have my identity, Chiquitano, second I'm an indigenous Member of Parliament, third I have a role of national representation” (interviewed August 11, 2003).

Manuel Dosapey barely mentions to start with the fact that he is Ayoreo. It is not necessary either, given frequent interruptions by fellow Ayoreos speaking to him in Ayoreo during the interview. The Ayoreos were deemed uncontacted until 1945 in Bolivia and 1960 in Paraguay. They are hunter-gatherers, and while most of the Ayoreos no longer live in the forest, their total number has remained close to what it was at the time of contact by the missionaries – between 4,000 and 5,000. Half live in 22 settlements in Bolivia, half in 13 settlements in Paraguayan territory. When asked about his identity, Manuel answered by speaking about external factors that affected his and his clan's life: the strong presence of evangelizing missions (the New Tribes Mission), the ones that, in his words, “allowed Ayoreos and Chiquitanos of the region called Rincon

del Tigre to get some education.”²⁰ He recounted to me a fatal confrontation between Ayoreos and the missionaries (see page 71), but without a sense of opposition to or dichotomous, closed position against the missions. I had to ask about some of our mutual friends from Ayoreo clans other than his to draw from him more information on him as an Ayoreo, upon which he enthusiastically adopted a teaching position with me, filling some of the deemed gaps in my education:

The Ayoreo people, we are seven clans, but five are the bigger ones, Picaneray,²¹ Chiquena, Dosapey are the bigger ones, then there's Etacore and then the smaller ones. The clans have a captain, someone who the people value and choose. It's one Cacique for all the Ayoreos, then there are others... the people value capacity and honesty... the Captain rules, has another person with him, and a third, and the community, and he tells us when it's time to go hunting in the woods, and then we give part to the Cacique, also to the captain, and then at night he sees his people arriving, and his woman says, how did it go, what did you hunt, and if he sees one who didn't catch anything, he says to his wife you have to take this meat to this family, so what he has received, he is keeping for the whole community. He distributes what we've hunted, also the honey, he keeps it, and gives it back two or three days later. The captain rarely hunts because he takes care of the women in the forest, together with his aides who also stay behind (Manuel Dosapey, interviewed August 14 2003) .

The interview is interspersed with interruptions in Ayoreo; it was evident that I was considered a friendly ally by Manuel Dosapey's fellow Ayoreos, but one who lacked language skills, not understanding Ayoreo.

With Carlos Cuasace, longtime leader of the Chiquitano people, and then-Director of the Indigenous Development Plan that resulted from the Chiquitano-Ayoreo negotiations

²⁰ The Ayoreos were deemed uncontacted until 1945 in Bolivia and 1960 in Paraguay. They are hunter-gatherers, and while most of the Ayoreos no longer live in the forest, their total number has remained close to what it was at the time of contact by the missionaries – between 4,000 and 5,000. Half live in 22 settlements in Bolivia, half in 13 settlements in Paraguayan territory.

²¹ The Ayoreo clans are organized by surname.

with a major oil and gas consortium (see page 133), the focus was on the recovery of the Chiquitano people. Long treated first as slave labour, then as *campesinos*, peasants, in the cotton, coffee and other export industries, the Chiquitanos and their leaders had worked intensely over the past two decades to ensure that individuals and communities recover their identity as Chiquitano over and above that of rural workers. Carlos's interview is a good example of indigenous leaders in Bolivia not wanting to assume their leadership roles as individual actions or individual merit. When referring to himself in leadership roles, he constantly refers to "we," rather than "I." His answers were always about this goal of the organization rather than about himself and his identity:

The Organization of Chiquitano People, the OICH, now has twelve centrals, two organized as indigenous cabildos; in 1997 when we assumed leadership there were eight centrals, and now we're twelve over five provinces. The number of communities has also increased: we are now 465 communities. For us it has been an important effort, because we discovered that many of us, our communities, we weren't aware of our jurisdiction in 97-98-99 and that made it difficult to adopt clear policies for all of our people, all of our centrals... There's zone one which is part of Ñuflo de Chávez [a province], zone two which is part of Velasco [a province] but which also overlaps with the province of Sandoval, and zone three is where [the town of] Puerto Suárez is; then there's also Roboré, San José, and the recently consolidated one, Santa Cruz Pailón. For example, there's Sirchipa that we consolidated in 97 in Puerto Suárez, when you were there with us. Then there's also two in San Ignacio, and those of Bajo Paraguá (Interview with Carlos Cuasace, August 12 2003).

The 'centrals' referred to by Carlos represent an average of forty communities each; the largest central represents 143 communities. Ensuring the legal change of these communities from peasant to indigenous in the different corners of the extensive Chiquitania was key in providing legitimacy to individuals' and communities' identity as Chiquitanos.

Since Carlos represents the Chiquitanos at international forums as well as locally and nationally, I posed the question of how he presents himself when at international events, and received an answer that reflected the same patience as Manuel Dosapey had, that when one *is* (Chiquitano, Ayoreo) it's ridiculous to expect one to actually have to say it each time one introduces him or herself, "but since you asked: Chiquitano, of course, then Bolivian after that."

Guaraní leader and ex-Vice-Minister of Indigenous Affairs Enrique Camargo, following a round of cold "*mate*²²" with fellow Guaranies and I, presented a theory that he was developing, viewing the Guarani people as a family, a pot or cauldron placed on three "*itacuros*," the stones that hold up pots over a fire. The stones: language, of course, then economy based on territoriality, and the "*nosotros*," "us," unity. When the three stones are there, there is such strength that there is no fear of division. The pot transcends country borders, and there could well be Bolivian Members of Parliament, or Argentinean ones, but it would still be first and foremost the Guarani family:

Spanish is spoken in so many countries that people recognize their families by last name. We of the Guarani Ñandeba don't have to have the same last name to be part of the same family. When people speak of the Free Trade Agreements, they do it across many borders, thinking of commercial interests. We the indigenous peoples need to do something similar to this in order to overcome the barriers that the countries represent for our common platforms. There is no reason to fear the state, but if it doesn't work, whether locally or on a wider scale, then we begin to speak out – because it's not working for us (Enrique Camargo, interviewed August 1 2003).

²² A thick tea made by steeping leaves gradually in cold and hot water, served in a gourd and sipped with a specially shaped metal straw which filters out the leafy material. The gourd is passed around, one person at a time. I learned to refrain from saying thank you each time it came to me: saying thanks was a sign of closure.

The Cavineño and Mojeño leaders interviewed provided the same sense of an identity that precedes that of the current political struggles: We are Cavineño (Mojeño), and we want to ensure that we lead our lives in the manner we wish. There was absolutely no trace of a doubt that the nations led the process towards a multicultural country, and no one needed to deny at any point accusations of being used by anti-capitalist parties (see page 8) nor of being “manipulated by out-of-fashion Marxists exploiting ethnic tension” (Ibid) – these messages or accusations had little relevance, if at all, to their struggle. It was clear, from each individual interview, that the identity was not shaped by a reaction to a state or to a given political context, but rather that the state institutions most often represented an obstacle to the development of their interests, of their life (*proyecto de vida*, as mentioned by Marisol Solano).

The indigenous leaders all presented themselves by their nation first, and as Bolivian second. Their identity was not defined by a reaction to the state, or by their exclusion from the state; the recognition of exclusion or of violation of their rights to development with identity was there, but their identity was not reduced to that of an oppressed or excluded people.

5.1.2 Of unity among indigenous peoples of the Lowlands

Marisol Solano, Guaraní woman and leader, reflects on the process of unity among the four different peoples of the department of Santa Cruz: “How did we manage to coordinate efficiently and effectively our different approaches to territory? First, we had

to know each other, go beyond our own communities, to see that our demand, our struggle is a common one, there is no difference really except for the language we speak, but our demands are the same, education, health and territory. Even our traditions are similar” (Marisol Solano, interviewed August 11 2003). The four peoples she refers to are the Ayoreo, the Chiquitano, the Guarayos, and a portion of the Guaranis. Another key factor to the unity of the peoples towards common strategies was to ensure that each of the four peoples was well-represented in the leadership, so that they could all learn together, and not only see the priority of each of the peoples, but identify the common priorities,

seeing together the problems that came from the government, but not just from the Bolivian government, also from the system of globalization and external impositions; seeing those realities together we grew. I’m only now starting to go back to the priority I had when I came from my community, which was medicine... Working together, we had other priorities, and we saw that other sectors, not just the indigenous peoples, but also the campesinos, the colonizers²³, other peoples, in other departments, even those who live in urban areas suffer. ... We couldn’t be a reference for everyone ... but now that everyone has their organizations, we are able to work together and see that this is all about one major problematique, there is one same enemy that faces a majority, that allows us to be unified.

Carlos Cuasace, of the Chiquitanos, concurred that the focus of the CPESC on a strong organization, internally, was what allowed them to assume a united front in defence of their rights. Enrique Camargo identifies the organization of the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (CIDOB) as the key success of the past decade, followed by the indigenous marches of the 1990’s and the INRA law, the agrarian reform law, with concrete results such as the law for intercultural and bilingual education. Egberto Tabo, representing CIDOB in one of the years when the CPESC had abandoned the CIDOB,

²³ Aymara and Quechua families from the Highlands who were given agricultural concessions in the Lowlands over the course of the past four decades.

expressed his thoughts that “our allies are those who understand the needs of the indigenous peoples without taking into account the differences we may have among us; we all run into problems, that’s why I mention it, there are also changes of leaders, of Boards, but it’s still CIDOB as CIDOB, based on one objective, autonomy of indigenous peoples” (Egberto Tabo, interviewed August 15 2003).

Achieving unity was a long and intensive process fraught with tensions, difficulties, arguments, moments of dissention and temporary fragmentations, but is considered not just a means for dialogue with the state and other actors, but also an end in itself: “when the indigenous peoples start to negotiate with the state from a nearly-equal status” (Enrique Camargo, interviewed August 1 2003).

5.1.3 Of alliances with the Highlands indigenous organizations and with the CSUTCB

There were moments of division over the course of the 1990’s and early 2000’s among the peoples of the Lowlands, many of which related to political decisions on whether to oppose the government or seek participation in it through political parties. Rifts arose, fluctuated or disappeared, yet leaders of the Lowlands from any and all of the different positions held this in common, that they established relationships with the indigenous organizations of the Highlands.

Marcial Fabricano is Mojeño. He has been involved with the indigenous movement of the Lowlands from its inception, and has been at times at times a highly esteemed leader of the CIDOB and at other times repudiated from the movement. In the interview held with him in 2003, he speaks of the movement as something that mobilized all of the indigenous peoples, “even in our diversity, in our different languages, because territory was the common language which generated the movement.” He reflects on the Highlands, that

that was where there was a first conviction of the need to organize based on cultural identity, from the ayllus, from the markas, the recognition of the authorities, the mallkus and the jilacatas. But when the organization began to grow, an organizational movement that was not based on the Andean culture came up, a strategy of adopting a union organization as a mechanism – this raised susceptibility, competition between the traditional organization and the union one... around 1994-95, the CIDOB witnessed the fact that a movement based on ethnic-cultural demands came up again among Quechua and Aymara brothers, who were not convinced that the union movement or organizations were... well, although it seemed strong, the leaders played into party politics, and the traditional authorities did not agree with this. We invited people from Norte Potosi, who participated in our meeting in Beni, in 93 or 94. They began to see how we were, how we organized, what our structure was, and started to follow that (Marcial Fabricano, interviewed August 7 2003).

Marcial refers to several other traditional authorities of the Highlands who were invited to Guarayos, to different CIDOB congresses, who saw how the peoples of the Lowlands “moved,” with the result that in 1996, when the peoples of the Lowlands started their long march to the city of La Paz, these traditional authorities and their communities joined them in the march, already organized as a national council of *ayllus*. This experience led them to believe that there should one day be one single instance, of one common strength, that would represent them together “in order to fulfill the project of the indigenous movement: to strengthen the Bolivian state in its legal, political, social and

constitutional structure.” Marcial remembers having learned from the existence of the union-style organizations: “it was the only experience we knew of in organization, with a President, a Treasurer, Vice-President ..., and we started that way in the Beni in 1987. After looking around a bit, we started to look at our priority themes and interests of the peoples, and re-organized ourselves around those [interests instead].”

José Bailaba recalls the beginnings of the indigenous movement in 1978, in the department of Santa Cruz, with visits to the communities of the Chiquitanos, Guaranos, Ayoreos and Izoceños (the Guaranis of the Santa Cruz region), as the starting point for the development of the CIDOB. Given the weight of the common objective of defence of the territories, it was important to develop alliances, an amazon alliance in particular. He recalls that in his early years as a leader, he suddenly heard himself state very loudly that: “one matter is the NGOs and the CSUTCB. If we enter into alliance with that alliance,²⁴ we will end up being absorbed by it; it’s fine for us to have them as allies for punctual matters, but who really represents the alliance?” (José Bailaba, interviewed August 11 2003) From 2000 on, he was instrumental in the development of alliances between a strengthened indigenous movement of the Lowlands, and a CSUTCB that was recovering its indigenous identity: “that’s why I say that at times we may have been confused, maybe it was just momentary, it may have been good to have them as allies at that time, if we could do it without being absorbed by them, but we had to be stronger first.”

²⁴ Understood to be the NGO-CSUTCB alliance: the CSUTCB was recognized as working hand-in-hand with NGOs related to political parties. See Table 5, on page 74, where the CSUTCB now sees in its history that there were eleven years, from 1985 to 1996, where the organization was “Managed by left and right political parties.”

Carlos Cuasace, when asked about whether he had first thought of alliances with the indigenous communities of the Highlands or with the members of the CSUTCB, answered: “Well, with *ayllus* and *campesinos* as well... we said, it’s better for us not to listen to all of this, they’re always going to want to divide us in order to reach their objective, so it took us a lot of work, meetings among leaders, until we were able to consolidate one single proposal, one single alliance, to present to the government; yes, it took a lot of time, and I do remember that there were two movements...” (Carlos Cuasace, interviewed August 12 2003)

5.1.4 Alliances with “other” sectors, towards the Constituent Assembly

Following up on his thoughts on alliances with the Highlands indigenous peoples and with the CSUTCB, Carlos Cuasace expressed deep satisfaction that his organization, the OICH (The Organization of Chiquitano People), with the CPESC representing them, was then also able to develop alliances with the “other sectors”: the universities, professors, translators, factory workers. “We have moved forward quite a bit, we must not lose ground, because when it’s about national matters, we have to be united even though it takes a lot of work.”

Bienvenido Sacu provides an example of when divisions among the peoples of the Lowlands were echoed by those of the Highlands who wished to support them. As a key indigenous march was taking place in 2002 with the CPESC leading the way, a well-known Lowlands leader was carrying out a hunger strike in a move that opposed the

march – his proposal was one of inclusion and participation with the government. Some of the leaders of the CONAMAQ expressed solidarity with the high-profile, and therefore with the hunger strike. Others were marching alongside the CPESC, and with their support, and long hours of dialogue and face-to-face meetings, the CONAMAQ opted to support the march, bringing the alliance back together, moving away from solidarities based on personal relations, and back to the pursuit of common goals, towards a common proposal of modifications to the constitution.

All in all, with a shared vision of governance as indigenous peoples, dichotomies that would oppose Highlands and Lowlands, union and indigenous, participation within or opposition to the state, were treated as mere obstacles to overcome, and even these fluctuated over time. The legitimacy of different forms of organization, decisions to enter or not into a given alliance, were not absolutes or principles that had to be defended. They depended on the context in relation to a long term strategy.

5.1.5 The delicate role of NGOs and advisors

Earlier, José Bailaba referred to the dominant role of the NGOs in relation to the CSUTCB. In the case of the indigenous movement of the Lowlands, the NGOs present in the Amazon were few and far between. While most of them are recognized as allies in the Beni, in Santa Cruz, and in the Guaraní regions, their role is a delicate one. There have been and continue to be moments of backlash against NGOs, as the indigenous organizations rejected them at different moments for having taken a protagonist role and

speaking on behalf of the peoples. Bienvenido Sacu defends one NGO's support to the CPESC, highlighting that this particular one was a real ally:

The decision is *ours*. They do not tell us what to think... we may be old leaders, but we know, I know for example what my vision is; of course the technical support, the lawyers, are with us, side-by-side, they prepare what we want to say, *us*, when we have to negotiate with the government on legislative matters, in legal terms, but it is only those who wish to attack us who say that those advisors are the ones that promote the vision.

José Bailaba adds to that his recognition that to accompany the movement is really a challenge, as the advisors have to be able to transform a political proposal into a technical one, "put it on paper in political or legal terms, based on a platform of demands; they may be knowledgeable in their field, but it is the indigenous organizations that have their own knowledge – the only thing we don't have is that technical part."

Enrique Camargo brings up the fact that without external support, there would not have been funds for offices and communication among the peoples. The international NGOs' projects had helped obtain offices, cover communications and transport costs, as well as legal support, levers that were of the utmost importance, but "now that there are laws, the support needs to be on how to manage those resources that we have access to; it's not about presenting our demands anymore, it's about how to develop management plans, for example."

Marcial Fabricano defines accompaniment by international and national NGOs as solidarity, assuming a just cause, where

the problem you live with is not one that you sought, but that is part of your history, your past, your life; from a cultural practice that is already developed, you see the injustice of that problem and you make it your own, but not as one that you need to solve: you give what you can so that you can be a factor, a

contribution to the solution... We decide what actions but someone else supports us, gives us energy, strength, that's accompaniment.

In the 1990s, the CPESC, the CIDOB and its members were often recipients or *beneficiaries* of projects managed by NGOs. By 2000, the CPESC, the CIDOB, and several regional organizations members of the CIDOB were developing their strategic and annual plans, to invite the NGOs to contribute to these.

From at least 1996 on, the indigenous organizations assigned one more role to the international NGOs: that of 'fiscalizing,' or monitoring the funding provided by their countries.²⁵ Carlos Cuasace says, "we have asked for more than four years that Ibis²⁶ ensure that Danida [the Danish bilateral program, equivalent to CIDA in Canada] have an audit carried out of the programs they have funded; we have asked Danida directly as well, but Ibis needs to repeat that demand. We prefer that our country not receive funds if they are going to be mismanaged. Also, although we appreciate the support of consultants ... if they earn 10,000\$, there's something wrong there. There has to first be an audit, and then there can be a structural definition of the use of the resources, without too much bureaucracy." Carlos also brings up a reminder that

we are looking for a network of alliances by the different cooperations from outside, in relation to the Bolivian state... The World Bank has given so much money for the legalization of the territories, and nothing happens. The IDB, how much did they give, and if the French and others are involved, then they have to use their governments to make sure... I think that we've asked that you develop alliances among those countries that send cooperation, in order to control this...

²⁵ Bilateral and multilateral cooperation

²⁶ The Danish NGO, which at that time had over 1,000 active members in Denmark

One role of the international NGOs was then to coordinate, modify, control, audit and monitor their own state about the bilateral financing that was not reaching the communities. Carlos adds a dimension to the definition of accompaniment: “The truth is, we have to both admit, the Cooperation and the organizations, that we have lived through a challenging phase, but it was a phase of learning which has allowed us to move ahead better, perhaps slowly, but with very positive results.”

5.1.6 Coordinating in the region: COICA, the United Nations

If it was difficult for leaders to communicate across the extensive regions of the Lowlands, and between the Lowlands and Highlands, it was all the more so in terms of participating in the COICA and monitoring its work, or contributing to it. While the CIDOB was consolidating, while its members were living out their internal conflicts, their struggles with successive Bolivian governments and with oil and gas companies, and developing relationships with other sectors and NGOs, the members of the CIDOB also had a role to play in the representation of their interests at international forums, ideally through the COICA.

Carlos Cuasace addresses the preoccupations he shares with the other leaders I interviewed in the following manner:

As representative of the OICH, I’ve had many meetings in Ecuador²⁷, in Colombia, and lately in New York and Washington, and I was quite surprised to find out, when I asked the Coordinator of the COICA, that the Danes were also

²⁷ The offices of the COICA are in Quito, Ecuador.

supporting COICA. If the cooperation agencies are supporting the structure, they should tell us, shouldn't they? That bothered me, since I'm representing the grassroots and second and third level of the COICA. I was also surprised that we did not have a proposal already prepared, we were at the United Nations, there were many countries from all over the world, and we only had one and a half nights to work. I said that it wasn't possible, when I go to international meetings, I arrive with my documents ready, defined, concluded, with consolidated proposals by the member organizations I represent. I was surprised that they weren't ready.... Because I was prepared, I introduced myself to the President of Human Rights of the United Nations, I asked for an internal meeting, and I said: "Look, we are very worried that you, at this level, are talking in theoretical terms, and in practice, this is what we are living in practice" and I was able to give him my documents, saying to him "take part in this matter, go and analyze it."

On the need to coordinate as members of the COICA, Carlos reflects that there is a lot of work to be done, rather than merely critiquing. With the COICA based in Ecuador, the CONAIE, the Ecuadorian indigenous organization, was better situated than the Bolivians, to monitor and discuss with the COICA the decisions they might take in the name of the organizations. This meant that while COICA had to continue to be a representative body for all the peoples of the Amazon, the Chiquitanos and the Bolivians would have to also represent themselves directly in international forums: there just wasn't enough physical and financial capacity to strengthen their participation *through* the COICA.

One case brought up by three of the interviewees and that included the COICA as a regional coordination of indigenous peoples was that of the World Bank's offer of training to indigenous organizations on monitoring of oil and gas exploration in 2001. This proposal was accepted by leaders of the COICA, and several of the CIDOB leaders saw this as an opportunity for learning which could not be rejected. On another front, it was critiqued by the CONAIE, from Ecuador, and in Bolivia in particular by members of the CPESC. Marcial Fabricano, with the CIDOB at the time, saw this offer of training as

“progress which we appreciated as very important, as it helped us in our discussions on a law to regulate the oil and gas activities in the territories, it helped us tremendously that this project allowed us to reach the regions that were to be affected, and bring up information from the communities themselves.” Carlos Cuasace, on the other hand, pointed out that these consultations on hydrocarbons in the territories were an attempt to manipulate the peoples: “That training was part of the governments’ proposals. Now the law has been approved and it is a serious problem for us, those who live in our territories. They only remember the territories because of their interest [in gas], that is to say the contribution was not for us, it was to provide legitimacy to a governmental proposal under the pretext of consultation, development and education.”

On the creation of the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues, Carlos identified that, “instead of this being our Forum, it is about our issues, that is a weakness for us and now we have to see what the role of the cooperation agencies is in this, since they sometimes pool their resources based on a common vision.” While this outlook reflected a disappointment on the one hand, he also demonstrated the intention to keep drawing on this United Nations space to further the quest for indigenous collective rights and self-representation. In 2000, the General Coordinator of the Coordination of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon (COICA) had similarly expressed his disappointment to me that years of preparation for this forum had resulted in a mere advisory body on indigenous “issues,” instead of a body of representation of nations with equal status to that of states within the United Nations system. This was a major point of contention with indigenous activists, but it didn’t stop him or the COICA from participating fully in the UNPFII, as an instrument towards the peoples’ objectives. The creation of this

international body was not to be critiqued to the point of rejecting it, but rather as a step towards a goal that was still there, beyond the realm of the state system, and that needed to be strategically backed and seized as an opportunity.

5.1.7 Of autonomy and self-determination

The indigenous peoples of the Lowlands choose different terms at different times, to convey their vision. The most predominant are “development with identity,” “autonomy,” and “self-determination.” For Egberto Tabo, when speaking of international support, he proposes that “as long as the support is within the principles of *autonomy* of the peoples, then it is valid,” yet most of his expressed opinions deal with participation within state governance. Marcial Fabricano speaks of “a combination of self-determination and participation within a state.” What is important to him is the principle of deepening or building democracy:

There is a theory of democracy, but it is not being lived.... the indigenous peoples are democratizing this country, but let us hope that the indigenous movement of Bolivia does not lose sight of participation towards democracy: the matter of self-determination is relative, in that we can be autonomous among ourselves. That is autonomy, autonomy in the sense that the decisions of the indigenous peoples be taken into account in the political and legal system of the Bolivian state, not as declarations, but in the sense that the will of the indigenous peoples as they define themselves or as they propose be complementary to the democratic system. That is what is self-determination, we are defining ourselves within the structure of the state system.... Self-determination in the rigid and theoretical sense is that we do everything ourselves, but here we are conjugating, conscious that we are not the only ones in this social unit, so we try to be respectful and harmonize both situations.

For José Bailaba, the situation is much more serious, and the state system has to be changed, albeit with the reform of at least one state to start with, the Bolivian state.

If we don't change the system, we still won't be able to combat corruption, for example, there will still be coverups. Look, first of all we can't start with a challenge that is too big, it would be heading for a crash, but you can start first with small steps, while the structure of all this hasn't changed yet. Changing the constitution is one step at least.... This is not democracy right now. I understand democracy, well [pause] it's more than just discussing or having the right to make claims [pause] there is [pause] we could say that there is an *abanico*, a whole fan of democracies from which to choose but in practice you're still tied to everything, it's like a dictatorship.... If there were democracy, well we'd reach at least a minimum of consensus on our claims, on the challenges [pause] here [in Parliament] it's all just imposed, even if people cry out, and those who cry out against this can be arrested.

5.1.8 Of democracy and the constitution

Bienvenido Sacu states that democracy as it stands has failed, it is a monopoly that has run out:

Society does not believe in this system anymore, and that is why we started preparing [the march of 2000], not because we wanted to go see La Paz, but to change... First, we said, we have to respect the law of the political constitution of the state; it turns out that in order to reform the constitution, a norm or law has to be approved first, that allows for the reform of the constitution. That's why we were marching to La Paz in 2000, our demand was to change those articles, open the lock as they say, because that's where there is a lock; and that's where we wanted to propose the general Constituent Assembly, and the way it is, different social sectors had to participate, not just the indigenous and campesinos, there are a lot of social sectors in this country, they had to bring their own voice so that the constitution could be modified.

Carlos Cuasace's point of departure for democracy is the consolidation of the territories.

Once these are legally recognized, they also have to be managed by the indigenous peoples. He brings up "citizen participation" as spaces of decision:

As I've mentioned before, we have to be in those spaces, because in any case we've always seen that it's the powerful people, they've always done what they wanted with our country, some four families have defined it, that can't be, and that's where our initiative was to propose as the Chiquitano people what we have spoken about, the Constituent Assembly in the reform of the constitution.

As Chiquitanos, our demands are territory, education, health, our rights as Chiquitanos, and all the reforms that we are presenting to the government, to the constitution, the mining code, regulations related to the ILO Convention 169, the law of water, and the other law about... it's huge, and that is what we are talking about and will socialize on the 18th or 19th this month...

Egberto Tabo is more aligned with Marcial Fabricano, focusing on improvements made to the state without challenging democracy. He highlights the amazing numbers of successes the indigenous peoples have had from 1990 onwards, with the first claims they presented, and the reform of the national constitution in 1995 to include two articles on indigenous rights, which in turn opened the way for reforms of other laws and the inclusion of the indigenous peoples' demands. Reform of health, education and "development" laws had been obtained, and in 1996 a second phase started with the march of 1996 demanding territorial rights which set the way for the INRA law. He expresses satisfaction that successive governments have been able to understand and respect the indigenous peoples' rights in spite of the fact that "we had so few professionals and our voice was so weak." He states that a new phase is starting now, where the indigenous peoples have to assume and implement those rights, in spite of their "low level of experience and knowledge." "We are in full process of consolidating our territories in this way," he says, while at the same time stating that "local development has not started, there is little attention paid to education, little attention paid to health and local development of the peoples, that part is still forgotten, so it's up to us to carry out

this development, turn it into an action plan that would improve the quality of life of indigenous people.”

Marcial Fabricano holds more than a decade of work as a leader of indigenous organizations and was a proponent of an indigenous law in 1991, which he continued to lobby for over a decade, in different shapes and forms. He gives the following history of the steps towards constitutional reform:

Until 1990, the March for Dignity, it was a phase of organization and claims. We asked that our organizations and our traditional authorities, the cabildos, be recognized. We asked for respect and rights concerning the natural habitat. By the recognition of our authorities, we were implicitly talking about dignity and the right to territory. For us, since we didn't know how the legislative structure of the country worked, just obtaining our territory through a Supreme Decree seemed to be the absolute tops. But then we understood that the Supreme Decree was not all that legal, as it wasn't backed by a law nor by the constitution. Of course, it was our allies from an NGO in the Beni who informed us that the other sectors of interest, the foresters, the ranchers, were pleading that it was unconstitutional. We did some research, and found out that the Bolivian state had not signed ILO Convention 169.

We then began asking that Bolivia ratify this convention and make it into a national law. After a series of workshops and seminars, we finally received the news that Bolivia had decided on July 11 1991 to ratify the ILO Convention.

We thought that that was fine, sufficient for the Supreme Decrees on territories to be respected, but observations came up again, that the convention was ambiguous, very general, and therefore not applicable in our country. They called it an orphan law, without constitutional grounds. So, if this is not going to be useful to us, let's make our own law. And in 1991-1992, we presented an indigenous law. It got stuck with the change of government. We continued demanding that the draft law be discussed in the new government in 1993. They said it was not possible to approve it, so instead it was going to be used as the basis for reforms of other laws, so that the indigenous peoples could be recognized. We continued fighting for recognition of our own law. And it's in 1994 that we started talking about constitutional reform. The reform of the education law was approved, then the law of popular participation, then a modification on the forest law, the environmental law came out, and it's on the basis of everything that we had put in our draft law, since it was integral, went to the main issues, constitutional ones. These results made it necessary for a constitutional reform to take place in 1994, recognizing the country as multiethnic, multilingual, multicultural. I think that this is very

important in all that we dealt with in terms of institutional rights. The new constitution was approved in 1995.

We continued mobilizing, discussing, improving laws, decrees, the constitution, and the recognition that there was injustice in terms of our rights.

That was not all, we also wanted to ensure the implementation of all those laws, for which we had participated in the debates and formulation.

But when we wanted to implement projects, with these laws, we learned that we had to legalize our right to the land. How? There had to be a law that recognized our legal right to the land. Starting in 1994, we fought about the 1953 agrarian reform law, and in 1996 we had to have another national march to discuss the content of what would be the INRA law.

So in yet another evaluation with our cabildos, caciques, we saw that we were in a second phase of indigenous rights: 1990-1996, consolidating the claims that had been approved, translate them into laws, into the constitution. I was asked to present our experience to countries in the North, all this complex, complicated process. I heard the news of our constitutional reform when I was in the United States, actually.

Until 1994, I had been President of the CPIB only [the Central of the peoples of the Beni]. In 1995-96, I was President of the CIDOB. Starting in 1996, we had to take a pause again to see where we were at, after that second phase of life, after organization and processes of participation, we now saw that we had to generate a new projection, the development of the indigenous people: our rights are recognized, our territories, now how do we consolidate them, now to we exercise our right to development. What politics does the state have... better education, health, economic development, and in terms of political participation, think of the structures of the state, the participation of indigenous peoples: the full exercise of our rights as a third phase.

Starting in 1996, we proposed our participation with the objective of development of the indigenous peoples. It was the first time that we discussed what our participation in the state structures should look like.

A proposal came up to present Marcial Fabricano as candidate for Vice-President. That was another challenge and experience. I wasn't looking for glory. We had to try to see how to work from within the structure of the Bolivian state. How things are done, what is done, what must be done. We had to accept the results²⁸. I stopped being an active leader in 97-98 (Marcial Fabricano, interviewed on August 7 2003).

²⁸ The political party that Marcial Fabricano ran for did not gain a single national deputy.

Enrique Camargo shares the same perspective on the history of the indigenous movement and their achievements, calling those levels of participation “remarkable benchmarks” that one could not have imagined in advance.

5.1.9 Of participation and political parties

Bienvenido Sacu was one of the founders of the CIDOB, with a history as long as Marcial’s within the movement. His path moved differently particularly in that his organization chose to go beyond inclusion or participation in the state, and propose a new structure:

We were part of the *political instrument* from the start; CIDOB participated in its creation from the start, with the national confederations, the CIDOB, the CSUTCB and the Confederation of Colonizers, the founding of the MAS. The MAS had a legal document as a party, it had been filed away for many years, and that is what was then passed on to Evo so that he could use the MAS colours together with all the social sectors.

For many years, the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia, the CSUTCB and other confederations across the country looked for or attempted to create “the political instrument” that would be their ticket to government, and from there to self-representation, as they had decided that to be consistent with their rejection of the electoral process, they would not create a new party of their own. The members of the first pact for unity were the CPESC, the CSUTCB, the CONAMAQ, the Federation of Colonizers of Bolivia (CSCB), and the Movement of the Landless (MST-B).²⁹ In the end,

²⁹ The Pact for Unity has grown and varied over the years, to include The Central of Ethnic Mojeños Peoples of the Beni (CPEMB), the Assembly of the Guarani People (APG – members of

they agreed on the use of the papers of the MAS, a party that had ceased to exist actively but was still legally recognized. This was the vehicle, the instrument, the *political instrument* that brought strong results in 2002, and a 54% Presidential victory in 2005.

Bienvenido viewed the state as it stood in 2003 as illegitimate, using a very practical example to illustrate this:

If a lumber company has 200 thousand hectares, it has to pay annually 200 thousand American dollars for the concession, but with the decree as it stands, the entrepreneur only has to present a management plan for 10 thousand hectares, only pays 10,000 American dollars, and the rest is to fatten his wealth up. This is like making holes in the forest law, the political constitution clearly states that the President has to ensure that laws are fulfilled, but that's not how it works, is it? And those millions of dollars of debt they owe to the state, they will never pay.

In his interview, José Bailaba recalls that when the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands started to demand citizen participation, it was always seen as something that had to be of interest to or channeled through a political party.

We started talking about this, and at the start we thought of developing a party that would be clearly of the indigenous peoples; I participated in the preparation of a charter for a political party, the ASP, we worked with campesinos from Cochabamba on this, with the compañero Alejo Veliz, with Evo Morales... it was a joint process, but then some advisors who had vested interests promoted the presentation of Alejo Veliz even before all the papers were in order, and the court turned us down. Given this situation, and since it had to be through a party, the Izquierda Unida was the next choice, but here in Santa Cruz, those who participated, sincerely, they really often did it as personal decisions with no consultation process, it was not structural, it was not organic, it was different... We then tried to participate through the Eje de Convergencia Pachakutic... I was candidate for Santa Cruz, but it was yet another form of participation since all of our indigenous organizations' charters are apolitical, that was criticized; when they want the leaders use the organizational charters... since we talked of

CIDOB), the National Federation of Women Campesinas of Bolivia Bartolina Sisa (FNMCB-BS), the Departmental Central of Agricultural Employees (CDTAC), the Committee of Defence of the Pilcomayo River (CODERIP), the Afrodescendants' Cultural Movement of Bolivia, the National Association of Water users (ANERESCAPYS), and the CIDOB.

participation, when we were at the CIDOB assemblies, we from the town of Concepción said: “okay, the organizations have to bring a proposal of how to participate” but we were the only ones to bring one and present it.

José presents the first Chiquitano steps in municipal and national elections by reflecting on how he and his fellow Chiquitanos could have better supported their elected candidates in the past. The indigenous organizations had a principle of ensuring that leaders return to their communities. They therefore proposed to one of their leaders who then had a seat in the CIDOB, that he run for municipal elections, something small but that would be an invaluable experience for the organization and the communities. The leader did so, but the organization did not provide him with the support that they had promised, as he learned the role of Councillor, nor even helped him set up his home again as he moved back to the community. He was left largely to his own, and ended up being associated with the party he had run with, instead of the organization. The same happened when he was later invited by a party to run for national elections – his time as Member of Parliament was again not seized as the opportunity it was for the organizations. Political parties courted the leader more than his organization did, and “we lost him, sincerely we lost him, even though we had spoken with him, me personally, I had supported him from a start even before he was a leader, then I supported him as a leader; he lost faith, even with the party, he was only there as substitute MP.”

Following this personal story, José returns to his view of political parties as a means of participation:

In the end, where can we go, with the political parties it doesn't work, why invest so much in having our leaders run for political parties, we should have thought of challenging this before, that's why often our *compañeros* are right to let themselves become absorbed by the political parties, if there's nowhere else to

turn to, it's such a challenge to make it there and get lost, whether it's municipal or local government spaces.

In light of challenges, progress, drawbacks, benchmark moments, disappointments, José concludes that:

We have to look at everything we've done, whether it's negative or positive, we need to look back... all this nourishes our vision, we then look for new mechanisms, new ways of doing... even for Ibis, if they've supported the indigenous movement for so long are they going to just give up? I say that all progress of the organization are results, one shouldn't be worried, instead one should feel that all of a sudden something that one had dreamed of is coming true, perhaps not because we can say that it's all done, but rather that we can now say what are the next scenarios that we have to look at, I sincerely say that this is a better and stronger challenge, we have to turn our efforts that way, if a process, even a small one, has started, it will become bigger and stronger every time... so it's not about me, it's thanks to the process, and we've all contributed in one way or another, of course the results might not always be the one that I worked on or for, it won't be for me, it will be for my people or for the country; what I want to avoid is us now turning our backs on our leaders just because they become politicians.

Overall, the leaders, in 2003, overtly expressed great hope for the development of a new national constitution. This optimism was nuanced by the recognition that not all was gained, that there were many years of struggle to come yet, as they sought representation as peoples.

5.2 From the perspective of the NGOs

As the members of the movement were defining their strategies, the NGOs were for their part evolving from their class-based view of development to include some understanding of the dynamics of the relation of the peoples to the state system. An economist from the

Highlands, the first Ibis Bolivian Program Officer, in 1993, in Ibis's early years of support to the indigenous movement, recognizes that

at the start I knew almost nothing about the so-called indigenous movement of the Lowlands; I had very little information and absolutely no contact with them... Ibis at the time seemed to be one of those actors from Europe that wanted to see their aspirations, their dreams of the change that did not occur in Europe... and of a sudden many people turned their sights to Latin America... the hope of change... and solidarity. You could see that vision, that positioning, in the head offices in Denmark, in Coordinators [in-country Directors] and in the cooperants too [Danish experts with two-year mandates, brought in by Ibis to work with the organizations]. So they placed their vision, their hope on change in Latin America. ... I don't think that that romantic vision has disappeared completely, but it's complemented by... it's not that different from the vision that was then developed of the indigenous peoples as a new political actor... for the people who were disappointed by the disintegration of the workers' movements, of the fall of the wall of Berlin... So then you find another actor who in theory should replace the worker, the classical worker of the revolution. So really, it's the same vision, isn't it? ... in Bolivia, we had seen the failure of the UDP [1982-1985 government that marked the 'return' to democracy, considered left-wing], we had failed, it was our fault, the left was bad, the left wasn't able to govern... so people who had been of the left-wave, in this moment of self-criticism tried to replace it ideologically, with a vision, in this case, indigenous. As another oppressed class.

He recalls the first Ibis strategy for support to the indigenous peoples as one that attempted to develop three similar programs, one each in Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, with a coordinated regional vision. In particular, he recalls that the strategy was very appropriately a *draft* strategy for several years, before it was replaced by a definitive document after several years of working with the indigenous movement of the three countries and with the COICA.

A long-time Ibis member, and Coordinator for the South American region in 1992, recalls that the new vision for the program, albeit not for the NGO as an international entity, started in 1990, and that

There wasn't really any idea, only within IWGIA and very limited circles and groups about indigenous peoples at all, it was seen as something exotic, not as a social force, and that was the problem. There was the whole issue of focusing on the labour movement. On the other hand, there was an indigenous movement internationally... There was a lot of conflict from Ibis [in Denmark] on that... the person who opposed [Ibis's new strategy to support indigenous peoples in South America] represented the, not old fashioned, but former approach on the dictatorships, and that is how *she* perceived the social movements in Latin America. In my time [the learning phase], we were swift and we were supporting action... always on their side, even if there were occasional mistakes... When Danida showed interest, I tried to be very frank and transparent [with the indigenous organizations]: "a major player will be coming and this should give you an opportunity... play your cards well" ... my self-perception was to be a critical partner, and question them if possible. But in terms of really trying to work along their own strategic goals. That's what we did all along, and transformed that into a development project, which isn't easy at times, but I think we succeeded at that.

Ibis' offices in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru were close enough to the indigenous peoples to begin to develop a strategy of accompaniment to the organizational development of their movement, but the overall Ibis vision and mission remained based on the quest for equity, access to resources and empowerment of marginalized or oppressed populations within a framework of human rights. This led at times to conflicts of values within the NGO that were similar to the ones described in my personal journey, when Guarayo leaders chose to run for elections with right-wing parties recognized for their violation of human rights or their privatization policies.

5.3 Examples of the use of municipal and national elections as a strategy, not an end

The perspective of the interviewed leaders takes on added meaning when placed within the context of decentralization. The re-establishment of democracy in Bolivia in 1982 led

to measures for integration which translated into a colonial form of assault that “did not take into account the opinion and thoughts of the inhabitants of the country, used no consultation mechanism on the type of democracy we wanted, nor on the instruments, institutions, levels and forms of citizen participation. The Bolivian state and its instruments, the political parties, did not interpret nor translate the aspirations and wishes of workers, campesinos and indigenous people of the country – the majority of the country --, much less did they include the traditional forms of community organization at either the national, departmental or municipal level.”(Alvarez Melgar 2002:357)

In 1989, the country was divided into nine departments, and these in turn were subdivided into provinces, the provinces had sections, and the sections held cantons. Departmental authorities were named by the national government. Municipal elections began taking place in 1985, and were tied into the national parties. All candidates had to run on a party slate.

Before 1994, there were 27 municipalities. With the promulgation of the law of municipalities in 1994, 311 municipalities were created, which grew to 327 by 2004. Participatory mechanisms were set up, whereby grassroots territorial organizations (OTBs in Spanish) could be set up and register to participate in municipal planning processes. The first consequence of this change was the fragmentation of existing communities and organizations with the municipal borders as the faultlines referred to by Griggs and Hocknell, and a push for increased competition among them for the resources being decentralized (Assies 2001). Instead of empowering the indigenous population, it was an assault on nations and social organizations. The law of popular participation (LPP) led

to an “insidious penetration of party-politic culture at local level. The political party, previously felt as a fleeting reality during times of election in the rural area, started to become a daily reality at local level”(Calla 1999:168). The fragmentation of indigenous territories under the LPP was seen in concrete terms, with territories under the jurisdiction of as many as 4 provinces or 4 municipalities.(Orellana Halkyer 1999)

Reactions to this included proposals of mancommunities of municipalities, as well as the recognition of indigenous peoples as approved OTBs – albeit through a lengthy application process. The *action* of consolidation of the indigenous organizations and movements continued regardless of the risk posed by this attempt at fragmentation from the state level.

In very practical terms, the sentiment that the party-system was not an appropriate mechanism for representation translated into innovative *strategies for the use* of parties at times of elections, both the Lowlands and the Highlands of Bolivia, as referred to by the indigenous leaders, in section 5.1 A few examples help to explain this: I present below one national and one municipal example from the Lowlands referred to by the interviewees, as well as one from the Highlands.

1) Divisions within the CIDOB, 1997 national elections

In preparation for the 1997 national elections, the CIDOB started to experience what would become a major rift, over the choice of two strategies: a) to present then-President of the CIDOB Marcial Fabricano as candidate for National Vice-President with the Movimiento Bolivia Libre (MBL), a socialist party born out of

the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR),³⁰ or b) to refuse the MBL's offer and encourage organizations to identify in each region the party with which indigenous leaders had the best chance of gaining seats without needing to adopt the party's political line. An extraordinary assembly of the CIDOB was called, which became a place of heated debate. For those opposing affiliation with the MBL, running as an organization with the MBL was what would be interpreted, in Fourth World theory and in today's Bolivia, as playing into mechanisms of integration and co-optation of indigenous peoples. Those opposing the presentation of candidates to run with different parties in each region worried that the CIDOB might miss out on a key moment of public national acknowledgement of the indigenous peoples. For some, the proposal seemed to contradict the notion of a unified movement for collective rights, while for others the proposal was a valid challenge to the electoral system, but one that would place the movement in a position of seeming to be radical, therefore limiting the possibility of the peoples' inclusion or participation in the development of the democratic system. The stakes were high and it seemed safer to accept the MBL's offer. In the weeks and months following the extraordinary assembly of the CIDOB, Marcial Fabricano presented his proposal to each regional organization in an attempt to achieve unity of the member organizations, and unity in support of the MBL. I

³⁰ Carlos Mesa, Bolivian historian and televisión journalist, who would become President from 2003 to 2006, states in 1997 that for the MBL, the alliance with Marcial Fabricano, of the Mojeño people, and President of the CIDOB, was an attempt to emulate the successful Sanchez de Lozada – Victor Hugo Cardenas team of previous years (President and Vice President respectively from 1993 to 1997) considered the first great leap in the recognition of indigenous peoples within national politics: “though Fabricano represents only some thirty ethnic groups of the Lowlands of Bolivia, with less than 5% of the population of Bolivia, the challenge of the MBL is to go beyond that 5% of votes, and present itself as a necessary force within Parliament.” (Mesa Gisbert 1997:11)

was present at his meeting with the CPESC assembly, where late into the evening, an Ayoreo woman stood up and chastised him in Ayoreo, for not representing the peoples if he wanted to run with a party. As I was privileged to witness over many years, women are at the centre of the social organization of the Ayoreos; the Ayoreos are a society that rejects the notion of centralizing power through one authority or one person (Mejía Estrada and Molina Rea 2006). Though I have only seen Ayoreo men sent to represent the Ayoreos at regional and national levels, in part due to the fact that Spanish is the common organizational language, the women can and do contradict or redress their representative at any given time, in assemblies and other public “political” spaces.

Marcial Fabricano, eventually did run for Vice-President for the MBL, backed by part of the organization, with disappointing results, which he refers to on page 111, above. The pairing of the CIDOB with the MBL “garnered less than 4 percent of the vote and failed to win a single national deputy. The much-weaker-than-expected results led to severe fragmentation of the lowland indigenous movement.” (Van Cott 2003:35) The division of the CIDOB referred to in earlier parts of this study had begun: the CPESC broke away from the CIDOB, maintaining their electoral strategy, and later conformed the “Eastern Block”, favourable to alliances with other social sectors, towards a reform of the state and of the constitution. By 2000, several member organizations had left – or been expelled from – the CIDOB, and it is only in 2006 that these returned to the CIDOB. In 2002, several of the leaders of the Eastern Block were denounced by CIDOB as traitors of the indigenous peoples, but in the CIDOB’s 2006 Assembly

of Peoples, it was Marcial Fabricano's turn to be denounced as a traitor and excluded from the organization, for being an "ally of the groups of power and traditional parties."(CIDOB 2006:11) In all cases, such accusations do not constitute an absolute, are shaped by the context, and are communicated in ways that are strategic within that context.

2) Guarayo and Chiquitano participation in the 1995 municipal elections

In the region of Santa Cruz, the first experience at presenting a candidate from the indigenous organizations to elections was in the 1995 municipal elections.

Bienvenido Sacu states that

citizen participation was part of our socio-political organizational process; before then, we had been worried because the idea was not to get involved with political parties; also, we couldn't be accomplices to corruption within the municipalities, so it's only in 1995 that we tried, both in the Chiquitania and in Guarayos. When we speak of our socio-political organizational development, this is the experience that has been very useful to us. We elected indigenous Councillors in two municipalities in the Chiquitania: in Concepción and in San Javier, where the landowners, the patronos, the rich people were.

In Guarayo country, the elections and negotiations were particularly creative:

Lucas Surubi became Mayor in San Javier, but in Concepción, the Councillor tripped up. In Guarayos, in Ascención de Guarayos and in Urubichá, in the two municipalities, we presented them as representatives of the organization, but each organization negotiated with the given party. In Ascención de Guarayos, for example, the ex-President of the COPNAG (the Central of Guarayo people) signed an agreement with the MIR, and the organization got one Councillor, and another of our *compañeros* went with ADN, so we had two indigenous Councillors, but we would have needed three to be government, so they negotiated with another party, the UCS, represented by a Caray, and our Guarayo brother was able to become Mayor. The MNR, another traditional party, made life very difficult for our Mayor, but he was sworn in thanks to the women's movement, who fought loud and hard for him to be sworn in in the middle

of the plaza: the MNR people had locked town hall up. The public forces, the police, showed up to take our Councillors and Mayor prisoners, without there being any crime to charge them with; we have citizen rights, the right to be elected and to choose our authorities, says the electoral law, but they didn't understand that, the traditional parties were very jealous, especially one member of the MNR, who used his power as national Member of Parliament to call the police in, but the women stood up and protected us, and that's how our brother went in and became Mayor. In Urubichá,³¹ they got two Councillors, one of them a woman. They needed one more to have a Mayor, so they negotiated with another indígena who was with another party, with the MNR, and he accepted at first, but then under pressure from his party, he betrayed us, and there was fighting... at the last moment, they shook hands with the MNR, decided it was a tie, and negotiated governance half-and-half.

These processes were referred to earlier, by Vicente Pessoa, page 52, and José Bailaba, page 114, as critical moments where the strength of the organization was key to ensuring positive learning experiences in municipal government, as well as to ensure that the candidates not be absorbed by the political parties.

3) **The ayllus of Norte Potosi and the 1999 municipal elections – borrowing the empty shell of a party**

In the Highlands, an organization representing the originary and indigenous peoples of Northern Potosi, the FAOI-NP, which had broken away from the CSUTCB to restructure itself in line with the traditional authority system of the Aymaras and Quechuas, implemented in 1999 a strategy similar to that of the peoples of Santa Cruz, seeking local governance through any party that would give them space for candidates with the condition that the party not thrust their political line upon them. In light of the pending municipal elections of 1999, the FAOI-NP decided to choose a candidate from within their organization, present

³¹ Also in the Guarayo region.

him as candidate, and only then look for the party that would be most convenient for them to ensure majority representation, and thus the Mayor's seat. When the choice of the MAS was made, the principal reasons stated by the then-*mallku mayor*³² of the FAOI-NP were: a) the MAS did not have political representation in the region and b) the MAS promised not to hold the candidate to its political agenda nor draw on party rules to expel him or hold any authority over him. It was essentially an empty party, a shell that would serve the federation of ayllus as a tool to obtain governance in their region, without party influence, and moreover in a unified manner, with only one party. The FAOI-NP was further able to run their election campaign under the Whiphala, the multi-coloured flag representing the nations of the Qullasuyo (the realm of the Aymara and Quechua nations of South America), instead of with the blue color of the MAS. The next strategic decision made, confirming that participation in the elections through the party-system was not to be an integration, but rather a strategy towards a larger upcoming change of the system towards indigenous governance, was the decision that the current *mallku*, Aurelio Ambrosio, the individual perhaps most ready in terms of popularity and knowledge of legal and political discourse of the country, would *not* be the candidate to run for election. The key to a successful strategy of recuperating the nations' governance lay in strengthening the FAOI-NP and its capacity to monitor and support the candidate, ensuring that the candidate sent to the electoral game continue to respond to the people who had elected him: the indigenous organization. Aurelio, as the strongest leader at the time, should therefore remain with the FAOI-NP, continue strengthening it and build its

³² Traditional authority figure for the Aymara and Quechua of the region

organizational capacity to monitor and support the electoral candidate. The ayllus, organized as FAOI-NP, and with the MAS as their instrument, won the municipal elections.

Two years later, in 2002, Aurelio Ambrosio was elected Member of Parliament for the MAS. By 2004, participation in elections was not exclusive to political parties anymore: citizens' groups and indigenous peoples could also register.

It is worthy of note that Marcial Fabricano's earlier reference of the visit of authorities of the Highlands at a CIDOB congress in 1993 or 1994 (page 98) was precisely with leaders of the FAOI-NP. It would be erroneous to seek causal relations there, in one direction or the other. What this does point to are similar views of indigenous governance by indigenous peoples in similar conditions of relative isolation from the state system until recent decades, beyond the current democratic and electoral system.

5.4 Multi-scalar approach: National and international lobbying in practice

The interviews attest to the fact that the indigenous organizations of the Lowlands of Bolivia were actively involved – for over a decade – in the presentation of numerous draft laws, proposals of regulations in relation to recently proclaimed laws, claims on violation of laws, lobbying for ratification of international agreements, and as early as the year 2000, the request for a constituent assembly which would allow for indigenous

peoples' self-representation. By 2002, the indigenous peoples had confirmed their presence and the strength of their role within national government, with 30 indigenous Members of Parliament (MPs) and Senators, out of a total of 157, for a total representation of 20%, equivalent to or more than that of many of the political parties of the time. The MPs and Senators chose to have their swearing in ceremony in their native language, Aymara, Quechua, and Besiro, a Chiquitano language, in the case of José Bailaba, the lone Lowlands member). The year 2002 also marked the beginning of an official national move towards a constituent assembly, successes in pushing back some of the effects of IMF and WB imposed structural adjustments, and the ensuing election of the current government, led by Evo Morales in representation of numerous social sectors, including that of the Lowlands indigenous peoples.

It is key to recognize and underline that more than ten years of intensive preparation and struggle with the legislative context preceded 2002 and the 2005 electoral victory of the indigenous peoples through their coalition of social movements. Those are the years where the 34 peoples of the Lowlands had to find a common language and organizational structure to represent themselves together, in spite of and in recognition of their heterogeneity. They are the years in which, once the common vision of self-representation or development with identity was clearly identified, they had to struggle yearly with decisions on whether to work towards their goal from within their state, against the state, with key actors within a given government, with multinational corporations interested in their underground resources and renewable natural resources, and still maintain unity and keep sight of the end goal.

In a study carried out for Ibis-Denmark, in the course of interviews on advocacy and lobbying, the members of indigenous organizations of Bolivia described the following activities they were involved in (Ringsing 2000:46):

On governance:

- 2000 National Dialogue: development of an indigenous proposal on multiple issues; proposal to monitor the dialogue.
- Reform of the constitution: Ratification of two articles, proposals of changes to several others.
- Indigenous government: Proposal of indigenous municipalities and local electoral lists, direct indigenous representation in Parliament, reform of the electoral law
- The creation of an Ombudsperson office for indigenous peoples
- The Popular participation law, reform of the Municipalities law.
- Recognition of women's rights

On territory and natural resources:

- Law of national agrarian reform (INRA): Annul Resolution 098/99 of the INRA, concerning lumber concessions on indigenous territories still in litigation.
- Forestry law reform
- Territorial management plans
- Law of hydrocarbons: Proposal of regulations for oil and gas operations in indigenous territories; preparation of a set of modifications to the law of hydrocarbons.
- Biodiversity: Regulation for access to genetic resources, monitoring and a national study on the protection of traditional knowledge; biosecurity.
- Water resources: Proposal of draft law on Water, promoting CIDOB's and the *campesinos'* alternative proposal
- Mining Code: Modification of the Code.
- Annulment of the Supreme Decree meant to convert the chestnut camps into lumber concessions
- Law on Cultural Heritage: Promotion of agreements with other countries.

On health and education:

- Health law: Promotion of the use of traditional medicine.
- Educational reform (intercultural and bilingual)

On other forms of economic development:

- Tourism: Proposal of a draft law on Tourism, modifying the 1998 draft law.
- Draft law on promotion and marketing of arts and crafts.

While I have grouped here those issues, they were presented by the participants as one single list related to territory, which in turn represents identity and governance. Through group work, members identified 14 issues that were to be worked on both in Bolivia and in “the North,” taken to be with NGO or civil society allies in European or North American countries, or within international forums (Ringsing 2000:47-48). These were:

- Permanent forum of indigenous peoples at the United Nations, Follow-up on ILO Convention 169,
- World Intellectual Property Organization, Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, Intellectual rights, Copyright laws,
- Convention on Biological Diversity, Oil and gas, Mining, Biodiversity, European Union Code of Conduct
- Danida (Danish bilateral development program) a) Strategy for indigenous peoples b) sectorial program in Bolivia; Follow-up on the framework of the development cooperation of the European Community and the Member States; Jubilee 2000

From 1989, when the CIDOB had grown to become a national Confederation of peoples, to shortly before the 2002 elections, the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands actively lobbied or were involved in 46 national legislative processes, as well as monitoring, contributing to or drawing from 15 international agreements in the same period. This activity is documented in an extensive table (Table 8, in Appendix 3, page 172) which presents the steps of the organizational process side-by-side with the national and international indigenous rights-related processes between 1982 and 2002. I present, below, the section corresponding to 1992 to 1996:

Table 8: Organizational process of the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands, national legislative context and international agreements 1992-1996
 Table composed by Anne Catherine Bajard, using data from the CIDOB and from the Inter-American Development Bank's Data base on Indigenous Legislation (IDB 2001)

Year	Indigenous movement of the Lowlands of Bolivia	Legislative context – indigenous peoples (National and international)
1992	A committee prepares a proposal for the creation of the CESC, regional member of the CIDOB	Law of the Environment, Law # 1333
1992	CIDOB presents draft "Indigenous Law" to the government based on analysis since 1985	
1992	1992: The APG (Asamblea del pueblo Guarani) assembly: 500 years of the invasion, 100 year anniversary of the loss of the battle of Kuruyuki. 7,000+ delegates including Argentina, Paraguay	
1992	The ORCAWETA organization is founded, to represent the Weehnayek and Tapiete peoples.	
1993	II Congress of the CPIB, April 1993	
1993	Legal recognition of the Weehnayek territory, 195,659 hectares.	<i>Law # 1430, on the American Convention on Human Rights</i>
1993		<i>Ratification of the Agreement establishing the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, Law 1468</i>
1994	Founding of the Coordinadora Étnica Santa Cruz, CESC, Bienvenido Zacu (Guarayo) elected President	Law of Popular Participation Law # 1551
1994		<i>Ratification of the International Convention on Biological Diversity Law of the Environment # 1580</i>
1994		Law # 1565, Educational Reform Law
1994		<i>Framework convention on climate change ratified by Law 1576</i>
1995	CESC changes its name to CPESC: Coordinadora de Pueblos Étnicos de Santa Cruz	Reform of the Political Constitution of the State, Law # 1615
1995		<i>Agreement to establish the headquarters of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean in La Paz, Law 1614</i>
1996	National March of the Indigenous Peoples for Land, Territory, Political Rights and Development. Demands: implementation of the decrees passed in 1990, entitlement of 16 new territorial claims.	Law 1689, Law of Hydrocarbons (oil and gas)
1996	Formal inauguration of the Centre for Planning and Indigenous Territories, on March 17 1996, during the CIDOB's Consultive Assembly	<i>Decision 391: Common Regime on Access to Genetic Resources of the Andean Community</i>
1996	1996: Re-organization of the Guarani of Bolivia, Argentina and Paraguay, proposing a summit meeting of the Guarani people of the three countries	Forest Law # 1700
1996		Approval of Law 1715, National Service of Agrarian Reform (INRA)

Year	Indigenous movement of the Lowlands of Bolivia	Legislative context – indigenous peoples (National and international)
1996		General Regulations of the Forest Law, D.S. 24453
1996		Regulatory Decree on the Law of Popular Participation and Administrative Decentralization, D.S. 24447

The indigenous organizations were deeply involved in the international agreements that pertained to indigenous rights and specifically to resource management, from consultations at community level through to international lobbying. The table shows an intensification of the national legislative processes in 1994, then in 1996, with the passing of such key laws as those for the management of forest resources, water, intellectual property and oil and gas. In each case, the CIDOB and member organizations and peoples lobbied, presented counter proposals and/or monitored the implementation of the laws, ensuring representation of indigenous rights and interests in a context where decrees, laws and regulations would otherwise more easily have sought to meet the interests of landowners and the extractive industry than those of indigenous peoples.

To carry out lobbying activities to the depth and breadth that they did, the indigenous organizations called upon support from international development NGOs, established personal relations with Ministers and civil servants working for the bilateral development programs (Denmark, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Spain), and enlisted the NGOs from those countries to lobby the bilateral programs for transparency in the management of the programs. They worked with anthropologists and activists from IWGIA. They held regular meetings and planning sessions with the COICA. They accepted World Bank workshops on oil and gas, while lobbying against the World Bank's role in pushing for privatization. They drew on capacity-building workshops or projects prepared by

multilateral organizations such as UNICEF, while at the same time building up their own operational plans so as to reverse roles and become the ones to invite the NGOs and UNICEF to contribute to their plans rather than being the recipients of isolated though well-intentioned projects led by funding agencies. They kept up positive relations with local landowners in or near their territories where possible, even when they were victims of beatings by violent militias organized by those landowners. They kept up cordial working relations with Ministers and public servants in Bolivia, even while denouncing their corruption to the funding agencies. They worked with lawyers and sociologists from Bolivian NGOs, even while sanctioning NGOs for speaking or acting on their behalf. They developed organizational relations with the indigenous organizations of the Highlands (CONAMAQ) as well as with the *campesino* confederation (CSUTCB), even when the latter was repudiating the former. They responded to multinational corporations seeking rights of exploration in their territories, and developed projects to benefit the communities, while denouncing the corporations' attempts to buy off the communities concerning violation of national laws on territory, natural resources and environment, and while working on legislation to provide adequate regulatory and monitoring systems for management of the territories.

The objective or vision of the organization was not limited to inclusion in the government of the moment or in the state system: all strategies, including participation in spaces of governance, and including the proposal of a constituent assembly had as objective that of achieving or obtaining governance over their territories, over their way of life. This was clear during the years I accompanied the movement, in developments since then, and is documented in the interviews I held in 2003. I briefly present below two examples

referred to by the interviewees, concerning oil and gas exploration in territories. In both examples, the indigenous communities worked side by side with local and international NGOs, their own regional indigenous organization, multilateral agencies, presented cases within the national legislative context, and established dialogue or negotiations with the corporations or the violators of human rights.

1) REPSOL oil and gas exploration in indigenous territories

REPSOL, an international oil and gas corporation, entered indigenous territories in the nineties, and in 1998 offered a group of communities the equivalent of the proverbial trinkets, including such items as four radios, a few scholarships, the opportunity for a few short-time jobs, a 5,000\$ camp, training of forest rangers and 1,500\$ for workshops on legalization of territories (Observatorio de la Deuda en la Globalización 2000), in exchange for exploration and exploitation of oil and gas in the indigenous territories. This situation was risible, given the size of REPSOL's operations: information from January 2002, shows that Repsol YPF had net proven and probable reserves of 11.6 trillion cubic feet and 239 million barrels of oil, representing 22% and 26%, respectively, of total reserves in Bolivia (Business News Americas 2002). In order to reverse this deal, and prepare for stronger negotiations and defence of their territories, the CIDOB enlisted the support of Ibis-Denmark to hire an oil and gas specialist to carry out capacity building throughout the communities, and for support in the form of international lobbying and media support to rally European civil society in ensuring social corporate responsibility. The local and national leaders dedicated renewed energies to national lobbying for transparency that would ensure that existing

legislation be enforced, and for modifications to current laws and regulations. They simultaneously worked internally at strengthening the organization's and communities' capacity to defend natural resources in the face of international corporations, built on their alliances with international civil society representatives, lobbied nationally, and drew on international environmental agreements to request that bilateral development agencies ensure their fulfillment by the Bolivian government.

2) Enron and Shell pipeline built through Chiquitano and Ayoreo territory

In 1998, an oil consortium composed of Enron, Shell, and Transredes announced the construction of a pipeline through the Chiquitano dry tropical forest. This line was to directly affect thirty-eight Chiquitano and Ayoreo communities, but also drew the attention of international environmentalists, as the region was considered to be "the largest patch of healthy dry forest ecosystem alive today, and one of the most biologically diverse dry forests in the world," (World Wildlife Fund 2001:3) with a critical/endangered status.

The CPESC negotiated for two years with the consortium, and obtained a compensation program, in the form of an Indigenous Development Plan (PDI) for close to two million American dollars. This was initially considered a success, as the PDI would be managed and implemented by the indigenous organizations themselves, and included organizational strengthening, legalization of land, agricultural production and arts and crafts promotion to benefit the communities along the pipeline. When I met José Bailaba a few days after the approval of the

PDI, he was rejoicing in this unprecedented success, and mentioned the support the organizations had had from their friends from international NGOs, and specifically the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Shortly thereafter, ENRON funded the Chiquitano Forest Conservation Program, with a fund of twenty million American dollars to be managed by a Board comprised of five international environment organizations, one of which was the WWF. The program was deemed by the CPESC to be a top-down conservation proposal, as well as a betrayal by their allies. Discussion between the Chiquitano leaders and WWF, as well as international pressure by allies of the indigenous peoples contributed to an unimaginable result: the WWF withdrew from the deal with Enron, claiming that they had been misrepresented by Enron.

The CPESC pursued the relationship with WWF, the Chiquitano and Ayoreo organizations continued managing the PDI, and supported the indigenous communities in negotiations surrounding a secondary pipeline in the region:

Then there are our brothers from San José and San Matías, we also helped them in negotiations on the impact of the secondary pipeline, so we were able to get some compensations from the oil and gas company. We're now in the phase of continued negotiations for the longer term, for conservation, and well, some day the NGOs will get tired of us, especially international cooperation, it would seem as if we have no resources of our own, we do, now we are thinking that by extending this project, working with the "*bases*" [grassroots members], we're telling them that they have to contribute a percentage, I don't know, we have many organizations that can bring at least cheese,³³ weekly or monthly, to support their leaders and that they don't fail, that for us, would be self-management (Guarayo leader Bienvenido Sacu, interviewed August 13, 2003).

³³ The Chiquitana community of San Javier, home of the Paikoneka, members of the Chiquitano family, is famous for its cheese, which is sold across the country.

5.5 Endurance and focus on the vision

A conclusion of this chapter can only be attempted by highlighting, from the information available in documents of the organizations and of international NGOs, from the interviews and from my experience, the endurance of the organized movement, and their continued focus on a vision of governance. The examples referred to earlier on in this chapter, be they of national or municipal election strategies or of negotiations with international NGOs and oil and gas companies are only a small sample of the manner in which the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands have developed and implemented a multi-scalar approach: for over two decades, the leaders and communities drew simultaneously on international and national or local allies, on lobbying at national and international level, all the while building up their own technical capacity and facing potential internal divisions as they developed strategies to defend their identity, their territories.

Between 1982 and 2002, they dealt with governments' documented corruptions, and appealed to international NGOs and bilateral development programs to monitor these, while at the same time developing strategic relations with those individuals involved in the claims of corruption. They worked with international NGOs support, teaching us to understand their strategies. They established rules regarding intellectual property for students and in particular anthropologists studying their knowledge. They monitored the actions of pharmaceutical companies exploiting their knowledge and participated in international processes on the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS). They obtained a constitutional reform in 1995 and monitored closely the

development and implementation of the law of agrarian reform. They overcame times of rivalry with the CSUTCB, all the while participating together in national discussions on intellectual rights and on water rights. They obtained recognition of their languages, and of at least two alphabets. They worked with the COICA towards the creation of a United Nations Forum of Indigenous Peoples, and accepted the change to a forum *on indigenous issues*. They faced violence and death, and were defended by international human rights organizations, while continuing to cohabit with those townspeople who represented or backed the aggressors.

They had been seen in the past as *beneficiaries* by the national NGOs, and overcame this to work in alliance as equals with NGOs: NGOs could no longer represent their voices, but were rather at the service of the indigenous organizations when so called upon. They learned project management in order to present appropriate results for development agencies. They faced hundreds of kilometres of dangerous routes between the Highlands and the Lowlands, and fatal accidents. They participated in forums on discrimination of minorities, even though they were not minorities. They blockaded their territories in order to stop lumber companies from opening up roads, and hunters from coming in. They organized settlements in inaccessible parts of their own territories to demonstrate occupation of the territory, and provided support to the families settling there, far from schools and health services. At the same time, the communities and the leaders attempted their daily survival and that of their families. They faced floods and fires. They built up the capacity of their members to ensure continued support and the development of new leadership. Some became widowed during the course of those years, rarely saw their daughters and sons, and some such as Bienvenido Sacu, Guarayo leader but also

musician, still found time to play in a band to gather some money while living in Santa Cruz. Women leaders had to choose between a personal life and a role as leader. Each of the leaders interviewed at some time faced accusations from within parts of the organization, that went as far as being declared “traitors”, and yet continued with their mission.

As stated in the argument of this thesis, the indigenous organizations of the Lowlands of Bolivia have in these and other ways implemented multi-scalar strategies, developed and adapted over time and in changing contexts their strategies for participation in national and municipal elections, as well as in international forums, beyond the notion of the state boundaries. They have further overcome moments of internal conflicts, maintaining an awareness of the possible fragmentation of their organization, and of the risk that the use of existing legal and political mechanisms as a *strategy* for the transformation of the state become a distraction from the goal of self-representation.

6. Indigenous peoples in action beyond the state

The interviews, as cited in the previous chapter, confirm the argument and purpose of this study: they voice that fact that the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia have adopted multiple strategies over the course of at least two decades in order to achieve self-governance, governance as nations, using a transnational, multi-scalar approach, combining international and national strategies to ensure not only a favourable legislative context, but also representation as nations. The interviews are furthermore testimony of

the leaders' recognition that there may be divergence, over the course of time, in regards the choice of strategies, but that it is the collective set of actions over a significant period of time that demonstrates that the vision is still the same, and that the moments of internal tensions are not absolutes: "We have to look at everything we've done, whether it's negative or positive, we need to look back... all this nourishes our vision, we then look for new mechanisms, new ways of doing... says Jose Bailabe (earlier, on page 115).

This chapter complements those voices by relating them back to the history of the peoples (chapter four) and to the different academic views on the nations' relation to the state (chapter three). This chapter further relates back to the principles that frame this study: that to understand the indigenous movement's struggle one must free oneself from culturally engrained dichotomizing lenses, that alliances entered into by the indigenous organizations of the Lowlands, be it through participation in the state system or with social sectors, do not signify compliance with these, but rather strategic actions, and that a perspective is not an absolute.

6.1 Nations beyond colonization, the Republic and democracy

For close to five hundred years, starting in 1535, the indigenous peoples of Bolivia have lived under foreign rule or under the imposition of missions such as the Jesuits in the Chiquitania (1550 to 1767, on page 69, above). They withstood the creation of the Republic of Bolivia in 1825 and the Republic's wars with neighbouring countries, through 53 governments to 1952. They were affected to different degrees in the

Highlands and Lowlands of Bolivia by the Revolution of 1952, which was followed by close to two decades of military regimes (1964-82), under 23 more governments. With the 'return' of democracy in 1982, they were the subject of increased strategies for inclusion within the state of Bolivia under a first government (1982-85). From thereon, with the development of national strategies for privatization and decentralization, based on the neo-liberal structural adjustment programs promoted by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank, they were subject to increased national and municipal electoral processes, as well as increased encroachment of their lands, particularly in the Lowlands, by multinational corporations seeking to exploit the gas reserves that had been discovered in 1995. There were nine governments from 1985 to 2005 before the indigenous peoples elected their representative to lead the country and reform the constitution to better represent themselves as nations.

Throughout the Republic, the peoples of the Lowlands as well as those of the Highlands carried out actions of resistance, such as the uprising of 1727 led by the Guarani chief Aruma to expel the soldiers, missionaries and merchants, the rebellion of 1810 led by Pedro Ignacio Muiva in the Beni (seen on page 70) and even under a democratic regime, in 1986, the resistance of the Ayoreos to missionaries. Through a total of 86 governments, colonization, the Republic's system of governance, wars that changed the shape and reduced the size of Bolivia, an agrarian reform, varying forms and expressions of democracy, the nations maintained their identity, as described by Nietschmann, as communities of self-identifying people who have a common culture and a historically common territory. The indigenous leaders interviewed for the present research all

demonstrated a clear sense of identity as Ayoreo, Chiquitano, Guarani, Guarayo, Mojeño, or Cavineño based on culture, language, relation to the land, and community relations or kinship relations, as referred to by Corntassel and Alfred. The leaders did not express a need to *regenerate* their identity, but rather to defend and maintain it, in the form of the defence of their territories. The common vision was that of their representation as nations, as peoples, with the territory as the key concept to understanding 'identity'. Within that, the interviewees consistently informed that the priorities were health, education, economic development and resource management. One of the first assemblies of the Lowlands recorded by CIDOB, in 1987, describes the main discussions of the Mojeños as focusing on "health, education, land and production issues" (see Table 10, on page 177).

Between 1982 and 2002, the 34 peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia moved from situations of relative isolation from the state or of servitude to locally-based landowners to one of negotiation at international forums for their collective rights, negotiation with multinational corporations with interests in their territories and natural resources, and national lobbying for laws and for the constitutional reform of 1996.

The peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia, in terms presented in Fourth World Theory, achieved the recognition of the re-emergence of nations as part of a history of state expansion (Griggs and Hocknell, as referred to in section 3.1), and as identified by Griggs (1992), have, with support from international NGOs, contributed to narrowing the gap between their nations and the international system, moving their claims from the domestic jurisdiction onto international agendas, and taking action in both spheres

simultaneously in a multi-scalar approach that defies the notion of a mere quest for inclusion within a state as its citizens.

While a grid of states is superimposed over the nations of the world, the nations of the Lowlands of Bolivia, through their actions over the course of history, and with an accelerated course of action between 1982 and 2002, have demonstrated their belief, expressed in the words of George Manuel, that no contemporary political and economic structure *has to be* (Manuel and Posluns 1974:xii). As discussed by Kathy Seton in her summary of Fourth World Theory in section 3.1, above, the nations do not oppose modernization or progress, instead they assert the right to define and pursue development and progress in a manner compatible with their own cultural contexts. They champion the right to choose the scale and terms of their interaction with other cultures.(Seton 1999:21)

6.2 Opening channels for access to governance within the state and beyond the state

While the leaders interviewed provided information on their need to organize in defence of their rights as early as 1978 (José Bailaba, on page 99), it was in the 1980s and 1990s that they were faced with the need to address laws pertaining to their territories (Marcial Fabricano, on page 110), in light of the development of the national legislative system. The construction of democracy spurred an increased assault on their identity, where their identity was the territory, which was being increasingly regulated by the state: “since we didn’t know how the legislative structure of the country worked, just obtaining our territory through a Supreme Decree seemed to be the absolute tops” (Marcial Fabricano,

on page 110). The years 1994-95 marked an intensification of the assault on their identity, with the discovery of major gas reserves in the new Bolivian context as an open-market economy. From 1936 to 1996, oil and gas exploitation, transportation and export had been largely state-run, but with the law of capitalization of 1994, the oil and gas industry was in effect privatized. Enron-Shell became the administrator of gas and oil pipelines between Bolivia and Argentina and Brazil. The indigenous communities and their organizations had to face up to and negotiate with Total, Repsol, Petrobras and British Gas, the major operators of Bolivian oil and gas. The increased threat to territorial resources was leading to a favourable environment for Indians to turn to local forms of political identity and participation, as discussed by Yashar. The law of Popular Participation of 1994, administrative decentralization of 1995 and the law of Municipalities of 1999 further set the way for one of the two key factors of success for indigenous claims to politico-territorial autonomy identified by Van Cott: the existence of channels of access to decision-making power.

6.3 Different strategies, common vision

In this context, the indigenous organizations of the Lowlands were faced with key decisions, always in relation to their vision of indigenous governance. Participation from within the state, self-determination, or a combination of both understood as “defining ourselves within the structure of the state system,” as presented by Marcial Fabricano on page 107, were some of the options if communities and nations were to ensure their collective rights as peoples. An approximate half a million persons of 34 nations spread

over close to 800,000 square kilometers, with limited financial means, limited or challenging road and riverways communications and telecommunications, limited formal education and access to information, with a multitude of languages, set out to define common strategies in different local contexts and with different levels of incursion of the state or of private interests in their region or their lives at different periods of time.

The context of 1982-2002 was such that the organizations' learning was for one part continuous and, for another, not homogeneous – daily challenges, new threats and regulations appeared as fast as others had been identified in each local context. The Ayoreos, hunter-gatherers who travelled days to reach the city of Santa Cruz, differed widely from the Chiquitanos, who had long been employed by the Carays, from the Guarayos, who had well-established communities in their territories, or from that of the large and imposing Guarani civilization. Benianos and Cavineños, and peoples from other departments of the country again each had different contexts, and were affected by the state and by ranchers, foresters or oil and gas companies in different manners. Common strategies would seem improbable in such a varied and dynamic context.

The first step was then to know each other (Marisol Solano: “we’d hear comments of other peoples, but we called them something else”), in some cases to recover one’s identity (José Bailaba: “there was no transport to Lomerío, it had to be on foot, two days carrying my things on my back, and I went even though I sincerely didn’t speak a word of Chiquitano”), to travel to the furthest community of one’s own people and to those of peoples who shared territorial space, overcome differences and identify the commonality (Marcial Fabricano: “even in our diversity, in our different languages, ... territory was

the common language which generated the movement”). It is only once the peoples had begun to identify what they had in common that they could develop a common platform of claims *in relation to the state* in a context of privatization and encroachment on their territories: legal recognition of indigenous territories, management of natural resources and economic development, education and communication, and health, all of which are currently reflected in the indigenous organizations of the Lowlands’ structure. While Radcliffe et al recognize from their research in the Highlands that there is both divergence and convergence around culture and that a key element of convergence is the anti-colonial ethnic identity, the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands identified a convergence around the defence of their territory, recognizing the diversity within that convergence.

In the context of diversity, not just of peoples, but of level and form of entry of the state and of private interests within peoples’ territories and livelihood, diverse strategies arose. Within a closed or fixed notion of unity, based on unity behind strategies, the divisions within the organization and the denouncing of ‘brothers’ (or sisters) that ensued, particularly in the 1990’s and early 2000’s, could be viewed as a fragmentation of the indigenous peoples. Indeed, Assies identifies that the first consequence of the state’s participatory mechanisms was “the fragmentation of existing communities and organizations,” (cited on page 118) but the push for “increased competition among them for the resources being decentralized” (Ibid) that he identified did not materialize. What little reference the interviewees make to competition for resources are cases, rather than a pattern, of communities or individuals accepting deals with companies, and the cases were assumed by the members of the confederation, to provide support in strategies that

would benefit the collectivity locally, with a combination of fairer negotiations and increased lobbying for appropriate legislation and its implementation. Van Cott appropriately qualifies as temporal the fragmentation of indigenous organizations that initially occurred when they entered party politics through non-indigenous parties – the division was over strategies, not over the vision. When viewed over a period of two decades, the assault on nations and social organizations identified by Assies was not successful: the indigenous organizations flirted with party politics, but were neither absorbed nor in the long term fragmented by them. The moments of conflict and division do not appear to have deterred the organizations from a common vision of governance as nations. This is seen in Marcial Fabricano's decade-long lobbying for an indigenous law, as well as the CPESC's arduous process towards a constituent assembly and a new constitution.

6.4 Accompaniment by NGOs and other actors

It can easily take two or three days by bus or train to go from one indigenous community to another in the Lowlands, some communities are dependant on air travel, and others yet are almost unreachable during the rainy season. In order to better know each other, inform each other of their situation and develop common plans where appropriate, the peoples' organizations sought funds that would allow travel, assemblies, phone lines, radio programs (Enrique Camargo). They further needed technical or professional support in building up their capacities in law and legislation, in natural resource management, education, communication, administration. They found this support initially

in international and national NGOs, and in turn drew the attention of bilateral and multilateral funding and technical assistance agencies – a new style of relations between indigenous peoples, international cooperation and the state was being developed (Victor Hugo Cardenas). The organizations further required and sought technical support, initially from national NGOs funded by international NGOs, and in the late 1990s through the direct hiring of staff specialized particularly in law, and in resource management. As stated by Bailaba, Marcial, Sacu, Cuasace, Solano and Camargo, the accompanying actors, the NGOs, needed to identify, from their cultural perspective, that there was an injustice, the solution of which they wished to contribute to. They could not make the solution process their own; they could contribute energy and strength to the peoples as they defined their solutions. Three of the interviewees had the almost identical statement that technical staff, for example, could help transform a political platform into a legal document, but that the vision, the platform, was that of the peoples.

Accompanying organizations or individuals needed to recognize that the information they drew on to identify an injustice was based on communication of values that could vary according to their role and that of the person communicating to them, at a given moment and in a given context. Their perception of the problem situation as a whole might coincide with that of the indigenous peoples, based on shared parts of their identity, but they could not assume the situation as their own or assume a full understanding of all of the elements that influenced different indigenous peoples in their decision-making process.

The NGOs and staff could perceive an injustice, but the behaviour or actions they might choose could differ from those of the peoples themselves, and they could view the context differently, as did the many communities represented by the organization, for example in assessing decentralization of spaces of governance as an opportunity or as a threat at different times. There was no absolute solution that could be touted, and the path to solving the injustices was to be dynamic and varying. The path therefore had to be traced by the indigenous peoples themselves. The recognition of differing perceptions or paradigms was key to recognizing, understanding and accompanying a given set of actions, without leading it. As Bienvenido Sacu says: “the decision is *ours*. They do not tell us what to think... we may be old leaders, but we know, I know for example what my vision is.”

The length and depth of the relationship between NGOs and the communities were of particular importance to the leaders, in recognition of the fact that NGOs are not empty vessels, but that they are driven by their own vision and paradigm, and that they are tied to mandates and regulations set by their members, their funders, and their country of origin. Conflicts that may have arisen over the course of time between leaders and NGOs were part of the indicator of depth of the relationship, rather than absolute rejection of one by the other: it is recognized that all parties were and continue to be developing their strategies in a dynamic context, and that, while the vision of individuals could be influenced over time and through shared experience, that of institutions was more difficult to shape. National NGOs and international NGOs that have accompanied the indigenous movement of the Lowlands for periods of ten years or more, including Ibis-Denmark, have grown in their vision together with the influence of the indigenous

organizations, in solidarity, but without necessarily having one single same vision. In section 2.4, I described my personal voyage and gradual shift of paradigm. For an NGO such as Ibis, composed of numerous staff, a Board, hundreds of members, and working in numerous countries across four continents, the change would be less likely, yet the indigenous leaders interviewed feel they contributed to shaping their companions, including Ibis in Bolivia. They recognized that moments of tension in the relationship were often related to the internal pressures placed on the NGO when individuals committed to the indigenous organizations' objectives were faced with institutional norms and values from their employer.

As stated in section 2.4.3, on dichotomies, NGOs with a mission to help "the other" have visions, values and a mission that are considered the immutable part of their identity. Strategies, projects and activities may vary, but the vision and values are upheld. In a very successful evaluation of Ibis's program in South America carried out by Danida in 1999, the evaluators applauded the accompaniment relationship, but pointed out that Ibis needed to deal with "difficult dilemmas: traditional indigenous justice implies physical punishment [not within Ibis's human rights values] .. is still used, [and] gender perceptions are far from Ibis' Western values... Ibis might well consider a role in assisting... [the organizations/communities] to reflect on these issues and dilemmas – rather than excluding them by a position that in simplified terms state that 'they have their values, we have ours – and we work where we have shared values.' "(Danida 2002:167)

If a change of paradigm at the individual level is a challenge, it is all the more so at the institutional level, where institutional vision, mission and values are to be affected.

Where I, individually, on my journey, lived a change of paradigm, and could accompany a process, yet individually come to terms with conflicting values at times, institutionally it would be a longer process, where conflicting values could become obstacles to any formal relationship.

6.5 Alliances and a transnational multi-scalar approach

As discussed in chapter 3, Radcliffe et al present the Andean indigenous movement as part of an issues network “rest[ing] upon webs of meaning that involve transnational actors, indigenous peoples, and nation-states. The *indigenous development* issue network... has been constructed from rural settlements through national bureaucracies, bilateral and multilateral agencies, with cultural boundary setting taking place ... at the crossing of levels, and at different levels simultaneously.” (Radcliffe, Laurie, and Andolina 2002:3) The combination of these two issue networks becomes “the transnational political sphere of action” (Ibid) of the indigenous movement. This definition can well be applied to the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands, and coincides with Brenner’s call for “new representations of sociospatial form ... to analyze ... emergent pluri-territorial, polycentric, and multi-scalar geographies of globalization,”(Brenner 1999:69) where the geography of state territories is not necessarily supplanted – there is rather a rethinking of the meaning of state territoriality and political space. For Radcliffe et al, the multi-scalar geographies are neither

problematic nor a reduction of the state's role, and they state – rather than calling for a rethinking – that the role of the state becomes vital in reproducing local and transnational relations.

Assies et al present a market-approach to the role of the state, viewing its continued role within a globalized world, with reconfiguration of the state as part of the exercise of democratization processes. The state is not challenged, but rather reinforced by constitutional reforms, as an enclosure of citizens to which it must respond.

In Trouillot's view, "state effects are never obtained solely through national institutions or in governmental sites,"(Trouillot 2001:125) and transnational social relations have always been present, and are increasingly so as they follow a market which is increasingly transnational. Turner states that when global citizens "seek to influence ... policy and legislation within states, they are likely to do so within a global rather than a... national frame of reference."(Turner 1998:33)

Tarrow and Smith refer to transnational movements or networks as a diffusion across international boundaries, for one, or as emerging processes in a world of increasing interdependencies among nation-states. Both these views seem to stem from a notion of state-fixity, where the rights of a group overflow from the state container, or follow the pattern of increased global relations of the state. Catherine Eschle warns against this view of global social movements as a mere reaction to globalization, a phenomenon that may contribute to opaquing a deeply engrained social movement which is not strictly anti-capitalist, or anti-globalization, or an oppressed class, but rather a movement of identification of common platforms among peoples of different and multiple identities.

For the leaders interviewed in this study, the state can be an instrument in reproducing local and transnational relations, but is not the exclusive channel in their struggle for the recognition of their rights. Their views seem to be closer to that of Trouillot, as from both their long-term and recent historical perspective, they would agree that “state power has no institutional fixity on either theoretical or historical grounds.”(Trouillot 2001:125) In the ‘90s, they were faced with the evidence that to struggle for their rights solely from within the state was ineffective. They needed to address corruption within the state by establishing alliances with Bolivian actors as well as with bilateral funders, and with the latter, both directly and through the international NGOs of the respective funders. At the same time they needed to be represented and have a say in the development of international agreements on intellectual property rights, on indigenous rights, on the convention on biodiversity. This representation could not be following the rungs of the ladders referred to by Brenner, it could not be entrusted to the state government, it had to be direct. In order to do so, they called on alliances with civil society movements in Europe (Ibis’ constituency, for example, and international press) to accompany them in negotiations and to carry out mass media campaigns; they exchanged with fellow indigenous organizations of the region and sought representation by the COICA, while at the same time carrying out direct representation; they negotiated directly with multinational oil and gas corporations while simultaneously working on national laws and regulations, seeking joint strategies with members of the COICA and lobbying internationally with the support of civil society in Europe, particularly in the countries of origin of the corporations. The list of issues being dealt with internationally and

enumerated in section 5.4 above, coincides, overlaps or even precedes the list of laws and regulations that the organizations were discussing at national level (Table 10, page 177).

As stated earlier, the development of alliances with international actors and NGOs seems to precede alliances with other social sectors of the country. The interviewees may, however, also have focused their answers on the role of NGOs and international cooperation in light of my role with them – I recognize again here the importance of identifying the researcher as a key filter to be aware of, not just in my perception or interpretation of input gathered during the research, but of the information that is offered to me based on the interviewees' perception of me or of my role. It is my perception or understanding, for example, that the alliance with social sectors of the Highlands does seem to start, with what were then incipient organizations of Northern Potosi, where leaders had broken away from the union federation to regenerate an organization based on traditional or 'originario,' indigenous identity. There was a favourable environment in the Highlands where, as Yashar says, organizations that had arisen in earlier decades where rural men and women "assumed a peasant status before the state," (Yashar 1998:33) even while they practiced an "indigenous identity derived from and structured by local practices," (Ibid) began to shift towards local forms of political identity and participation. This shift came about through the combination of the weakening of the peasant organization and the increased threat to territorial resources. Consequently, while the first organic relations of the CIDOB with the Highlands is stated as being with the organization of ayllus of Northern Potosi, once the CSUTCB had begun to exhibit its indigenous identity beyond that of a rural workers' union, strong alliances began to be forged. A movement of identification of common platforms among peoples of different

and multiple identities that was dynamic and where the members participated in ongoing processes of collective identity formation, as defined earlier by Eschle, could then be identified as bridging the Highlands-Lowlands divide, as indigenous peoples, organized as peoples or as unions, as workers or as teachers, agreed to a common platform of constitutional reform.

7. Conclusion: Indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia in action beyond the state

It is clear, when one views Bolivia's indigenous population as a heterogeneous one, and when one removes the dichotomous lenses that seek to view the world in terms of oppressed and oppressors, socialist or neoliberal, that the quest of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia for self-governance is not over with the new constitution, nor with the increased presence of indigenous individuals in seats of Parliament. Jose Bailaba, quoted in introduction, already answered his own question in 2003 when he asked whether having "a hundred indigenous Members of Parliament" would make a difference: he stated "we have to break down the structural system if we really want democracy, if we want to move forward". The peoples have survived hundreds of years, and have survived the increased assault on their identity of the past few decades. It is by adopting strategies that vary according to the political, economic and historical context, by maintaining their relations with their brothers and sisters in spite of arbitrary state or municipal borders, by establishing strategic alliances internationally and nationally simultaneously, drawing on the current legislative processes even while challenging them, and overcoming moments

of deep internal tension that could fragment them, that the peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia continue to seek governance beyond the state, even beyond the current state so often lauded for its indigenous representation – the peoples of the Lowlands work with it and will continue to challenge it.

It is important to highlight that the interviews, the research, and my experience with the indigenous peoples of Bolivia bring to mind too many further matters that need to be analyzed or brought to light as contribution or action-research to the movement for self-representation to be able to list them all here. They include the perception of indigenous women, of the elderly, more focus on the indigenous peoples and transnational movements – with the need to redefine both ‘transnational’ and ‘movement’ from their perspective, a question posed by Yashar on whether the indigenous peoples were in fact challenging state institutions rather than the state system. In particular, I would recommend further comparative study or rather transnational research that includes the strategies of the indigenous peoples of the North American region, of Greenland, focusing particularly on those who have overtly identified that their wish is not for inclusion, but for representation. For all of those future research subjects, I recommend that the research objective stem from the actors and be facilitated by academics, ensuring that the objective not be set by the academic researcher, but rather by the organizations or the movement, and that rather than seeking key informants so as to be participatory, the research be that of the peoples and have key writers. This would meet the goals the peoples set when they expressed, about alliances with NGOs: “they can transform (a

platform) into a (legal/academic/formal) document, but the decision is ours, the vision is ours.” (Bienvenido Sacu, cited earlier)

8. Epilogue

I conclude this research with an epilogue or update of the current situation concerning the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands and their relation to the state, this time to the government they elected and the process of reforms they initiated.

8.1 After 2003

The indigenous identity-based movement of the Lowlands of Bolivia was the first to propose a constitutional reform aiming at self-representation. In seeking alliances with an ever-growing number of social sectors across Bolivia, the common platform became the constitutional reform – self-representation as nations remained specific to the peoples of the Lowlands, as they once more were faced with the reality of their minority status. This time the minority was in relation to Aymara and Quechua peoples. In 2003, the indigenous Member of Parliament interviewed had expressed disappointment that there was very little that he could achieve in the name of the peoples from his position within the state as it was structured. In later conversations, he acknowledged but attempted to keep to an internal level the disappointment of the peoples he represented, about the composition of the Constituent Assembly: he and his brothers and sisters had not obtained representation as requested, of one leader for each of the 34 peoples. He was named a member of the Constituent Assembly through the MAS – through a political

party, not as a nation as he and his people had hoped. One single person had had participation in the Assembly as representative of the nations of the Lowlands, and he was in fact a legal advisor, not an indigenous leader. There was a strong concern among the nations of the Lowlands about the fragility of the Constituent Assembly, as although the leaders continued to feel that they had the initial ownership of the move towards a new constitution, they had not achieved representation as peoples through it; it was, however, in the best interests of the process to keep their disappointment to a minimum, in order to at least ensure that the new government, a government of the people, be allowed to move forward in an environment that was fraught with hostility, from the large landowners who held power through capacity for international mass media coverage, from the multinational corporations and from the governments and multilateral institutions that backed the interests of these corporations.

Again, strategies varied within the CIDOB, between those who attempted to stifle temporarily and strategically the losses and focus on the opportunities, and those who outright denounced these losses, as in a statement of April 2006, where the CIDOB states:

In spite of the fact that we were the first to put forth the need of a constituent assembly [in 2000] and to fight together with other sectors for its recognition in the constitution and its implementation, we were cheated by the traditional politicians who, with legal arguments, opposed this instrument; and today, it is the same traditional parties that are getting ready to take over at all costs the Constituent Assembly, excluding us again, leaving us no possibility of being justly represented. ... we demand of President Evo Morales Ayma that he instruct his Political Committee to rectify these injustices ... modifying the list of MAS candidates to include at least 17 of our indigenous candidates from the circumscriptions where we have organic presence. (CIDOB 2006:1).

It seemed then that the Constituent Assembly and the new constitution would ensure *results* in relation to the water, hydrocarbon, natural resources, cultural heritage, intellectual property rights issues, but the peoples would not be represented as peoples: the struggle was not over. While the CIDOB recognized that they had conceded that natural resources could not be the exclusive property of the indigenous peoples, and had to be recognized as property of all Bolivian citizens, bit by bit they were ceding too many of their key proposals, particularly that of political rights and representation. In October 2007, the CIDOB representative to the Constituent Assembly declared:

We are sorry that the Government has not maintained the spirit of the indigenous autonomous model that this sector presented and that was approved in the reports of the Commission on Autonomy of the Constituent Assembly. They have changed the essence of our proposal; if we asked for autonomy it was so that we would no longer have to depend on the departments, which do not respond to our needs. Now, we see that we are being limited to municipalities, and that we will depend on the *prefecturas*.(Constituyente Soberana 2007:1)

In the case of the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia, it is difficult not to be impressed by the fact that, even in the light of a highly mediatized supposed 'triumph' of the indigenous peoples, through the Presidency of Evo Morales, the CIDOB continued to seek self-representation as peoples, beyond the constitutional reform of the state. The CIDOB presented proposals modifications to the Constituent Assembly, proposing a total of 68 indigenous representatives be part of the assembly, 34 in the Highlands, and 34 in the Lowlands, each representing one of the people of the Lowlands. The main claim was that due to the small population of each people or nation, they would not otherwise have representation in the Assembly, other than through political parties.(CIDOB 2006 website) In other documents, the CIDOB was, between 2002 and 2008, actively defining and presenting proposals for indigenous autonomies in relation to the national

Constituent Assembly, and analyzing their relation with departmental autonomies, continuing to push and create an environment for indigenous governance, in the recognition that “plurinationalism and pluriculturalism express diversity (what is useful to some is not useful to all),”(CIDOB 2008) and therefore the need to highlight within the characteristics of the state, the “differentiated styles of life in regards to use of space and territory” (Ibid).

In light of the fact that representation as nations was not obtained, the MAS, the Constituent Assembly and the new constitution become once more tools towards indigenous governance, not an end in itself. In December 2007, the Constituent Assembly approved 99.8% of the text of the new Bolivian constitution, with the strategically expressed support of the CIDOB, in representation of the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands: “we, the 36 peoples of the country, are united and represented in the constitution.”(Cejis 2007:1).

8.2 January 2009, the new constitution is approved

CIDOB celebrates the approval of the new political constitution of the state: The 34 indigenous peoples of the Lowlands feel included in the new political constitution of the state approved this 25th of January 2009 by referendum. After more than 20 years of struggle and marches by the ... 34 indigenous peoples ... in which they asked to be included in the *carta magna*, today, that dream of many years has become reality.

Maria Saravia, Secretary of Communications of the Confederation [CIDOB] in her declaration said that the struggle is not over here, to the contrary, it continues, given that since last year we have been working on the electoral law so that it would reflect direct participation of the indigenous peoples in the different powers of the state. Another of the

topics that worry and creates conflicts is that of Land and Territory, so that there will be continued work on the process of recognition of the land, until it is obtained, given that we are looking at how to improve the INRA (the national agrarian reform law) so that it can be implemented. In any case [*no obstante*, or in spite of this], the Confederation celebrated the constitutional referendum in their very offices as soon as the preliminary results came in. CIDOB declaration, January 26 2009 (CIDOB 2009 website)

As I write, the constitution has been approved – January 25, 2009 – and includes the recognition of 36 indigenous languages plus Spanish as official languages of the state, specific territorial and natural resource rights of indigenous peoples, and a proposal for autonomies that recognizes the possibility of self-government within a plurinational state. The struggle is not over, as the implementation of such autonomies is one of the main contentious issues for the nations of the Lowlands on one hand, and for the members of the oligarchy that has opposed the constitution. The saga that began close to 500 years ago continues, with a stronger *tool* than ever towards governance as nations: the new Bolivian constitution. The indigenous peoples of Bolivia will continue to develop alliances with social movements where necessary and seek representation rather than inclusion, utilizing a multi-scalar approach and redefining social space, regarding this struggle as a dynamic one that is set in their identity, and considering their currently strong role in the state as part of a context rather than as an end – their identity exists in their culture, their language, their relation to the territories, to their kinships, even while it is lived in the “politicized context of contemporary colonialism.”(Alfred and Corntassel 2005:597). Colonization is not their only story. Just a chapter.

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Appendix 1: Interviewees

Bienvenido Sacu, **Guarayo**, August 13 2003

Carlos Cuasace, **Chiquitano**, August 12 2003

José Bailaba, **Chiquitano**, August 11 2003

Manuel Dosapey, **Ayoreo**, August 14 2003

Marisol Solano, **Guarani**, August 11 2003

Carlos Romero, August 13 2003

Egberto Tabo, **Cavineño**, August 15 2003

Enrique Camargo, **Guarani**, August 1 2003

Hans Hoffmeyer, August 5 2003

Mamerto Pérez, August 5 2003

Marcial Fabricano, **Mojeño**, August 7 2003

Pilar Martínez, July 31 2003

Kristian Edinger, October 14 2003

Appendix 2: Interview sampling criteria

Type of actor	
Indigenous leader: roles played over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community, regional or national leader of the structured organization of the Lowlands; - Leader of a given people or nation; - Membership of one of two opposing political positions, those seeking negotiation with the government of the day and those seeking to create alliances between social sectors beyond the existing electoral and governing system (called the Eastern Block); - Member of Parliament, Councillor or Mayor, or public employee
National NGOs and independent consultants or supporters of the indigenous movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allies of the movement and of the European NGOs supporting the movement, with or without project funding; - Agents involved in lobbying at a global level
International development agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members of the coalition of bilateral, multilateral and international non-governmental organizations supporting the indigenous movement; - Employee or ex-employee of these agencies
Department or region	
Bolivia – Lowlands	Santa Cruz, La Paz, Beni, Chiquitania, Chaco, Riberalta
Outside the country	
Identity	
Indigenous	Ayoreo, Guarayo, Mojeño, Cavineño, Chiquitano, Guaraní
Other	
Time frame	
Active at the time of key moments of the indigenous movement	Indigenous march of 1990; Indigenous march of 1996; Indigenous march of 2002
Active during several changes of government	1992-97; 1997-02; 2003

Table 9: Interview sampling criteria

Appendix 3: Organizational process of the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands, national legislative context and international agreements 1982-2002

Year	Indigenous movement of the Lowlands of Bolivia	Legislative context – indigenous peoples (National and international; international highlighted in grey)
1953		Agrarian Reform: Law decree, August 2 1953, raised to Law on October 29 1956.
1979	First formal coordination between indigenous peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia, Guaraní-izoceño, Chiquitanos, Ayoreos and Guarayos, upon the initiative of the Izoceña community, led by the Capitán Grande guaraní, Mburuvichaguasu Bonifacio Barrientos Iyambae, also known as “the Big Shadow.”	
1982	CIDOB is founded as a central of indigenous peoples and communities of Eastern Bolivia (Chiquitanos, Ayoredes, Guarayos, Guaraníes)	
1986		<i>International Tropical Timber Agreement (UNCTAD) ratified by Law 867 on May 27, 1986</i>
1987	On February 7, 1987, in Arakuarenda-Piedritas, the Assembly of Guarani people is founded, with the participation of numerous institutions (NGOs, Church and Health unit). Its objective is the revindication of territorial rights and community development.	
1987	The first assembly of the Mojeño takes place in Trinidad in April 1987, where health, education, land and production issues are discussed.	
1988	The communities of Isiboro Sécure demand recognition of the Nacional Isiboro Secure park as indigenous territory.	
1989	In 1989, the 8th Congress of the CIDOB raises it to the level of Confederation, bringing together 80% of the nations of the Eastern zone, the Chaco and the Amazon.	Supreme Resolution 205862, on February 17 1989, states that it is “of national and social necessity to recognize and assign rights to territorial areas of the forest groups and indigenous communities of the Easter zone and Amazon of Bolivia, guaranteeing their survival and full social, economic and cultural development.
1989	On February 1st 1989, in the presence of 19 delegates from the Chácobo, Esse Ejja y Cavineño peoples, the Comité Regional Étnico del Noroeste Boliviano, CRENOB (en 1991, CIRABO) is created. That same year, the Takanas also join the committee.	
1989	Creation of the Central de Cabildos Indígenales Moxeños (CCIM) on March 7 1989	
1989	CIDOB becomes a nacional representative body, with the addition of new indigenous organizations from the Chaco and the Amazon, maintaining its acronym, which is already well known by different national and international instances.	
1989	The Weenhayek people participate in CIDOB’s congress, organized as Capitanes del Pilcomayo OCWP, under the leadership of encabezado por el Capitán Silverio Rivero	

Year	Indigenous movement of the Lowlands of Bolivia	Legislative context – indigenous peoples (National and international; international highlighted in grey)
	Pérez (en 1992, ORCAWETA).	
1989	On November 10 1989, the CCIM carries out the First Departmental Congress of Indigenous Peoples, in Trinidad. The Central de Pueblos Indigenas del BENI (CPIB) is founded.	
1990	Two meetings are carried out in the Beni, in June and July, in Iviatos and San Lorenzo de Moxos. A demand is made that the government respond to territorial claims, with a deadline. In San Lorenzo, the government's proposals are rejected, and the 15 th of August is set as the date for the start of the Indigenous March for Territory and Dignity, from Trinidad to La Paz	
1990	August 15, 1990: Indigenous March for Territory and Dignity. The indigenous peoples of the Beni, with the support of other peoples, march to La Paz. 800 men, women, elderly people and children walk 34 days (640 km) to La Paz.	
1990		On September 24, 1990, the government recognizes, by Supreme Decree, four indigenous territories: D.S. No 22611: Territorio Multiétnico, Territorio Chimán D.S. No 22610: Territorio Isiboro-Securé D.S. No 22609: Territorio Sirionó Another decree calls for the creation of a national commission to study the draft indigenous law
1991	In 1991, during a seminar analyzing the Indigenous Law, the CRENOB decides that the organization should not be a committee, but rather an indigenous central, independent of the CPIB. The CIRABO is founded.	<i>Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) ratified by Law 1255, July 5 1991</i>
1991		<i>Ratification of Convention 169 of the ILO, by Law 1257 of July 11 1991</i>
1992	In 1992, a committee is set up, to prepare a proposal for the representation of the four founding peoples of the CIDOB, through a regional representation of the department of Santa Cruz (future CPESC).	Law of the Environment, Law # 1333, April 27 1992
1992	CIDOB prepares a synthesis of legislative options worked on since 1985, and transforms it into a draft "Indigenous Law," presented to the government in 1992	
1992	1992: The APG (Asamblea del pueblo Guarani) appears with strength on the national Bolivian scenario on January 28, remembering 500 years of the invasión of America, together with the 100 year anniversary of the loss of the battle of Kuruyuki. More than 7,000 delegates from Bolivia, Argentina and Paraguay participate.	
1992	The ORCAWETA organization is founded, in representation of the Weehnayek and Tapiete peoples.	

Year	Indigenous movement of the Lowlands of Bolivia	Legislative context – indigenous peoples (National and international; international highlighted in grey)
1993	II Congress of the CPIB, April 1993	
1993	Legal recognition of the Weenhayek territory, 195,659 hectares.	<i>Law # 1430, February 11 1993, on the American Convention on Human Rights</i>
1993		<i>Ratification of the Agreement establishing the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, Law 1468, February 18 1993</i>
1994	Founding of the Coordinadora Étnica Santa Cruz, CESC, with Bienvenido Zacu, of the Guarayo people, President	Law of Popular Participation Law # 1551, April 20 1994
1994		<i>Ratification of the International Convention on Biological Diversity Law of the Environment # 1580, June 15 1994</i>
1994		Law # 1565, Educational Reform Law, July 7 1994
1994		<i>Framework convention on climate change ratified by Law 1576 of July 25 1994</i>
1994		<i>Ratification of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, Law # 1599, October 18 1994</i>
1995	General Assembly of the Indigenous Peoples of Santa Cruz, name change from CESC to CPESC: Coordinadora de Pueblos Étnicos de Santa Cruz	Reform of the Political Constitution of the State, Law # 1615, February 6 1995
1995		<i>Agreement to establish the headquarters of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean in La Paz, Law 1614, July 5 1995</i>
1995		Law # 1674 Against Domestic Violence and Violence in the Family, December 15 1995
1996	National March of the Indigenous Peoples for Land, Territory, Political Rights and Development. Demands for the implementation of the decrees passed in 1990, and for the entitlement of 16 new territorial claims.	Law 1689, April 30 1996: Law of Hydrocarbons (oil and gas)
1996	Formal inauguration of the Centre for Planning and Indigenous Territories, on March 17 1996, during the CIDOB's Consultive Assembly	<i>Decision 391: Common Regime on Access to Genetic Resources of the Andean Community, July 2 1996</i>
1996	1996: Contact between and re-organization of the Guarani of Bolivia, Argentina and Paraguay, proposing a summit meeting of the Guarani people of the three countries and of Brazil and Uruguay	Forest Law # 1700 approved July 12 1996
1996		Approval of Law 1715, National Service of Agrarian Reform (INRA), October 18 1996
1996		General Regulations of the Forest Law, D.S. 24453, December 21 1996
1996		Reglamentary Decree on the Law of Popular Participation and Administrative Decentralization, D.S. 24447, December 20

Year	Indigenous movement of the Lowlands of Bolivia	Legislative context – indigenous peoples (National and international; international highlighted in grey)
		1996
1997	On April 30 1997, The Yuquí and Yuracaré Councils, the Indigenous Council of the Ichilo River -CIRI and the Indigenous Council of the South Isiboro Sécuré-CONISUR, create CPITCO, the Coordination of Indigenous Peoples of the Tropics of Cochabamba	Penal Code, Law 1768, March 10 1997
1997	In June 1997, the Tacana, Leco and Mosenen people sign an agreement of brotherhood. The first meeting of indigenous peoples of the North of La Paz takes place from the 27 th to the 29 th of September, and the Central de Pueblos Indígenas de La Paz, CPILAP, is founded	Mining Code, Law # 1777, March 17 1997
1997		Regulation on Biosecurity approved by Supreme Decree # 24676, June 21 1997
1997		D.S. 24781, July 30 1997: General Regulations of Protected Areas
1997		Law of the Ombudsperson, # 1818, December 22 1997
1998	The 11th Grand National Assembly of Indigenous Peoples (GANPI 98), with the participation of 34 indigenous peoples, add to their territorial claims the claim for indigenous administration, ratifying the autonomy of the indigenous organizations	General Law of Concession of Transport Public Works, Law 1874, June 22 1998
1998		On October 20 1998, the Government presents the document: “National Indigenous and Orinary Policy: Development with Identity”
1998		D.S. # 25203 of October 21 1998, Consultative Council of the Indigenous and Orinary Peoples of Bolivia
1998		Organic Reglamentation of the General Law of Concession of Transport Public Works, D.S. # 25253, December 18
1999		Directive 001/99 “Technical Intendance – Forest Superintendance for Domestic Use”
1999		<i>Law # 1978 of May 14 1999 ratifies the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination</i>
1999		Election Code: Law # 1984, June 25 1999
1999		Law of Political Parties, Law # 1983, June 25 1999
1999		Law of the Code for Children and Youth, Law # 2026, October 27 1999
1999		Law of Municipalities, Law # 2028, October 28 1999
1999		Law of Penal Procedures, Law # 1970, March 25 1999
2000	In 2000, the extraordinary GANPI (Grand National Assembly of Indigenous Peoples) of the CIDOB takes place, on the National Dialogue of the Indigenous People	Law Modifying Article 4 of the Civil Code on Working Age, Law # 2089, May 5 2000

Year	Indigenous movement of the Lowlands of Bolivia	Legislative context – indigenous peoples (National and international; international highlighted in grey)
2000	3 rd Campesina March, July 2000	Law modifying the Law of Potable Water and Sanitation, April 11 2000
2000		Statutes of Law 1715 of the National Service of Agrarian Reform, through Supreme Decree # 25763, May 5 2000
		Modifications to the Statutes of the INRA Law, D.S. #25848, July 18 2000
2000		Official Languages: D.S. # 25894, September 11 2000
2000		<i>Decision 486, September 14 2000, the Andean Community establishes a Common Industrial Property Regime (inc indigenous intellectual property rights)</i>
2000		President's Decree # 25956 for the Creation of the Ministry of Campesino, Indigenous Peoples' and Orinary Peoples' Affairs, October 20 2000
2000		Supreme Decree for the Organization and Functions of the Ministry of Campesino, Indigenous Peoples' and Orinary Peoples' Affairs. D.S. # 25962, October 21 2000
2000		Minister's Resolution # 141 / 00: approval of the document "Public Policy with Gender Equity for Indigenous Peoples of the Lowlands"
2001		D.S. 26140, April 6 2001, on the functions of Non- Governmental Organizations working with Campesinos, Orinary Peoples and "Colonizadores" (Highland indigenous peoples inhabiting the Lowlands)
2001	"Encuentro por la Tierra" in La Paz, November 29 2001. CIDOB, CONAMAQ, the Movimiento sin Tierra and the CSUTCB participate.	D.S. # 26151, April 12 2001, Creation of Legal Assistance Services for Indigenous and Orinary Peoples.
2001		D.S. # 26164, April 27 2001, Fund for the Development of the Financial System
2001		"Ley de Condonación," Law # 2201 of May 18 2001
2001		Law # 2209, June 8 2001: Law of Promotion of science, Technology and Innovation includes rules for Intellectual Property
2001		Ley # 2211 LIL Indígena, June 8 2001, with the AIF, for the funding of the Development Project of the Indigenous and Orinary Peoples
2001		Law of National Dialogue, 2000 (Law # 2235, July 31, 2001)
2001		D.S. # 26330, September 22 2001, Basic Indigenous Health Insurance

Year	Indigenous movement of the Lowlands of Bolivia	Legislative context – indigenous peoples (National and international; international highlighted in grey)
2001		D.S. Reglamentario de la Ley de Condonación, mediante D.S. # 26339, September 29 2001
2002	March for the People's Sovereignty, Territory and Natural Resources in Bolivia	

Table 10: Organizational process of the indigenous peoples of the Lowlands, national legislative context and international agreements 1982-2002
 Table composed by Anne Catherine Bajard, using data from the CIDOB and from the Inter-American Development Bank's Data based on Indigenous Legislation (IDB 2001)

Appendix 4: An overview of Ibis-Denmark support to indigenous organizational development in the Lowlands and Highlands of Bolivia

CIDOB

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
CIDOB: Apoyo jurídico, apoyo institucional y desarrollo organizativo		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CIDOB/CPESC/CABI: Derechos de Propiedad Intelectual							■	■			
CIDOB: Encuentro Continental de Mujeres						■					
CIDOB: Petróleo, diagnóstico interno y capacitación a regionales								■	■		
CPTI: Atlas, compilación y publicación								■	■		

BENI

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
CEJIS: Acompañamiento y asesoría jurídica. Condicionado por convenio con CPIB a partir de 1998.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CPIB: Desarrollo Organizativo - Apoyo institucional y a actividades dirigenciales.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CMIB: Organización							■	■			
Sub-Central TIPNIS					■			■			
CIDDEBENI: TIM			■	■				■			
TIM: Fortalecimiento organizativo								■	■		
ITONAMA									■	■	
Sub-central San Joaquin											■
CIRABO: Organización y derecho (junto con CEJIS)				■	■	■	■				
CIDDEBENI: Programa integral productivo-organizativo, con convenio entre CPIB y CIDDEBENI	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				

GUARANI

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
TEKO-Guarani: Cema Rural - Fe y Alegría Tataendi. Educación y organización.											
Capitania Kaipependi, Fortalecimiento Organizativo											
APG: Apoyo al desarrollo organizativo y participación política del pueblo Guarani, consolidación territorial											
Capitania Kaipependi - Fortalecimiento Organizativo											
CIPCA: Diagnostico Guarani, defensa derechos											
PAMG: Programa de Apoyo a la Mujer Guarani											
Consejo de Capitanes de Chuquisaca: Organización, Municipios											
Tentayapi: Consolidación de comunidades, búsqueda de agua											
Capitania Kaami: Poder local											

SANTA CRUZ

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
ALAS: Componente jurídico											
CPESC: Desarrollo organizativo, programa socio-político											
OICH: Fortalecimiento Organizativo, Territorio Monteverde											
OICH - MINGA: Fortalecimiento Organizativo y Participación Política											
COPNAG: Fortalecimiento Organizativo											
CANOB: Asamblea											
CMIG: Asamblea de Mujeres Guarayas											
PROCESO: Educación, alfabetización, bachillerato pedagógico Chiquitano y Guarayo											
CPESC - FORMASOL: Información, comunicación, capacitación											
CIDAC - ARTECAMPO: Fortalecimiento de la Asociación de Artesanas											
CIDAC: Estudio de género Artecampo											
CEPAD: Poder local, Guarayos											
CEADES: Gestión democrática, Guarayos											

LA PAZ

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
OPIM / OMIM: Fortalecimiento Organizativo											

NATIONAL PROJECTS AND INTERNATIONAL LOBBYING

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
CEJIS: Rio + 10											
Fundación Tierra: Rio + 10											
IBIS: Taller integral (tierras altas y bajas): Capacitación en manejo integral admin-prog											
Fundación Diálogo: PRSP											
IBIS: Sistematización y apoyo al Desarrollo Organizativo											

COCA: TRADITIONAL RIGHTS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Qhana: Yungas 2000											
CEDIB: Publicacion e Informacion sobre Coca, Drogas y Desarrollo											
CEDOIN: Servicios de información											

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORIGINARY / INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT OF THE HIGHLANDS OF BOLIVIA

Exploration phase

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Fundación SARTAWI: Mejoramiento de la producción camélida											
ASUR: Arte Textil											
CENDA: Recuperación semilla nativa											
CENDA - FSUTCC: Poder local y organización											
GRAMA: Parque Sajama, apoyo organizaciones comunitarias hacia gestión territorial											
THOA - Recopilación de la historia oral Aymara											

CONAMAQ AND MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

