

# Tinkazos

---



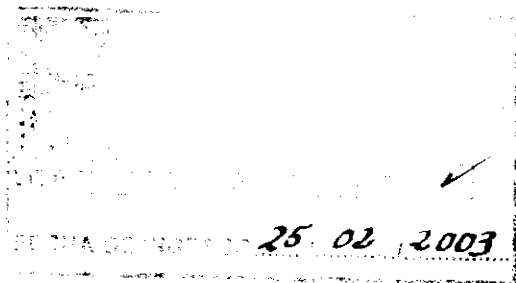
*bolivian social sciences journal*

---

February 2003







## Presentation . . . . . 5

### I. EDUCATION REFORM

#### Education Reform: Resistance and Innovation

*Maria Luisa Talavera S. . . . . 9*

#### Reading and Writing in Aymara under the Bolivian Educational Reform

*Denise Y. Arnold  
Juan de Dios Yapita  
and Ricardo López G. . . . . 19*

### II. GENDER AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES

#### The Reproduction of Ethnic Identity and Gender Relations in the Mojos Lowlands

*Zulema Lehm Ardaya  
Tania Melgar Henrich  
Mercedes Noza Moreno  
and Kantuta Lara Delgado . . . . 33*

#### "Now my Daughter is Alone": Rethinking Violence and Kinship in the Bolivian Andes

*Krista E. Van Vleet . . . . . 55*

Bolivian Social Sciences Journal, published every four months by the Strategic Research Programme in Bolivia

#### PIEB Steering Committee

Silvia Escóbar de Pabón  
Carlos Toranzo  
Susana Seleme  
Xavier Albó  
Claudia Ranaboldo  
Gilberto Pauwels

#### Editorial Board

Rossana Barragán  
Pamela Calla  
Godofredo Sandóval  
Carlos Toranzo

#### Director

Rossana Barragán

#### Editor

Nadya Gutiérrez

#### Translation

Sara Shields  
Katy Oxtan

#### Layout

Rubén Salinas

#### Cover illustration

Raul Lara, from the "Vincent Van Gogh in Oruro" series

Legal registration number: 4-3-722-98

#### Printed by

"EDOBOL" Ltda.

All rights reserved: Fundación PIEB, February 2003

#### PIEB

Ed. Fortaleza, p. 6 of. 601. Av. Arce, 2799

Phone: +591-2-2432582 or 2435235

Fax: +591-2-2431866

fundapieb@unete.com

www.pieb.org

This publication is sponsored by DGIS (Directorate General for International Cooperation of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Full responsibility for the articles lies with their authors. *Tinkazos* does not necessarily share the opinions expressed therein.



**Comments and Debate  
on VanVleet's Article:  
On Violence against Women**

*Sonia Montañó*  
*Denise Arnold*  
*and Krista Van Vleet . . . . . 81*

**III. MIGRATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**From Tarija to Argentina:  
Lives on the Border**

*Alfonso Hinojosa Gordonava*  
*Guido Cortez Franco*  
*and Liz Pérez Cautín . . . . . 99*

**New Social Behaviours  
with Aymara Roots:  
An Ultrasound Scan of  
Young People in El Alto**

*Germán Guaygua*  
*Angela Riveros*  
*and Máximo Quisbert . . . . . 117*

**Being Young in El Alto:  
Between Rock and Sikuris**

*Rafael Archondo . . . . . 133*

**IV. POPULAR PARTICIPATION  
AND MUNICIPALITIES**

**Four Peoples, Three Municipalities,  
Two Elections and One Law:  
Indigenous People and/or Mayors in  
Urubichá, Gutiérrez and Villa Montes**

*Ana María Lema . . . . . 147*

**V. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND RIGHTS**

**David Fights Goliath in Cochabamba:  
Water Rights, Neoliberalism and the  
Renovation of Social Protest in Bolivia**

*Willem Assies . . . . . 179*

**Interview with Bartolomé Clavero:  
Speaking of Indigenous  
Peoples' Rights**

*Esteban Ticona Alejo . . . . . 209*

**VI. CULTURE AND AESTHETICS**

**Aesthetic Models of  
Bolivian National Culture**

*Javier Sanjinés C. . . . . 223*

*T'inkazos online . . . . . 235*

**PIEB Publications . . . . . 237**

# Presentation

The Strategic Research Programme in Bolivia (PIEB) has now completed nine years of work in fulfilment of its commitment to research in the social sciences. Its activities have centred on supporting, promoting and disseminating research, in the conviction that in order to be able to propose development strategies based on greater equity and social justice, sustained reflection is needed on our country's complex social dynamics. PIEB has placed its faith in the belief that research is not a luxury but an essential prerequisite for proposing alternatives for society.

One of PIEB's main means of dissemination is the journal *T'inkazos*. The term that gives the journal its name, which comes from the Aymara word *t'inka*, is widely used throughout the country and refers to that first intuition or 'hunch' with which all research begins. Every year since July 1998 we have published three issues of *T'inkazos*. As a way of commemorating its existence, we plan to publish an anthology every five years.

The issue we are now presenting is the first of these commemorations: it is an anthology, in English, of some of the articles published so far. Its aim is to illustrate PIEB's work to readers outside Bolivia, and it seemed to us that the best way of doing this was to publish articles arising from PIEB-supported research projects. Publishing it in English will enable us to break through language barriers to reach a wider readership, both in international cooperation and in universities.

Bearing in mind that the readers at whom this issue is aimed are no longer just in Bolivia, much of the work published so far, whose objectives lay more in the area of training, has not been included in the current selection. This anthology does not include articles that have publicised research, methodologies, ideas and reflections from other countries, whose bibliographies are not always easily accessible in our country, or articles on subjects that are too local and specific. The compilation has prioritised articles – published in issues 1 to 12 – that have addressed issues that have been and continue to be the subject of current public policy debates: education and the education reform, migration both within the country (rural-urban) and abroad and its consequences, popular participation and specifically its implementation in indigenous groups and peoples, the debate on violence against women, the social movements that have shaken up the country over the last two years... Many of these issues are also of ongoing interest to researchers, especially young researchers, who have explored them in different locations and regions of the country.

We have also been careful to ensure that the different regions of the country are represented, seeking to break with the ethnocentric focus on the high plateau. As in every issue of the journal, we have also included work by other researchers and contributors to *T'inkazos* and PIEB in general. Finally, we have chosen a representative selection of the different formats that have characterised *T'inkazos*: articles presenting research results alongside interviews and round-table discussions.

We hope that our readers will appreciate the work done, both by our institution in its commitment to training and support for social research, and by the researchers themselves, who are from a younger generation, featured in this special issue.

Rossana Barragán  
DIRECTOR OF *T'INKAZOS*

Godofredo Sandoval  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PIEB

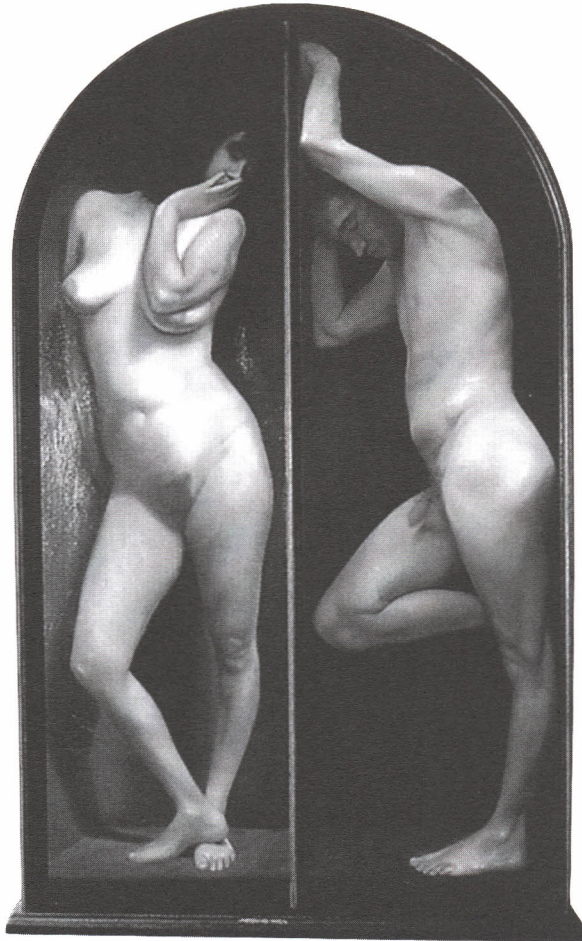




---

## I. EDUCATION REFORM

---



*Alex Zapata*





# Education Reform: Resistance and Innovation<sup>1</sup>

**María Luisa Talavera S.<sup>2</sup>**

**The study summarised below, sponsored by PIEB, produced important results for the application of the Education Reform in the classroom. The process of reform has been marked by both progress and opposition. Teachers are caught in a struggle between defending their employment rights and meeting new demands in education. The teaching profession is finding its identity torn between resistance and innovation.**

*Dedicated to Manuel Contreras*

The book *Otras voces, otros maestros* (Talavera *et al.*, 1999) highlights the importance of individual schools as the setting for the processes generated by the Education Reform Programme (Programa de Reforma Educativa - PRE).<sup>3</sup> The text published this year focuses principally on two of these, innovation and resistance, which are expressions of the appropriation of the Reform by the teachers studied.

The study was carried out in three state schools in three separate *núcleos* (administrative units) on the outskirts of the city of La Paz. Two of these operate during morning hours: one is the central school of the unit, covering the first five years of primary education with a roll of around 450 pupils; the other is an associate school with over 600 pupils, covering pre-school and the first five primary years. The third, also an associate

- 
- 1 This article was published in *Tinkazos* 4, August 1999. It is based on the report of the project "Teachers and the Education Reform in Bolivia: an Ethnographic Study in Three Schools in the City of La Paz". With support from PIEB, this resulted in the book *Otras voces, otros maestros* (Other Voices, Other Teachers. PIEB, 1999). The research team comprised Erick Jurado, Ximena Sánchez, Gilberto Vera, Zonia Cordero and María Eugenia Luna, and was led by the author of this article.
  - 2 María Luisa Talavera is a sociologist. She has an MSc in education from the Research Department of the Centre for Research and Advanced Studies at the National Polytechnic Institute of Mexico. She is currently teaching education science undergraduates at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA) in La Paz (Bolivia).
  - 3 The PRE is the result of the implementation of the Education Reform Law of 1994. The formulation of this law has been documented by Manuel E. Contreras (1998). It seeks to improve the quality of education in the country and to increase the coverage of state schools, applying the criteria of efficiency and quality. It involves a transformation of the curriculum and an institutional and administrative overhaul of the system (Anaya, 1999). Implementation was designed to take place gradually. It was introduced in rural areas in 1996 and in urban areas the following year.



school, operates during the afternoon session and covers pre-school and seven years of primary level. It already has over 400 pupils and is expanding. According to the PRE, associate schools are to share the resources of central schools, hence their name.<sup>4</sup>

The study aims to answer three central questions:

- What happens in schools when the PRE begins to be implemented?
- How do teachers perceive and respond to the reform programme?
- How does opposition from the leadership of the teachers' union manifest itself in the workplace?

These questions, and our expectations concerning the answers we would find, arose from our reflections on previous experiences with an educational development programme (Talavera, 1994b, 1996, 1997).

We approached the questions as ethnographic research,<sup>5</sup> linking theory to the information gathered during the fieldwork (Rockwell, 1986). This involved establishing a long-term relationship with the three schools being studied, during which we were able to observe and ask questions, then prepare draft texts that were repeatedly analysed before the final version presented here was produced.

The study spanned two academic years, from the last term of 1997 (September to December) to the end of the following academic year (December 1998). During this time 171 field reports were rigorously drawn up, based on notes of classroom observation sessions and interviews, principally with teachers, head teachers and educational advisers. Records were also obtained of teachers' meetings and of the interaction of teachers and heads with parents. In total, 12 months were spent inside the schools, with four researchers alternating fieldwork with periods of analysis.

The final draft was prepared in two months, in order to meet the deadline set by our sponsor (PIEB). However, we continue to make use of the ethnographic archive that has been built up and plan to carry out additional studies to complement the final report, which has now come out as the book *Otras voces, otros maestros* (Talavera *et al.*, 1999).

## PROCESSES OF INNOVATION AND RESISTANCE

The processes studied have been generated through teachers' interaction with the contents of the Reform during the initial stages of implementation. They are part of appropriation processes that in time lead to new practices and customs becoming incorporated into the current stock of teaching

---

4 As a result of the introduction of the PRE, schools have been grouped together in administrative units (*núcleos*). There are 851 *núcleos* in the country comprising 13,141 educational establishments, of which 5,596 had embarked on the transformation process in 1997, according to official statistics (*Directorio Estadístico de Unidades Educativas Fiscales del Departamento de La Paz*, SNE, 1997).

5 Ethnographic research started to be undertaken in the country in the early 1980's (Balderrama, 1982, 1984) by the Centro Boliviano de Investigación y Acción Educativa (CEBIAE), and gave rise to educational development programmes (teacher training) rather than a tradition of research of an anthropological nature; it became assimilated with participatory research and/or research-action. Our study seeks to construct an object of knowledge and to this end it concentrates on research activities. Nevertheless, in the course of this process we have shared our findings and final results with the teachers in the study. This served as an opportunity to compare our hypotheses with the perspectives of the subjects being studied.

wisdom. That is, despite its relatively recent introduction and all the difficulties faced by teachers and the State in implementing the Reform there are signs that it is starting to bring about change, and that ought to encourage greater efforts to move education in schools further towards the regeneration that is required.

Innovation and resistance are interlinked processes that influence each other mutually. We saw them as two sides of one coin: education and employment. On the education side, which is that of innovation, we dealt with the change in the material conditions of teachers' work, brought about by the new regulations governing the schools we studied and the resources they have received.<sup>6</sup>

The new legal and regulatory framework has given rise to a new way of organising teaching that has a formative effect on teachers through their interaction with the contents. It is also evident that there is a need among teachers for further education and training.

The other side of the coin is that of resistance, which seems linked to the strategy employed by the Reform towards teachers, who feel their union rights being threatened, and with the history of education in the country, in particular with that of the schools in the study.

The processes of innovation and resistance affect the organisation of teaching principally because of the introduction into schools of learning modules and the educational advisory service. Interaction with these resources creates difficulties for teachers by requiring them to understand and familiarise themselves with the Reform at the same time as they continue to teach. The great disparity in the salaries of those implementing the Reform – teachers, head

teachers and educational advisers – creates tensions that impede its development. For example, a head with 24 years' service earns 1,200 Bs, whereas an adviser with 6 years of teaching experience earns 2,500 Bs, and a qualified teacher with 22 years of experience receives just 900 Bs.

The difference in salaries induces head teachers not to take an active role in the introduction of the innovations and to leave the advisers on their own. These in turn are unable to provide effective support to teachers, who are also affected by the disparity. Thus, elements of the PRE strategy are themselves fomenting resistance to change and providing the basis for the support enjoyed by union leaders in their opposition to the introduction of the Reform.

Faced with the need to change without first having been "brought around" to working with the modules, teachers have started to construct their own alternatives. One of these is to combine the Reform contents with their existing practices, which they do to respond to the new demands by adapting them to the conditions in which they work. This demonstrates how teachers' knowledge is practical in nature, as already highlighted by other studies (Elbaz, 1983; Michael Connelly and J. Clandinin, quoted in Liston and Zeichner, 1993); it is based on "personal and professional experience, rooted in the problems of day to day teaching and integrated with knowledge of theories on children and the learning process" (Liston and Zeichner, 1993: 88).

However, in practice the mixing of methods resulting from teachers' interaction with the Reform contents also occurs because of a lack of understanding about how the modules should in fact be used, and is evidence of the need for

---

<sup>6</sup> This refers to the group work materials known as modules. They are softback texts with innovatory contents that can be used to develop the curriculum. During the first three years of primary education schools are expected to cover eight modules in language and eight in mathematics. In late 1998, the schools featured in the study received the sixth modules in the series.



ongoing teacher training. The approach to change embodied in the PRE should be applied to teachers already in employment.

The degree courses that have been introduced to raise the academic standard of teachers seem to be ineffective and inaccessible for most of the people studied. None had graduated from such courses and very few were nearing completion. Hence the importance of the educational advisory service, which in practice is a programme to provide on-the-job training. The conditions in which it operates, however, limit its effectiveness. The Reform hinges on this programme, and unless it is strengthened it will adversely affect the results of the most important project undertaken by the state since the introduction of the universal right to schooling (Contreras, 1998). The demands that the PRE makes of teachers require that the state should provide viable training opportunities, if it really aims to improve the quality of education. Other studies dealing with educational change in schools have found that the appropriation of reform proposals is a slow process (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1997). This is because teachers have to integrate them into their existing knowledge and conditions of work (Talavera, 1994a).

To summarise, the strategy of the PRE towards teachers is in part responsible for generating resistance by not providing prior training nor facilitating the updating of teachers' training within schools; effectively excluding head teachers from the process and creating a new hierarchical post that breaks with the career ladder of the teaching profession. Thus, the processes of resistance in the schools featured in the study are not simply a "reflection" of the traditional clashes between the leadership of the teachers' union and the authorities of the Ministry of Education; they are generated within each individual school independently of the conflicts that occur in the wider social context. They also express traditions established by previous

generations of teachers who marked the history of the particular schools being studied and of the national education system.

## THE FILTERING OF THE PRE

Given its importance, the extent of resistance needs to be discussed in greater detail. Schools, as a sector, have had a negative experience of the state, which historically has paid little attention to them. In the case of the three schools featured in this study, teachers and head teachers together with local parents set up the schools themselves, carrying out the bureaucratic procedures required to obtain land, buildings and funding for salaries.

The bureaucratisation and inefficiency of the authorities responsible for administering the system, the lack of control over teachers' work and party political influence in institutional affairs seemed to constitute the basis of teachers' autonomy, which was used not just for professional ends but frequently also to further union interests. Such a history explains in part the current resistance to change and constitutes the wider social context of the schools in this study. Within them a common culture is produced and reproduced, that is, a structure of shared understandings that provides those who work there with a basis for their actions (Geertz, 1987). This structure "filters" the contents of the Education Reform and therefore needs to be examined.

Examples of its elements include party political interference, which through custom has become accepted as inevitable; school being suspended or breaks extended without a thought to the effect this will have on learning; teachers absenting themselves and justifying themselves later, once work has already been affected. All these elements are part of the culture of schools that has developed over years in which the State has had very little involvement. Now that it wants

to be more involved it is encountering resistance, which is a result also of the lack of knowledge among the authorities as to how schools actually work. Greater understanding of this aspect is therefore essential.

The material conditions of schools acquire a particular importance in the reorganisation of school practices; they are part of the structure that filters attempts to reform the education system. The use of space and time are particularly significant. The number of children in the classroom, which in one school is over 40, the lack of comfortable facilities in another, become filters that modify the effects of the Reform. For example, the lack of a bookcase in which to keep the modules and books of the school library means that these resources are under-used, since they have to be kept in the office together with other types of material and under lock and key so that they are not lost. Some classrooms are too dark and the benches and tables too heavy to be moved when required.

Nevertheless, space is not as important as time, since in the school with the worst infrastructure the teachers have made notable progress with the modules. On the other hand, classroom time is a fundamental element in the learning process. In the last five academic years the required 200 school days have never been achieved. In 1998, schools were open for 155 days, which is equivalent to less than 600 hours rather than the required 800.<sup>7</sup> Children and teachers need time to consolidate the learning process and lack support at home. If the school system cannot provide this opportunity, it will not be possible to improve the current level of literacy and overcome the effects of educational backwardness. The lack of time available for

teaching impedes “experimentation” with the modules, as teachers call it. The school year is shortened by the way the system functions. In 1998, 27 days were not recuperated despite a directive to work on Saturdays. School days were also lost in February because the start of the academic year was held up until March.

The study shows that teachers are being pulled in different directions: on the one hand, their union leaders call upon them to defend rights that are affected by the PRE; on the other, as a result of the reform they are experiencing demands to find new ways of organising their work and concentrating on their own learning in order to be able to teach. Perhaps because of the tensions they experience and because of the risks relating to the objectives of the Reform stressed by the unions, when teachers are asked to choose, the union position rather than professional considerations gain the upper hand, with “the identity of the teaching profession” caught in the conflict.

It would seem that the PRE strategy played precisely on the duality of this identity to bring about reform in a system where union interests predominate over professional concerns. In order to be implemented the Reform had to differentiate between teachers. This is also related to the initial process of implementation that we studied. As a result of the differentiation strategy head teachers were marginalized from the process. Those that were included in this study work to improve their schools, but do not defend the Reform nor identify themselves with the measures it has introduced. Its strategy has displaced them and they do not have educational responsibility for the changes to be implemented. That task has been assigned to the advisers.

---

7 Private schools in Latin America and the Caribbean provide over 1,000 hours of classes to their pupils, whilst the average in state schools varies between 500 and 800. *El futuro está en juego*. Report of the international commission on Education, Equity and Economic Competitiveness in Latin America, April 1998.

We found that while the most committed teachers criticised the union leaders they also give them their support, because they say they are the only ones to defend them from political domination. Support for the current union leadership is shown by the unanimity with which, in the schools studied, strikes are adhered to despite voices of opposition. During these times of unity between the union leadership and teachers the orphanhood of the PRE is a paradox. Its greatest challenge is to get through to teachers.

There is a huge amount of work to be done to transform schools in the way that the PRE requires and in order for teachers to take this on it will be necessary to promote dialogue and debate. Alternatives must be put together with them, within schools. Public discussion on the issue of seniority, one of the ghosts of the Reform, must be given priority. The other issue is the supposed move towards the privatisation of state education, which according to one part of the union leadership is the implicit objective of this Reform. Nevertheless, the share of the private sector in education has in fact decreased from 12.5% in 1990 to 8.8% in 1995.<sup>8</sup>

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In *Otras voces, otros maestros* we tried to show how the PRE actually operates in the schools studied. It concentrates on the modules and educational advisory service because they were the most representative elements in the analysis of the information gathered. These concrete innovations constitute a historic event in state education because it is the first time that the State has

provided teaching materials and educational support for teachers in the workplace.

The formative effect of the modules on teachers is evident. In their interaction with the modules it is possible to observe changes in the perceptions and beliefs that support their work and the generation of processes of appropriation, which are visible in innovatory practices that in the medium term will give rise to the construction of a new knowledge base. Because of the formative implications, we believe that great attention should be given to what is taking place with the use of these materials.

By analysing what takes place when the modules are used in class it is possible to see that those who have been through the first year of the transformation are in the process of changing their practices and concepts about teaching, learning, its function and their own perceptions about themselves. In this sense, the teaching materials are like scaffolding which supports teachers as they appropriate the logic of the approach that underlies them. Thus, teacher interaction with the materials becomes an ongoing training process, which, if supported, will transform practice in schools.

We believe that teachers have made considerable efforts to try out the contents of the Reform despite the adverse situation in which they find themselves. We consider that their interaction with the materials in schools has a motivating effect and raises their professional self-esteem, which is so important in the building of values in children. One teaches by example.

In order for individual and collective processes to continue to develop it is necessary to strengthen

---

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Education figures. Contrary to popular perception, the size of the private sector has decreased in recent decades. The private sector catered for almost 20% of pupils between 1950 and 1965. There followed a continuous decline until its share reached around 12% in the 80's and early 90's (Contreras, 1996). However, within the private sector there is a predominance of secondary schools, which in 1995 accounted for 19% of the school population, whilst primaries accounted for just 7%.



the educational advisory service and promote the setting up of teams in schools to provide opportunities for debate and critical reflection. It is necessary to recognise the progress, difficulties and problems that arise through interaction with the PRE.

The initial processes need to be further developed so that the PRE can actually transform the structures in each school and they do not get stuck in the preliminary stages or in the repetition of principles. The reform needs to be taken on by teachers as their own. Conditions for on the job training need to be improved so that the advisory service can truly support teachers in their learning needs.

Head teachers need to be brought into the process and coordinate their work with the educational advisers.

The authorities should put in place mechanisms that enable them to work more closely with schools. For example, there could be a team that not only monitors the advisers but the whole process of implementation, checking that materials arrive, what is lacking, where to request things, in short, facilitating the work and supervising it at the same time. Likewise, educational advisers should have regular meetings with senior officials to keep abreast of the progress of the PRE.

There should be public awareness of what is happening in schools in relation to the PRE, with news about it appearing on television in order to make it a topic of daily conversation and public debate. This would also facilitate the dissemination of decisions taken at higher levels.

Those in charge of the PRE as well as teachers must fight for it to become state policy and not remain an experimental process (Elmore *et al.*, 1996: 18-20). Perhaps this would also limit the party political interference that is so harmful to education.

Finally, and this is a fundamental point, there must be a public debate about the issue of seniority, because it affects the conditions in which the PRE is implemented. The real implications of introducing changes and the reasons for not doing so must be understood. It is a problem that distracts the attention of teachers and stops them from concentrating on the changes they must bring about in their daily practice to tackle the challenges that the PRE brings with it.

With regard to the research process itself, it should be noted that various points became evident during the study that deserve to be followed up. One of these is the need to reconstruct how methods are combined in practice and to document how some teachers manage to move from away from older approaches and use the language modules to teach literacy. Likewise, better knowledge is needed of the scale of resistance that teachers have to change and the forms that this takes.

Attention needs to be given to the displacement of head teachers as a result of the implementation of the Reform. The role of children in the transformation of teacher perspectives should also be studied in greater depth. Finally, in this study we have also constructed a hypothesis regarding the importance of children's interaction with the modules to the reflexive process in teachers.

Some of these topics are already being studied by young researchers in the project "Teachers and the Education Reform", which gave rise to the book discussed by this article. The mixing of methods, the displacement of head teachers and the influence of children on processes of innovation in teaching are issues currently being examined by Zonia Cordero, Gilberto Vera and Ximena Sánchez, in complementary studies being supported by PIEB.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anaya, A.

1999 "Presentación". In: *Otras voces, otros maestros. Aproximación a los procesos de innovación y resistencia en tres escuelas del Programa de Reforma Educativa, ciudad de La Paz, 1997-1998*. La Paz: PIEB, Research Series.

Balderrama, M. et al.

1982 *Escuela y comunidad. Una perspectiva etnográfica. El por qué del fracaso en escuelas marginales*.

La Paz: CEBIAE, Estudios Educativos 15-16.

1984 *Escuela y comunidad. Una propuesta hacia el cambio*. La Paz: CEBIAE, Estudios Educativos 18.

Contreras, M.

1996 "Hacia la construcción del mercado de la educación". In: *Revista Unitas* 15, July.

1998 "Formulación, implementación y avance de la Reforma educativa en Bolivia". In: *Ciencia y cultura. Revista de la Universidad Católica Boliviana* 3, July.

Elbaz, F.

1983 *Teacher Thinking: A Study of Practical Knowledge*. London: Croom Helm.

Elmore, R. et al.

1996 *La reestructuración de las escuelas. La siguiente generación de la Reforma Educativa*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Fullan, M. and Hargreaves, A.

1997 *¿Hay algo por lo que merece la pena luchar en la escuela? Trabajar unidos para mejorar*. Sevilla: Cooperación Educativa in collaboration with Ontario Public School Teachers Federation.

Geertz, C.

1987 *La interpretación de las culturas*. Mexico: Gedisa.

Liston, D. and Zeichner, K.

1993 *Formación del profesorado y condiciones sociales de la escolarización*. Madrid: Morata.

Rockwell, Elsie

1986 "Etnografía y teoría en la investigación educativa". In: *Enfoques* 13. Bogotá: Centro de Investigaciones, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.

SNE

1997 Directorio Estadístico de Unidades Educativas Fiscales del Departamento de La Paz.

Talavera, M. L.

1994a *¿Cómo se inician los maestros en su profesión?*

La Paz: CEBIAE. Master's dissertation, Mexico D.F., Departamento de Investigaciones Educativas, Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional.

1994b *Innovación educativa desde la perspectiva del trabajo docente*. La Paz: Centro Boliviano de Investigación y Acción Educativa (CEBIAE).

1996 *Contextos institucionales y sociales en los que se recrea la Propuesta de Innovación Educativa en Escuelas (PIEE)*. Report for CEBIAE.

1997 *El proceso de sensibilización de la PIEE*. La Paz. Report for CEBIAE.



*Guiomar Mesa*





# Reading and writing in Aymara under the Bolivian Educational Reform<sup>1</sup>

Denise Y. Arnold, Juan de Dios Yapita  
and Ricardo López G.<sup>2</sup>

**This research shows that the idealistic discourse of Bolivian Bilingual Intercultural Education never comes down to earth sufficiently to understand what really goes on in rural schools in the Bolivian highlands. The 1994 Educational Reform Law simply applied this idealistic, globalising and yet nostalgic vision from elsewhere, without taking into account whether it is applicable to cultures such as those in the Andes. Fundamental shortcomings are found in both theory and practice.**

The theoretical framework of Bilingual Intercultural Education (BIE), applied in the classroom under the 1994 Bolivian Educational Reform Law, tends to be based on western concepts, following globalising notions of “many cultures under one hegemony” and resorting to an idealistic and liberal discourse in the way it is applied. Above all, it never deals seriously with

the fundamental day-to-day theoretical and practical problems of the classroom. In the reality of Bolivian schooling, different languages and cultures, differing epistemologies and a variety of textual practices, all come into contact.

BIE does not address this particular regional history of education and schooling. If it were to do so, it would have to take into account the

---

1 This article was published in *Tinkazos* 3, April 1999. Denise Arnold corrected the translation of it for this anthology. The research project “Multimedia: Alternative Textual Practices and the Production and Understanding of Texts in Intercultural Bilingual Education in a Postcolonial Bolivia” was funded by PIEB from 1998-99. The results were published in Arnold, Yapita and others (2000).

2 Denise Arnold is an anthropologist, specialising in cultural anthropology. She is currently working at ILCA (Aymara Language and Culture Institute) in La Paz (Bolivia), at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (La Paz), and at Birkbeck College, London. Juan de Dios Yapita is a linguist, specialising in ethnolinguistics. He works at ILCA (Aymara Language and Culture Institute) and at Birkbeck College, London. Ulpian Ricardo López is an anthropologist, specialising in cultural anthropology. He works at CEPA (Ecology and Andean Peoples Centre) in Oruro (Bolivia).

longer-term concerns of local people regarding the relationship between rural communities and the State, and the even thornier problem underlying local wishes to enter the State educational system, as exemplified in the many educational activities that take place within the confines of each community, and which involve the fundamental relationship between communities and their land. We will deal with each of these points in this article.

### TEXTUAL PRACTICES IN CONTACT

For historical reasons, one notable feature of educational systems in the Andes is the degree of “interference” arising not just from “languages in contact” but also from “textual practices in contact”. It is well known that other forms of “writing”, “literature” and “texts” (oral forms, textiles, glyphs, *kipus*) were developed in the Andes. These are still used in rural communities and are very different to the writing and texts based on western alphabetical reading and writing introduced with the Spanish conquest.<sup>3</sup> But despite the increasing number of studies of the practical difficulties encountered in teaching alphabetical reading and writing in cultures that have other textual practices, there is still very little research on the problems involved in teaching and learning reading and writing in Bolivian rural schools, where the same difficulties are found, particularly in Quechua and Aymara areas.<sup>4</sup>

This same phenomenon of “different textual practices in contact” casts doubt on current definitions of “illiteracy” in Bolivia, seen as a weed that needs to be eradicated. In the rural Andean context, however, so-called “illiterate” people not

only have their own textual practices but also the means to communicate through them with others at an almost “pan-Andean” level. Furthermore, the continued existence of these other textual practices reveals both their longevity and *raison d'être*. If they are still used today it must be because they perform an important function in the contemporary Andean world.

In order to reduce these difficulties in other parts of the world, even in highly developed countries such as the United States or the UK, there have been experiments with “alternative” textual practices in the case of certain ethnic groups (Cook Gumpertz and Keller Cohen, 1993). But in Bolivia today, there are very few practical proposals for managing the daily classroom encounter that rural schoolchildren experience between different textual practices. For example, there are few proposals for improving the teaching of alphabetical reading and writing. Practically nothing is being done to explore the classroom use of Andean texts (weaving or *kipu*, song or story). There is also a complete lack of understanding of the interferences that arise when these different textual practices come into contact on a daily basis.

The application of the 1994 Popular Participation Law and Educational Reform opened up a space that brings us closer to this reality. This is particularly the case with the proposal to develop alternatives to the “core” curriculum, managed from the top down by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, and the National Technical Education Services Unit (UNSTP). There is now the added possibility of developing in every region of Bolivia so-called “diversified offshoots” or “local core subjects”, as part of the curriculum that addresses local needs,

---

3 We use the new definitions of “writing” and “text” found in Derrida (1971) and Hill Boone and Mignolo (1994).

4 But see Arnold (1996).

that can make use of the communities' own texts, and be managed by their own representatives, with the additional support of regional technical staff.

Unfortunately the intellectual background to the Educational Reform fails to take into account current international debates concerning the phenomenon of different textual practices in contact, their distinct characteristics or their distinctive levels of interaction. Neither does it take into account the results of experiments with "alternative textual practices" in the classroom. Instead, certain interests have taken advantage of the Educational Reform's application in practice either to develop the dominant culture's reading and writing practices in the classroom, or to include within the same, what are seen paternalistically as examples of a more primordial "oral culture" (ETARE, 1993a).

### READING AND WRITING AS SEEN BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND REFORM OFFICIALS

Within this wider context, our research looked at how the new teaching materials are received and applied in rural Andean classrooms from a historical perspective, with a particular focus on the Reform's so-called "modules", the new school textbooks in native languages. The aim was to grasp the different levels of understanding and interpretation of these modules by schoolchildren, teachers, and community members. At the same time, we wanted to compare how these new written school texts are understood and interpreted, with the way in which Andean people understand and interpret their own local texts.

In general, people in rural communities are very much in agreement that, at least in the past, one went to school "in order to learn to read and write". They also feel that access to reading and

writing was important historically, because learning Spanish made it easier to use colonial land titles to their advantage in the ongoing struggle for their land. But when a test was carried out in the current context of the Reform, not one child in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade in more than 10 schools (whether Reform Transformation or Reform Improvement schools) was able to read fluently and with understanding, either in Aymara or Spanish. Instead, their reading level was syllabic or sub-syllabic, and lacking in understanding, even after so many years of formal State education. With the application of the Reform modules in the classroom, it is clear that the quality of reading has fallen further still. UNSTP officials have recommended that children should not be expected to read until they reach level 3 of the basic learning cycle, because "the new education system has other priorities".

For obvious reasons, this recommendation, together with the teaching of native languages that has been introduced into the curriculum, has caused consternation among parents everywhere in the Bolivian highlands. In our field work, we found that school drop-out rates have become almost uncontrollable in certain areas. Moreover, the mother tongue is being rejected in favour of Spanish in traditionally Aymara areas, from Tiwanaku (in La Paz department) to Turco (in Oruro), simply in order to avoid the use of the modules in Aymara, and the implementation of the Reform's Bilingual Intercultural Education programme.

At the same time, it is very clear that due to the traditional teaching practices of syllable pronunciation, memorisation and repetition, still used by teachers, the vast majority of children in rural areas have never managed to be able to read fluently and with understanding, as do their counterparts in other countries. Faced with these findings, we asked the following questions:

- How do people in rural communities interpret western "reading and writing", to the extreme that they now think that in the past, when everything was in Spanish, children really were capable of reading and writing properly in the classroom?
- Or is it perhaps the case that, underlying past practices of reading and writing, there were other Andean criteria in play that were more important to community members, and of a much longer standing?
- What exactly has changed in the current Educational Reform context?

Much of the research therefore involved understanding the nature of this "Andean" way of reading and writing, its particular history and its application in the classroom, all in the current context of the changes introduced by the Educational Reform. Our analysis led us to suggest that, historically, the Andean experience of textual practices in contact gave rise to an Andean reinterpretation of European reading and writing in the colonial context of enforced Christian indoctrination, in which the teaching of reading and writing cannot be separated from the teaching of the faith. We then deduced that despite this colonising situation, Andean people were able to develop their own practices of reading and writing to serve their purposes, all in accordance with an Andean interpretation of Christian doctrine that followed their own textual theories. Given this historical stratification of dual reading and dual interpretations, there is therefore a vast difference between what State officials think is going on in the classroom and what is really happening.

Abiding by these same criteria, people in Andean communities have included the modern State school within their own symbolic system whose roots extend back to the distant past, well before today's schools were actually built. Community members therefore perceive the way in which children read in the classroom as part of their own system of practices, theories and values, which in turn form part of their own modes of production and reproduction on community land. An important element of this historical reformulation is the Andean reinterpretation of St. Augustine's seminal thinking, according to which each letter is thought of as a seed that can be made to sprout by pronouncing it aloud.

### "NATIONAL SUICIDE": POSTURE AND PRACTICE

What, then, are the conflicts that arise between international BIE discourse, and the worlds of State functionaries and technical officials, and the Andean use of reading and writing?

It is well known that of all the Andean countries, Bolivia has been the most predominantly rural until very recently, and it is still extremely "illiterate". Official figures show that 70% of the total illiterate population lives in rural areas and 68% of the latter are women.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, according to official figures, the "persistent illiteracy" of the rural population, and particularly of rural women (50%), is the result of their marginalisation, and the school drop-out rates.<sup>6</sup> According to the 1992 census, 15% of the total school-age population was still excluded from the educational system.

---

<sup>5</sup> See ETARE (1993b: 4).

<sup>6</sup> See ETARE (1993b: 4). Analysis of the 1992 census shows that the figure for absolute illiteracy was 20%, rising to 55% if functional illiteracy is included. This illustrated the "crisis" affecting Bolivian education, and was the reason for setting up ETARE and launching the 20th century's Second Educational Reform (Velazco Reckling, 1994: 5).

Even so, the criteria used to reckon these figures in Bolivia do not follow internationally accepted criteria. According to the Educational Reform Technical Team (ETARE, 1993b: 4), describing someone as “illiterate” is merely an indication that the person concerned “never attended school”, while “functional illiterates” are people who, “having learned to read and write, have forgotten these skills through lack of use”. Therefore, under international parameters, the number of people who cannot read and write to the same standard of fluency used in other countries would be much higher.

Perhaps because of these same shortcomings in the definitions used by the State, and in teaching practices themselves, since the 1960s the Bolivian State has developed an educational system in which more than a third of its total annual budget is spent on public education, and another half of that amount on private schooling.

At the same time, over the last few decades the State seems to have developed a kind of institutionalised cover-up that aims to conceal this national reality, at least in the case of the majority of the population of rural extraction. The small gifts parents make to rural teachers to ensure that their children pass each primary or secondary grade are well known. In some teacher training colleges as well, there are indications of a system of payments or other ways of ensuring that thesis assignments are completed. This also seems to happen at university level, enabling students to pass courses in undergraduate and masters degrees (the so-called “buying of degree certificates”). All these day-to-day practices conceal a Bolivian reality that has its roots in rural classrooms.

In this context, although the Educational Reform proposals were well-intentioned, they often adopt a paternalistic attitude towards these problems. López (1996: 24), for example, in an attempt to define interculturalism within the BIE

framework, holds that this was created with the aim of addressing in a more relevant and fairer way the needs of the indigenous population who speak native languages. In our view, greater tolerance or respect for cultural pluralism is not enough to overcome these problems. Instead, there is a need to rethink the textual forms and practices at the heart of the Educational Reform.

## THE APPROACH TO ILLITERACY

First of all the concept and definition of illiteracy needs to be rethought. In contrast to the last few decades, when the focus was on adult literacy, the Educational Reform’s new proposal is based on educating the school-age population in alphabetical reading and writing as the most effective long-term remedy for illiteracy. But instead of focusing directly on alphabetical reading and writing, a more “intercultural” approach was chosen.

Even so, there are several arguments against this approach at an international level:

1. One is the argument made by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, who sees illiteracy as a consequence rather than a cause. He describes it as an “epiphenomenon of the structure of a society at a given moment in history”.
2. Another argument is worldwide reality, underlined in 1979 in the Club of Rome report “No limits to learning”: “Despite the attention paid the world over to the reduction of illiteracy, it is a social plague that is on the increase year after year as population growth in developing countries outstrips the progress made by literacy programmes.”
3. Another is the failure of educational programmes in developed countries, to the point where 15 per cent of North American 17-year-olds still in school were “functional

illiterates", meaning that they were unable to read and write well enough to apply for a job in which this skill was a minimum requirement.

4. Finally, French philosopher Jacques Derrida argues that alphabetical writing has simply passed its peak: "now that phonetic writing...tends to dominate world culture, the advancement of science in any of its disciplines is no longer satisfied by it" (Derrida, 1971: 8).

At the same time, the framework of interculturalism needs to include a new definition of an equivalent to "illiteracy", that describes the ignorance of Reform experts and officials concerning Andean textual practices, literatures and languages.

### ANDEAN TEXTUAL STRUGGLES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Secondly, there is a need to rethink the current conflicting situation between different textual practices in the classroom, and the mutual misunderstanding between the main protagonists: international experts and Reform officials on one hand, and community members and rural teachers on the other.

We suggest that this conflict-ridden national reality is part of a much longer textual struggle that started in the colonial period, and that only by examining the historical evolution of this struggle, will we learn to understand its current manifestations in rural highland communities in the context of Educational Reform implementation.

From this perspective, we suggest that what some define as "national suicide" through State education – a phenomenon arising from the "illiteracy of most teachers" that started around the time of the educational changes applied in

1952 – is linked to this same long-term textual struggle. Therefore, at the heart of the problem of illiteracy today, there are many other underlying problems: a confrontation between forms of texts, writing and textual practices, as well as secondary textual phenomena that are the result of additional confrontations between different meanings, interpretations and forms of understanding.

The immediate roots of this situation can be found precisely in 1952, when a whole generation of literate teachers in rural areas was dismissed. With the good intention of having rural teachers who knew more about the reality lived by their pupils, a new generation of rural teachers who spoke native languages was promoted. Due to the massive and sudden entry of this new generation of young rural teachers into teacher training colleges in the highlands, there was neither the time nor the capacity in terms of human resources to focus on their own learning needs, as bilinguals. Although they spoke native languages, the new teachers had no knowledge of the written register, either in their mother tongue or in Spanish. Therefore, in order to teach reading and writing in the classroom, since the 1950s rural teachers have resorted to what they already knew: long-term Andean reading and writing practices based on memorisation and recitation, which they were familiar with since childhood.

At the same time, as a new group with trade-union interests, since the 1950s rural teachers seem to have remodelled classroom teaching practices in accordance with the modernist-*criollo* educational discourses and ideologies that suited them, within the framework of their new profession, their new identities and aspirations. This is what Platt calls their socio-economic "whitening" and their submission to "the 'one and only progressive future' preached from Europe" (Platt, 1987: 120).



The result of this process is a double-edged play between contradictory philosophies. In educational practice, we found the merging of an approach to modernisation (with its roots in the French Revolution), an approach to the nation (typical of *criollo* thinking), an approach to the Bolivian Revolution (as conceived by the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement, MNR), an acceptance in principle of Tamayo's national education philosophy, and a tacit acceptance of the Warisata educational experiment. All this is combined with teachers marking their status differences from small farmers (*campesinos*) for professional reasons, greater access to reading and writing, and an ambiguous relationship to the land.

When we examine rural teachers' discourse in more detail, we find the same "double-edged Andean interpretation" at the heart of their ideas. As intermediaries between the community and the State, they act as State officials but they still identify with local people in the communities. We suggest that the crux of this ambiguity is the underlying memory of an important historical relationship between them (the teachers) and Andean legal representatives in the defence of community lands. Rappaport (1990) calls the equivalent legal representatives in Colombia an Andean "textual community", because they were experts in the handling of colonial documents concerning land. The heart of the educational policy of these legal representatives was to educate indigenous people in the dominant language, Spanish, in order to gain access to these colonial documents and so defend their land against expropriation, all following the Andean practices of reading and writing by memorisation and recitation.

Because this problem was overlooked, the Educational Reform's current proposals could actually worsen the effects of living with this

confrontation between different textual practices, at least in the short term. Moreover, without the theoretical basis to make an in-depth analysis of the problem, the Reform is operating in a vacuum, lacking a framework for action to unite the different protagonists.

### THE REFORM MODULES: TOWARDS "A LANGUAGE THAT DIVIDES US"

Thirdly, the preparation of the Reform's teaching materials should take into account the nature of these past textual struggles, and facilitate the transition between dual textual practices in the present in a truly intercultural way, instead of bringing about a situation of further conflict.

In a thorough review of the Reform's modules or textbooks in native languages (especially Aymara, produced by the UNSTP) and their application in the classroom, we started to evaluate evidence of this textual struggle. For example, it is clear that the modules are based on an ideological attempt to adapt rural children to alphabetical reading and writing, but without giving them the didactic and pedagogical framework needed to do so. It should be borne in mind that the implementation of the Reform is the first time in history that an attempt has been made to carry out a mass "literacy" campaign among Aymara people by teaching them to write alphabetically in their own language. Therefore, UNSTP experts might have been expected to be aware of the need to facilitate this process by designing easily understood modules in which the transition from the oral Aymara register to the written register would be enjoyable for schoolchildren, teachers and parents. Unfortunately this is not the case. On the contrary, there is a vast distance between spoken Aymara and written Aymara in the modules, and this is causing rejection at all levels.

Regarding linguistic aspects, the modules in Aymara had an overwhelming tendency to apply an “academic” form of written Aymara, peculiar to the Reform.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, they used the grapholect of La Paz Aymara, based on an unproven linguistic theory about the supposed similarities between Aymara and Quechua (in Cerrón-Palomino, 1994). These texts are far removed from the Aymara spoken by rural people and even by rural teachers. In our fieldwork, we frequently found a strong rejection of this new way of writing Aymara, not just among parents and teachers but also among schoolchildren and the directors of educational districts.

We also found that a “standardised (normalised)” version of Aymara was being applied, within a purist and historicist framework. The dominant tendency was to restore the vocabulary used centuries ago rather than use the semantic domains of present-day Aymara. There is such an overdose of this newly invented vocabulary in the first few modules, that a student has to learn an average of 3.3 unknown words in each learning unit, even for terms as common as “book”. Such features of BIE application have caused alarm and very strong adverse criticism in many other Latin American countries which have opted for what the Paraguayan educator Melía calls “a language that divides us rather than a language that unites us”.

Furthermore, this approach to linguistic standardisation disregards certain fundamental criteria in Aymara grammar, especially vowel elision which, in discourse, marks the morphophonemic aspects of the language (for example, the marking of direct and indirect objects). Due to the excess of vowels in the new written Aymara, we witnessed a new way of

“reading Aymara” in the classroom. This involves the pronunciation of all the final vowels, which makes spoken discourse almost meaningless.

The UNSTP’s imposition of the new textual practice of writing Reform Aymara is therefore giving rise to a new way of “reading” it, which uproots the Aymara voice from its own textual background without providing an easy way for speakers to adapt to the new modernising practice of alphabetical reading and writing.

This has happened because the majority of experts directing the preparation of the modules do not actually speak the native languages. They are also too “literate” in the written registers of the language to be able to understand the sociolinguistic, didactic and educational problems of rural classrooms. As far as they are concerned, “you read the same way as you speak” and nothing more.

Furthermore, in our linguistic review, we found that the module texts contain a large number of words that are not really Aymara but almost literal translations from the Spanish (Yapita, 1999). This tendency is even more marked in the later modules (from N° 3 of the Aru reading and writing and Jakhüwi arithmetical series onwards). This suggests that the methodology used to prepare the modules involves writing a draft of the teaching units in Spanish, and then asking the UNSTP technical staff to translate them from Spanish to Aymara (or Quechua). This supposition on our part was later confirmed by some members of the UNSTP team (at least for the modules in Aymara from Aru 3 onwards). We do not feel that this methodology is appropriate, either in the IBE framework or in the spirit of the Reform itself,

7 This point in our June 1998 Progress Report is highlighted by Albó (1998) in the newer version of his report “*Hacia unas políticas interculturales y lingüísticas para Bolivia*”, and more recently in his book *Educando en la diferencia* (2002).

which aims to respect the cultural and linguistic differences between Bolivia's languages and cultures.

The same thing happens in the teaching aspects of the modules. The organisation of the teaching units in native languages clearly follows that of the texts prepared in Spanish, without much questioning or review. This is another example of the application of a preconceived model for both modules, without taking into account comparatively the didactic, conceptual and educational differences found in Andean cultures.

As far as the educational techniques applied to the teaching of reading and writing in Aymara are concerned, these ought to follow the organisation of grammatical structures in this language (or a framework of comparison between Aymara and Spanish). Instead, we found that the modules apply units without much logical or sequential organisation, all in the name of new classroom educational techniques. In practice, this causes many difficulties for teachers and schoolchildren. The most obvious example is the application of eight-syllable Aymara words in the first unit of the first module, which is to be used with six-year-old children in the first Basic Learning cycle. This is further evidence of an overdose that makes learning more difficult (Alavi, 1999).

Furthermore, the modules encourage "cultural diglossia", because they use Aymara as a vehicle for teaching the values of the dominant culture with regard to learning class, gender and ethnic stereotypes, etc. Above all, the modules overlook the criteria involved in Andean textual practices (and their visual-iconographic organisation) and simply include them in an alphabetical reading and writing framework following the criteria of the dominant culture and language.

We also found a glaring lack of awareness of the cultural characteristics of Andean societies in

the organisation and content of the Aru modules. For example, they disregard the differentiation between categories of human and non-human, body and spirit, and they demystify play, and the ritual and everyday roles of children in rural highland cultures.

At the same time, we found a lack of understanding of Andean gender relations. Instead, there is a worrying application of what Illich calls the western "unisex" model (Illich, 1983).

Finally, regarding the teaching of maths in Aymara, we found that the *Jakhuwi* modules apply Western mathematics without much awareness that it differs significantly from Andean mathematics both conceptually and comparatively (Villavicencio, 1990; Urton, 1997, etc.). These modules also follow the teaching-learning sequence of the maths modules prepared in Spanish, without much adaptation to the context in which they are to be used. Moreover, they include somewhat rustic and absurd contexts such as counting sheep's feet or writing numbers with a finger dipped in water mixed with medicinal herbs.

In short, despite the abundant discourse around BIE, in the current Reform framework Andean languages serve only as the means of communication enabling another round of extraneous ideas from the dominant culture to be imposed on rural communities. In this sense, the historical forbears of the Reform modules are none other than the catechisms promoted by the Third Council of Lima in 1583-1584.

## TOWARDS AN ANDEAN FORM OF INTERCULTURALISM

Fourthly, there is a need to rethink the Reform's interculturalism in order to take into account Andean forms of interculturalism that already exist.

To understand what is really going on in rural schools, it is necessary to understand from the community perspective the long history and practice of Andean State education and its relationship to local farming and grazing traditions, especially with regard to the question of land. This in turn demands awareness of the role of the different textual practices in contact. On the one hand, Andean textual practices themselves, especially textiles as the Andean means of communication par excellence, form vital parts of Andean modes of production and reproduction. This is because their textual basis is the fleece, which is produced from local flocks with access to adequate pasture and water. For these reasons, local Andean education has always focused on the care and management of these elements over and above others. On the other hand, the paper and ink of today's formal State education forms the textual basis of the State, precisely because these materials are part of the annual paper harvest in administrative bureaucracy.

It should also be borne in mind that in the past this community-State relationship took another form, in which both sides were part of the same Andean hierarchy. It is in this historical context that we find the roots of what we call "Andean interculturalism" (as opposed to the Reform's interculturalism), meaning the whole set of practices and ideas that have emerged historically in the framework of the relations between Andean communities and States in the more distant past.

Communal oral history of schooling as an institution clearly shows that its roots lie in past community-State relations during the Inca period, where the origins of the so-called "Andean pact" are also found. It is precisely within this historical context that community members measure and judge community-State relations

today. In this same historical encounter, we find some of the reasons for the current rejection of teaching in native languages. If in Andean history the school has always been a place for the teaching and learning of other cultural practices – Inca textuality and the Quechua language, for example – then it should not surprise us that community members, as parents, transfer this perception to the present-day Bolivian State, in their demand to learn only Spanish and the textual practices of the Nation, meaning reading and writing based on paper and ink. Only in this way would they be confident of holding the necessary means to deal with State officials to defend their land rights, using the State's own textual means to do so.

It is for these historical reasons that the last century's Andean legal representatives and educators have been more interested in learning Spanish as the dominant language, and using written documents, as this enables them to confront the State when they need to defend their land. In this long-term context, it is not easy to change either community members' or rural teachers' view of BIE.

But the situation is even more complicated than that. From the perspective of people in rural communities, another important aspect of history is the role of the school and schoolchildren in production and reproduction based on their land, flocks and other local resources. Above all, for community members, current community-State relations, and the way in which these are forged through schooling, have to do with ongoing struggles for their land rights, and production on their land.

Therefore, Andean interpretations of reading and writing are also a part of this same struggle for land, and the daily recitation in schools of reading and writing practices has to do with the successful sprouting of seed-letters, as can be seen in the names of earlier school textbooks, such as

*Surco* (Furrow), *Muju* (Aymara for Seed), *Semilla* (Spanish for Seed), and so on, all following an Andean reinterpretation of Christian doctrine.

In this context, what has happened in the Reform and caused so much concern is that even more letters have been added to written Aymara, giving rise to even more elaborate recitations. These no longer make any sense, because Aymara has been decontextualised from its own textual base in the land, perhaps as part of a very long term historical attempt to finally uproot Andean communities from their territory.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, the current interculturalism and bilingual education proposals do not understand the Amerindian philosophical world or its literatures and textual practices, let alone the historical phenomenon of textual practices in contact.

This situation is all the sadder when we bear in mind that studies of these issues are in the forefront of new directions in cultural studies and postmodern science internationally.

A way of changing this situation would be to give the Reform's experts and literate functionaries training courses on the history, culture and languages of the Andean region in which they work, and the oral textual practices based on Andean forms of textuality.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alavi, Zacarías  
1999 "Los textos escolares y la calidad lectora en el contexto de la Educación Intercultural Bilingüe de la Reforma Educativa". In: *XII Reunión Anual de Etnografía*, 1998, *Tomo II*. La Paz: MUSEF, FCBCB and VC.
- Albó, Xavier  
1998 *Hacia unas políticas interculturales y lingüísticas para Bolivia*. 2 vols. La Paz: CIPCA and UNICEF.  
2002 *Educando en la diferencia. Hacia unas políticas interculturales y lingüísticas para el sistema educativo*. La Paz: CIPCA, Cuadernos de Investigación 56, UNICEF and Reforma Educativa (MECD-Bolivia).
- Arnold, Denise Y.  
1996 "Weaving as an Alternative Literacy: embodied and disembodied forms of learning in the Andes". Paper presented to the Round Table *Knowledge and Learning in Andean Cultures*, held at Darwin College, Cambridge, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1996.
- Arnold, Denise Y.; Yapita, Juan de Dios, and others  
2000 *El rincón de las cabezas: Luchas textuales, educación y tierras en los Andes*. La Paz: UMSA and ILCA. To be published in English as "The Metamorphosis of Heads: Textual Struggles, Education and Land in the Andes", by Pittsburgh University Press.
- Cerrón-Palomino, Rodolfo  
1994 *Quechumara. Estructuras paralelas de las lenguas Quechua y Aymara*. La Paz: CIPCA.
- Cook Gumpertz, Jenny and Keller Cohen, Deborah  
1993 "Alternative Literacies in School and Beyond". Introduction in a Special Issue of *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4, December 1993.
- Derrida, Jacques  
1971 *De la Gramatología*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Argentina Editores.
- ETARE (Educational Reform Technical Team)  
1993a. *Dinamización curricular: lineamientos para una política curricular*. "Cuadernos de la Reforma" Series.  
1993b. *Reforma Educativa. Propuesta*. "Cuadernos de la Reforma" Series. La Paz: Papiro.

Hill Boone, E. and Mignolo, Walter (eds.)  
1994 *Writing without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Illich, Ivan  
1983 *Gender*. London: Calder and Boyars.

López, Luis Enrique  
1996 "No más danzas de ratones grises: sobre interculturalidad, democracia y educación". In: Godenzzi Alegre, Juan (comp.). *Educación cultural en los Andes y la Amazonia*. Cusco, Peru: CBC.

Platt, Tristan  
1987 "Entre *ch'axwa* y *muxsa*. Para una historia del pensamiento político aymara". In: Medina, Javier (ed.). *Tres reflexiones sobre el pensamiento andino*. La Paz: Hisbol.

Rappaport, Joanne  
1990 *The Politics of Memory: Native Historical Interpretation in the Colombian Andes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Urton, Gary  
1997 *The social life of numbers. A Quechua Ontology of Numbers and Philosophy of Arithmetic*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Velazco Reckling, Enrique  
1994 "La Reforma Educativa Boliviana: una (re)visión estratégica". In: *Noche Parlamentaria*. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

Villavicencio Ubillus, Martha  
1990 *La matemática en la Educación Bilingüe. El caso de Puno*. Lima: Libros Peruanos S.A.

Yapita, Juan de Dios  
1999 "Comentario lingüístico de los Módulos de la Reforma Educativa". In: *XII Reunión Anual de Etnología, 1998, Tomo II*. La Paz: MUSEF, FCBCB and VC.



## **II. GENDER AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES**



*Raúl Lara*



# The Reproduction of Ethnic Identity and Gender Relations in the Mojos Lowlands<sup>1</sup>

**Zulema Lehm Ardaya, Tania Melgar Henrich  
Mercedes Noza Moreno and Kantuta Lara Delgado<sup>2</sup> - CIDDEBENI**

**Zulema Lehm and her team explore inter-ethnic and gender relations through a meticulous and detailed analysis of ethnic identities, inter-ethnic and inter-gender valuations, kinship categories and relations, the division of labour, population, access to natural resources, migration, involvement in the market, access to knowledge and social ascent in six communities.**

The aim of the research was to throw light on the complex inter-ethnic and gender relations in the Mojos lowlands, Beni department, in the Bolivian Amazon region. Characterised by vast natural savannahs and lowland riverside forests, seasonal flooding and a pronounced variation in climate between the rainy season and the dry season, the Mojos lowlands are home to 16 of the 33 indigenous peoples that have been identified in Bolivia, as well as a large white and *mestizo* population mainly concentrated in the towns. They are therefore

an ideal area for the study of inter-ethnic relations.

The research arose from the observation that since the 1980s an intensely dynamic process related to ethnic identities has been going on in Beni. This was due both to the organisation and mobilisation of the region's indigenous peoples and to the gradual recognition of some of their rights in national laws. This process represents a challenge to the category of ethnicity as it appears in the laws and in the minds of state administrators, where it is conceived of as a static

- 
- 1 This article was published in *Tinkazos* 8, February 2001. Sponsored by PIEB and the Beni Research and Documentation for Development Centre (CIDDEBENI), the results of this research project were published in the book *Matrimonios interétnicos. Reproducción de los grupos étnicos y relaciones de género en los Llanos de Mojos* (Inter-Ethnic Marriages. The Reproduction of Ethnic Groups and Gender Relations in the Mojos Lowlands. PIEB, 2002).
- 2 Zulema Lehm is a sociologist; she has a masters in social sciences, with a mention in Amazonian studies, from the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) in Ecuador. She is currently working as an independent researcher. Tania Melgar has a degree in history from the Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow; she is currently working at CIDDEBENI. Mercedes Noza is studying sociology at the Gabriel René Moreno University (Santa Cruz); she is a member of the CIDDEBENI consultancy team. Kantuta Lara is an anthropologist, currently specialising in Amazonian anthropology.

category that bears no relation to reality. This misconception perpetuates the mechanisms of exclusion, despite the laws' manifest purpose of recognising indigenous rights.

Another factor that influenced the identification of the research topic was the observation that the growing interest in gender relations is leading to policies and actions that are being applied in a context of profound ignorance of the particular nature of these relations in the region's indigenous groups. Both themes, ethnicity and gender, come together in inter-ethnic marriages, and we therefore decided to approach them from this starting point. The questions we originally asked were: what are the factors that determine inter-ethnic marriages? and, given that such marriages are increasingly frequent, how do the ethnic groups reproduce themselves?

Theories about gender have shown that relations in this area are made up of a set of practices, symbols, representations, norms and values that societies have constructed on the basis of sexual difference. These cultural constructions pre-establish forms of behaviour and relationships through the socialisation process, which involves models of what society defines as appropriate attitudes and behaviours for each sex. Feminism's fundamental contribution is to have revealed that such forms of behaviour and relationships do not come from nature but from culture (Mead, 1935; Grupo Temático de Género, 1997; Gonzáles, 1993: 17). In the same way, ethnic differences are also a set of socially constructed representations, practices, symbols, norms and values (Cardoso de Oliveira, 1976: 48). Both theories therefore have something in common: they deal with socially constructed differences. Because they are socially constructed, they are subject to change, and therefore are not static categories.

Both ethnic and gender identity are based on contrast, meaning that they are defined in relation to "the other" (Gonzáles, 1993: 27; Barth, 1976). As Barth (1976) explains, an ethnic group's identification does not depend only on self-identification but also on the way in which "others" include or exclude it. This inclusion/exclusion is fluid. As Paulson (1996) and de la Cadena (1997) point out, a person can be considered *mestiza* or *mestizo* in one context and *india* or *indio* in another.

Finally, a few comments need to be made about two concepts present in gender theories: the gender "condition" and the gender "situation". Lagarde (1993: 34) states that "in terms of gender women share the same historical condition, but they differ with regard to their life situations and the degree or level of oppression". In other words, the gender "condition" refers to a shared state, whereas the "situation" refers to the variations. This research is located on this second level, given that our concern is to describe the variations present in the different ethnic groups in our study.

With regard to the above, according to Gayle Rubin (1996) it can be stated that the division of labour and kinship relations occupy a central place in gender relations. But these two factors, especially the latter, are also central to inter-ethnic relations, and constitute empirical and observable expressions of sex/gender and ethnicity systems. Likewise, given that cultural constructions are constricting but not absolutely impermeable, leaving an important space for individual action, it is possible for individuals of either gender, and of a certain social status in ethnic groups, to decide to break with the established scripts. When this happens, how does the ethnic group reproduce itself? The conscious or unconscious desire to take forward actions aimed at bringing about change must derive from a set of perceptions of the gender situation in a particular group, in contrast to those

prevailing in other groups. These perceptions imply inter-gender and inter-ethnic valuations that we need to elucidate if we are to understand the meaning of change in kinship systems.

As far as Bolivian society is concerned, study of the interplay of ethnic identities reveals the existence of a "continuum of contempt" (Rivera, 1996). When this is internalised by the indigenous groups themselves, it gives rise to a structure of hierarchies among them, based on the colonial precepts of "savages" versus "civilisation". This situation is expressed in turn in gender relations. So, as de la Cadena (1997) shows, in the value scales originating in the colonial period, "indian" women are placed at the lowest level.

The interweaving of the categories of ethnicity, gender and class implies considerable theoretical and empirical complexity. In the case of the Amazon region, added to this complexity is the fact that few studies have addressed these issues. When we reviewed the literature on the Mojos lowlands we found a number of studies of inter-ethnic relations (Jones, 1980; Paz, 1991; Zajechowski, 1989; Vargas, 1994); there are far fewer studies of gender (Lehm, 1996; Brito, 1998). Our research represents the first attempt to study the intersection between the two categories.

Our research inquired into the following thematic areas: inter-ethnic and inter-gender valuations, kinship categories and relations, the division of labour, population, access to natural resources, access to know-how and knowledge, and social ascent. We also gathered information about "integrating" processes such as migration, involvement in the market and access to health and education services, all in relation to inter-ethnic marriages.

Six communities were chosen for the study: the Trinidad Indigenous District, Puerto San

Lorenzo, San Pablo, Tres de Mayo, Naranjito and Ibiato/Nguiray. The indigenous peoples involved are the Trinitario, Yuracaré, Guarayo and Sirionó (see the Appendix for details). The field work was carried out in two stages. The first stage, which lasted for two and a half months (January to March 1999), took place in the rainy season, while the second two-month stage, from June to August of the same year, was in the dry season. The team was made up of four researchers: two "experienced" and two young researchers. All four worked in the urban settlement of the Trinidad Indigenous District. For the work in the rural communities, each researcher travelled to one community. Throughout the time spent working in the communities, the experienced researchers monitored the work of the young researchers every day, using the indigenous organisations' radio communications network.

As well as reviewing the secondary sources of information, both theoretical and empirical, a set of techniques was used to gather the primary data: community censuses, a survey of women over the age of 12 about childbirth and fertility, mapping of natural resources by gender, calendars of the year's activities by gender, daily activities records, production and benefit flow analysis, life histories, kinship patterns, questionnaires with graded opinions and valuations, and interviews with people with specialist knowledge of the Search for the Promised Land, shamanism, hunting and fishing. Observations were recorded in field diaries.

## MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

### ETHNIC IDENTITY

This subject was approached first through the terminology of kinship. It was found that in the communities studied a term in each native

[



Sources: Prefectural Roads Service  
Beni Borders Commission  
Map drawn by: Unigeo - Ciddebeni



language is used to refer to the members of their ethnic group. In the Trinitario language the term is *jañono*, in Yuracaré *tapia* and in Guarayo *chemú*; in Sirionó, the term *mbyá* (meaning our people) is used in the same way, but the word “relative” in Spanish is also directly used. Likewise, the Trinitario, Yuracaré and Guarayo translate the terms in their languages into Spanish as “relative”, and they are used in two senses: the first is more restricted and denotes close family members, while the second is broader and also means “relative”. When they translate the words into Spanish they usually use the term “relative of the same race”, meaning a member of the same ethnic group. This reference to kinship to establish ethnic group belonging shows the importance of ancestry or origin in the processes of ethnic group inclusion or exclusion.

To complement the above, and following Barth (1976), we found that the inclusion or exclusion of a person depends on values that the group considers fundamental. So, for example, for the Trinitario of Puerto San Lorenzo and the Trinidad Indigenous District, participation in festivities, organisation in assemblies and religious practices would be what they see as making them different from other groups, and represent the indicators they use to be able to distinguish those who do not belong to their group. The Yuracaré of San Pablo and Tres de Mayo generally considered language as an indicator that enables them to classify people as included or excluded. The Guarayo and the Sirionó, on the other hand, considered behaviour to be the indicator. In the case of the former, this is defined as the way people are, walk and greet others, while in the case of the latter it is the way in which people relate to each other, and they placed particular emphasis on friendliness and respect.

The ethnic identity of the children of an inter-ethnic marriage between Trinitario and Yuracaré

men and women in the communities of Puerto San Lorenzo and Tres de Mayo will depend firstly on the socio-cultural context in which they are socialised. Our in-depth study of one inter-ethnic family illustrates the fact that ethnic identification depends more on social factors than biological ones. This inter-ethnic marriage dates back to the 1950s and, like many others, had its origins in the messianic migrations made by the Trinitario in the Search for the Promised Land. The couple had three sons and four daughters. To begin with, following the matrimonial residence rules, the Trinitario woman went to live in the Yuracaré settlements, but when the children reached school age the family moved to the Trinitario settlement so that they could go to school. Later on, two of the sons married Trinitario women and stayed to live in the same Trinitario settlement, while two of the daughters married Yuracaré men and went to live in the Yuracaré community of Tres de Mayo. In this case, the sons are considered Trinitario, as are their children, while the daughters and their children are considered Yuracaré. This shows that matrimonial residence plays a very important role because it determines the cultural context of socialisation. The case also illustrates a variant in ethnic identification as one of the sons, a leader of the indigenous umbrella organisation, identifies himself as Trinitario-Yuracaré.

Furthermore, when one comes from a certain place, lives in it and complies with the norms established in the community, this gives rise to the identity of “community member”, which defines rights and duties in terms of access to natural resources. In communities where one ethnic group is the majority of the population, ethnic identity plays an important social control role with regard to the performance of duties, or failure to perform them, on the part of those people who, without being members of the ethnic

group, live in the community and are defined as community members.

With regard to the above, a review of ethno-historical data shows, in all the cases in our study, that since the pre-colonial period the ethnic groups have identified themselves with a particular place. In the case of the Trinitario, the chronicles show that this identification was based on the belief that it was "from that place", generally a lake or a body of water, that "God produced their ancestors" (Orellana [1687], 1906: 8; Altamirano [1715], 1979: 30-31). This "location-based" identity is still evident today, in the case of "the Trinitario", "the Ignaciano", "the Loretano", and "the Javierano" – Mojeño peoples of Arawac origin – whose names refer to the Jesuit missionary settlements in Trinidad, San Ignacio, Loreto and San Javier. But in this case, these "location-based" identities are a sphere in which processes of "identity manipulation" (Cardoso, 1976) or "creative management of identity" (Paulson, 1996) are evident, mainly since *mestizos*

and *criollos* came to live in the former missionary settlements. Indigenous, *mestizo* and *criollo* individuals will therefore call themselves "Trinitario", "Ignaciano", "Loretano" and "Javeriano", referring to their birthplace and obscuring ethnic identity. In some cases, this enables indigenous groups to camouflage their ethnic identity, seeking to avoid being stigmatised or discriminated against. But it also means that *mestizos* and *criollos* can deny indigenous rights while preaching a seeming equality. Nevertheless, the very fact that this "identity manipulation" takes place shows the persistence of hierarchical differentiation between ethnic groups.

Finally, the indigenous movement currently organised around the CIDOB (Indigenous Confederation of the Bolivian Lowlands) and CPIB (Beni Indigenous Peoples' Council) addresses its followers and represents them under a "generic indigenous" identity (Ribeiro, 1977). At a certain level, however, the use of the generic term to represent indigenous peoples and address

Inter-Ethnic Marriages  
Ethnic Composition of Families by Community

COMMUNITY	TOTAL FAMILIES	MONO-ETHNIC	INTER-ETHNIC	BROKEN UP	NO INFORMATION	NON-INDIGENOUS
Trinidad Indigenous District	113	59 (52%)	23 (20%)	2 (1.8%)	30 (26%)	1 (0.9%)
Puerto San Lorenzo	25	20 (80%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)		
San Pablo	26	22 (85%)	4 (15%)			
Tres de Mayo	17	14 (82%)	3 (17.6%)	1 (0.4%)		
Sirionó Indigenous Territory	90	70 (78%)	20 (12%)			
Naranjito	26	14 (54%)	9 (46%)			3

Source: own data from community censuses, January 1999.

the state and national society is leading to ethnic specificities being obscured. Beyond the discourse, this implies that certain organisational models are being subtly imposed on ethnic groups that have other ways of organising. Such is the case with the spread of Indigenous Assemblies<sup>3</sup> among the Yuracaré and the belief held by some of their members that if they are not organised in an Assembly they are not organised at all. This perpetuates the attitudes of contempt in some and the loss of self-esteem in others.

As the table shows, in all the communities in our study endogamous marriage within the ethnic group predominates. The communities with a higher number of inter-ethnic families are Naranjito, where the majority of the population is Guarayo, and the Trinidad Indigenous District (TID), where the majority of the population is Trinitario. The situation in Tres de Mayo is unusual in that two of the 14 mono-ethnic families are in fact Trinitario. The communities with the lowest percentage of inter-ethnic

marriages are the Sirionó Indigenous Territory and Puerto San Lorenzo. However, in the case of the Sirionó Indigenous Territory (SIT) a more in-depth analysis needs to be made, as there are references to the fact that in 1984, in Ibiato, there were only 2 non-Sirionó men in a total population of 275 (Stearman, 1987). This would seem to show that there has been a rapid process of including non-Sirionó people in the SIT via inter-ethnic marriage. Thanks to this inclusion of non-Sirionó individuals through marriage, the ethnic group has been able to increase its population – which by 1984 had reached such a critical level that it was feared the group would not be able to reproduce biologically – by assigning group membership to the children of inter-ethnic marriages.

Taking the communities studied as the universe and analysing the inter-ethnic marriages, it was found that, except in the case of the Yuracaré communities, it is mainly women who marry men from other ethnic groups.<sup>4</sup> This would

---

3 Indigenous Assemblies are an organisational structure adopted by indigenous peoples who were brought into Jesuit mission settlements in the 17th and 18th centuries. This form of organisation is still used today and assemblies continue to operate in each community. The Indigenous Assembly can include a number of leadership positions – up to 24 – depending on the size of the population in the settlement or community. The highest authority in the Assembly is usually the *corregidor*.

4 Bearing in mind that most of the TID population identify themselves as Trinitario, 11 Trinitario women married non-Trinitario men while 8 Trinitario men married non-Trinitario women. The remaining four marriages are other combinations that do not include Trinitario individuals.

In Puerto San Lorenzo, the inter-ethnic marriages involve two Trinitario women: one is married to a man who identifies himself as “from San Borja” and the other is married to a “Trinitario-Yuracaré” man, meaning that he in turn is the son of a previous inter-ethnic marriage between a Trinitario woman and a Yuracaré man and identifies himself as “Trinitario-Yuracaré”.

It is therefore the case that in the two Trinitario communities it was mainly women who married or formed long-term relationships with non-Trinitario men.

Of the 4 inter-ethnic marriages in San Pablo, 2 are between Yuracaré men and Trinitario women, one involves a Yuracaré woman and a man who identifies himself as “from Riberalta”, and the last is between a woman who identifies herself as “Santa Cruz Trinitario” and a man who identifies himself as “Yuracaré” but is the son of an inter-ethnic marriage between a Yuracaré man and a Trinitario woman. In this case, then, it is mostly men who marry women from another ethnic group, especially Trinitario women.

The composition of the inter-ethnic marriages in Tres de Mayo is as follows: one inter-ethnic marriage between a Yuracaré man and a Chimane woman and 2 second generation inter-ethnic marriages between “Yuracaré-Trinitario” women and Yuracaré men. In this case, it was again mostly women who entered into inter-ethnic marriage.

reaffirm a trend already observed by Block (1997) in the Reyes missionary settlement in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup> However, in the family trees drawn up by our study, the inter-ethnic marriages do not show a pattern that would enable us to state that there are lineage exchanges between different ethnic groups. What can be observed are lineage exchanges within the same ethnic group, and this is particularly noticeable in the case of the Yuracaré.

The figures on the frequency of inter-ethnic marriage are relative and probably conservative because they do not take into account people who have left the community. It is clear that a large number of people, especially women, have migrated away from their communities and married men from other ethnic groups, and this is one of the reasons why they have not returned to their communities.

Historical inquiry into inter-ethnic marriages shows that they have taken place in different periods. During the period of the mission settlements, which took place at different times

with each ethnic group,<sup>6</sup> marriages of this type were the result of a strategy used by the missionaries to settle the indigenous peoples who were still scattered in the forest. They encouraged marriage to members of the groups that had been brought into settlements earlier. Another aim was to counteract the fall in population caused by epidemics. In this way, the Trinitario were used in the attempts to settle the Yuracaré, the Chiquitano were used to settle the Guarayo, and the latter to settle the Sirionó. As a result of this process there is a clear ethnic and hierarchical differentiation between the ethnic groups. This is expressed in representations based on colonial-style stereotypes that place ethnic groups on a bipolar continuum that runs from those considered “the most civilised”, is the first to be brought into settlements, to “the most savage”, ie the last to be brought into settlements. These representations not only exist in the minds of the ‘whites’ (*criollos* and *mestizos*), who consider themselves to be at the top of the inter-ethnic hierarchy. They have also been internalised by the

Of the inter-ethnic marriages in the Sirionó Indigenous Territory, 12 involve Sirionó women married to non-Sirionó men, and 8 involve Sirionó men married to non-Sirionó women. In this case, which is similar to that of the Trinitario, it is again mostly women who have married or formed a long-term relationship with men of other ethnic groups.

In Naranjito there are 26 nuclear families: 14 are mono-ethnic Guarayo marriages, 9 are inter-ethnic marriages and 3 are marriages considered non-indigenous. Of the inter-ethnic marriages, 6 involve Guarayo women married to non-Guarayo men, and 3 involve Guarayo men. Of the 6 women, 4 married non-indigenous men and 2 married Mojeño-Ignaciano men.

- 5 “As well as the hierarchical divisions in Reyes, in the records of individuals and their family ties the census shows that there were precise kinship networks operating in the settlement. Of the 279 surnames mentioned in the document, 114 (42%) appear in more than one family unit. In the town, names are repeated more frequently (78%) in the same ethnic or linguistic group. In 82% of cases on the woman's side, a surname crosses linguistic barriers. As the divisions represented the main indigenous groups in the settlement, these features of the community of surnames reflect, on the one hand, the persistence of a strong ethnic identification in the settlement and, on the other, the persistence of the pre-settlement practice of exchanging women between lineages” (page 137).
- 6 The Mojeño were brought into settlements by the Jesuits early on, between the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Although some Guarayo were brought into the Mojos and Chiquitos missions during the same period, the bulk of their population came under the settlement regime between 1827 and 1870, when the missions were run by the Franciscan order. In the case of the Yuracaré, there were successive attempts to bring them into settlements between 1800 and 1870, mainly by the Franciscans, but it was barely possible to stabilise the settlements among this group. Meanwhile, the Sirionó were only brought into settlements at the end of the 1920s, both by the Franciscans in the Guarayos settlements and by the state in the Casarabe indigenous school, and finally in Ibiato by the Four Square Evangelical Church.

ethnic groups themselves, as shown by the value scales applied during the study.

Several of the life histories recorded show that the owners of agroindustrial and cattle farming businesses frequently imposed or had an influence on inter-ethnic marriage.

The messianic movements, especially those that took place in the 1950s, led the Trinitario far away from their territorial centre on the banks of the Mamoré river, and gave rise to encounters with scattered forest groups, including the Yuracaré. This, together with the belief that the forest groups know where the Promised Land is to be found, has led to inter-ethnic marriages between Trinitario women and Yuracaré men.

The spread of rural schooling, and especially the condition imposed by the state to the effect that there have to be at least 20 children in a community before a teacher can be allocated, has led parents to carry out recruitment campaigns in the scattered settlements in their area. Given that the Trinitario have generally had a relatively more concentrated pattern of settlement than the Yuracaré, they have been the ones to obtain a teacher first, by recruiting children from Yuracaré settlements in the surrounding area. This recruitment, together with the spread of Spanish in rural schools, has meant greater inter-ethnic proximity that has resulted in marriages. Finally, migration, especially to urban areas in search of work, has also led to inter-ethnic marriage.

Since the pre-colonial period, differences in the distribution of natural resources and relatively specialised land use by the ethnic groups in accordance with specific ecosystems led to inter-ethnic exchanges of certain resources, which intensified when the communities became involved in the market. However, it is also clear that the exchange of resources between those communities that were drawn into the system earlier and those with fewer advantages is unequal.

This type of unequal exchange takes place between the Trinitario community of Puerto San Lorenzo and the predominantly Yuracaré community of Tres de Mayo. The former is characterised by being a relatively concentrated settlement, with a majority Trinitario population and more frequent commercial contact with Trinidad and neighbouring estates. In contrast, Tres de Mayo is a predominantly Yuracaré community which only recently started to become more concentrated. At the time of the study, supplies of manufactured goods still came mainly from Puerto San Lorenzo. Given these characteristics, the exchange relationship both encourages inter-ethnic marriage by intensifying contact, and inhibits it because of the growing awareness among the Yuracaré that they are at a disadvantage in their relations with the Trinitario.

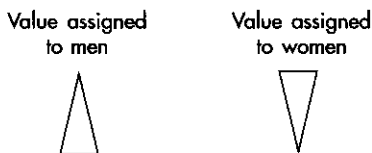
As far as inter-ethnic marriages are concerned, the colonial hierarchical structure we referred earlier to gives rise to two opposing forces: one that encourages them by motivating individuals from the subalternised groups to seek social ascent through marriage, and another that inhibits them precisely because of the "continuum of contempt" that exists between the ethnic groups (Rivera, 1996). Due to this structure, "social ascent" through marriage is fraught with conflict and certainly does not translate into linear and unobstructed social mobility processes.

## INTER-GENDER AND INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

The gender situation within the ethnic groups varies depending, mainly, on kinship systems, the division of labour and involvement in the market. These factors in turn are expressed in an inter-gender and inter-ethnic value system. It was found that women are more highly valued in the groups at the top of the inter-ethnic hierarchy, while

women who belong to the less valued groups are themselves less highly valued.

The following diagram shows these inter-ethnic and inter-gender value scales:<sup>7</sup>



Furthermore, the relationship between women's degree of autonomy and the value placed on women does not appear to be linear. On the contrary, it was found that women are highly valued both in ethnic groups where they have a high degree of autonomy, as in the case of the Sirionó, and also in ethnic groups where women have less autonomy, as in the case of the Guarayo.

The division of labour varies significantly between the communities in our study and is an expression of certain differences in gender relations. In all the communities the tasks done exclusively by women are cooking, washing clothes and making chicha; girls, and to a lesser extent boys, are responsible for fetching water. Yuracaré women in San Pablo and Tres de Mayo

are responsible for fetching firewood, which is not the case in the other communities. Also, once the plot of land has been cleared, these women spend more time cultivating it and providing the household with manioc and plantain, as do the Guarayo women. Yuracaré and Sirionó women take part in hunting expeditions, carrying the game and collecting forest fruit.

Trinitario women, on the other hand, devote more time to weaving with fibres and cotton. It used to be their responsibility to make clothes for their husband and children. The introduction of manufactured clothes and fibres, however, has led to a reduction in the cotton crops that were exclusively women's responsibility in the past. Spinning is done only by older women, while weaving is no longer a task done by all women. Despite this, over the last few years there has been a revival in weaving, mainly to make bags, hammocks and bedspreads. The first two items are made both for family use and for sale, while bedspreads are for domestic use.

In all cases, the tasks done exclusively by men are hunting, felling trees to clear the land and carpentry. One feature that distinguishes the Guarayo is the use of weighted traps for hunting. Although hunting is the men's responsibility, children and young men and women also take part in checking the traps, although adult women are banned from this activity because of the belief that they bring bad luck.

Although the whole family participates in the building of homes and the planting and harvesting of annual crops such as rice and maize (and in the case of the Guarayo communal work days are organised involving members of the

<sup>7</sup> This information was obtained by addressing the following question to a sample of 195 people, balanced by sex and age, from the six communities in the study: "If you were not (name of their own ethnic group), would you prefer to be (a list of ethnic groups including the ones in our study but excluding their own)?" Another question in the same survey asked how they would describe men and women from different ethnic groups.



extended family and other families), the responsibility for these tasks lies with the men.

Fishing is an activity carried out almost exclusively by adult and older men and boys among the Trinitario, while among the Yuracaré, Guarayo and Sirionó women are also involved in fishing, although men devote more time to it.

A particularly important activity among the Sirionó is the collection of wild honey to be marketed, and both men and women are involved in gathering and selling. Likewise, the capture of turtles, which is carried out regularly and collectively in the Cocharcas river, represents an important social activity in which men and women participate.

With regard to child care, the greater responsibility falls to women in all cases while the children are at an early age. When they are older the responsibility is divided so that men are responsible for socialising and teaching boys while women are responsible for girls. Among the Guarayo the grandparents play an important role, more so than in the other groups. This is reinforced by myths, showing the high social value attached to them.

The sale of labour is another important element in the survival strategies of these ethnic groups. In the set of activities related to the market among the Sirionó, it is noteworthy that both men and women travel regularly to work on the agricultural estates near the SIT. Among the Trinitario, women often work together with their husbands on the estates, especially during the first years of marriage and before the children start going to school. Later they move back to their community and from then on it will mainly be the man who takes seasonal work on these estates. Among the Yuracaré and Guarayo in the communities involved in the study, in contrast, seasonal work outside the community is mainly done by the men. But in all cases a large number

of young men and women migrate in search of work and do not come back. Bearing in mind parents' control over daughters, particularly noticeable among the Guarayo of Naranjito, girls consider leaving the community to go to work as an achievement. It represents a sort of break with the norms that generally results in an inter-ethnic marriage.

Of the rural communities, Naranjito is the only one with an internal labour market. This is based on the presence of non-indigenous people in the community, who employ young women and girls as childminders.

The case of the Trinitario in the Indigenous District is quite different from the others because they live in the town. The most important income-generating activity, in a context of more or less widespread commercialisation, is the sale of labour. Here the gender division in the Trinidad labour market can be seen clearly: men are mostly employed in the building trade, drive motorbike taxis or work in masonry and carpentry workshops, while women are domestic workers or wash clothes. Men are paid higher wages than women. Some men and women have their own small businesses: small carpentry workshops are run by men, while the sale of food, sweets and soft drinks is usually managed by women. As with their rural counterparts in Puerto San Lorenzo, it is mainly the women who make handicrafts to sell. This activity has been promoted by the Moxos Handicrafts Centre, an institution supported initially by CIDDEBENI and currently run by indigenous organisations. Meanwhile, the weight of reproductive activities falls mainly on women, especially in terms of childcare. This is significantly different to the situation in rural areas where, as mentioned above, there is also a gender division.

It is clear that in inter-ethnic marriages between Trinitario women – whose obligations

do not include collecting firewood or working in the fields to produce manioc and plantain, and who do not take part in hunting and gathering expeditions or have to carry the results – and Yuracaré men, even when they are living in predominantly Yuracaré settlements, the men will have to change their traditional activities and adapt to the Trinitario system. This does not imply criticism of the Yuracaré men by the members of their own community so much as criticism of the Trinitario women, who are considered to be lazy. Here it can be seen that differences in the division of labour inhibit inter-ethnic marriage.

For their part, Trinitario women will criticise Yuracaré women for the way in which they make chicha: "they chew up manioc and don't boil it". It is on the basis of this aspect that a mechanism for stigmatising the Yuracaré has been constructed. They, however, in contrast to the Guarayo, refuse to change the way they make chicha as it represents the basis of their social cohesion system. This is another aspect that inhibits inter-ethnic exchanges through marriage.

In general it was found that in the case of the Trinitario and Guarayo, both in Puerto San Lorenzo and in Naranjito, the division of labour between men and women is complementary. This is because the women devote more time to producing by-products, in contrast to the Yuracaré and Sirionó communities, where women also participate in hunting and gathering expeditions and, in the case of the Sirionó, in the seasonal work on cattle ranching estates as well. This difference implies that, in the case of the Trinitario and Guarayo, while they are away the

men are obliged to take on activities considered exclusively women's work, such as cooking and washing clothes, in contrast to the Yuracaré and especially the Sirionó, among whom these tasks are exclusively women's work.

In order to make a more in-depth analysis of the gender situation, two economic spheres were identified in each community (Barth, 1974)<sup>8</sup>: the first involves the market and the second reciprocity. For each of these spheres we asked the man and the woman in 10 family units in each community separately which was the most important product for the market in their family economy, and which was the most important product for inviting or thanking relatives and friends. Taking the products identified as the basis, we applied the Benefit Flow Analysis technique.<sup>9</sup> The results are shown in the table below.

By correlating kinship features with the division of labour and involvement in the market, certain tendencies can be observed with regard to the gender situation in the communities studied.

The case of the Trinitario shows two relatively different situations. Firstly there is the case of the Puerto San Lorenzo community where, despite a predominance of residence in the man's home, there is a very marked and complementary division of labour. Here, women's work results in products that are valued by both men and women, and women have a significant degree of control both over the production process and over marketing. The situation is somewhat different in the TID where, although residence is still in the man's home and there is also a very marked and complementary division of labour,

8 We used Barth's (1974) differentiation of economic spheres as it enabled us to distinguish the presence of mercantile relations as well as reciprocity in each economic system, maintaining its unity. We also drew on Stocks' (1984) analysis of the impact of market involvement on gender relations in indigenous communities in the Peruvian forest.

9 This involved asking the following questions about each product: How is it used? Who decides how it is used? Who puts it to use? If it is sold, what is the money used for? And finally, who decides how the money is used?

## Value Assigned to Products by Economic Sphere

COMMUNITY	PRODUCTS PRIORITISED IN THE RECIPROCITY SPHERE		PRODUCTS PRIORITISED IN THE MARKET SPHERE	
	By men	By women	By men	By women
Puerto San Lorenzo	Bushmeat	Bushmeat Chicha	Hens	Hens Handicrafts
Trinidad Indigenous District			Handicrafts Sale of labour	Sale of labour Handicrafts
San Pablo	Bushmeat Chicha	Chicha and Bushmeat	Chocolate Rice Maize	Chocolate Rice Maize
Tres de Mayo	Chicha Bushmeat	Chicha Manioc	Rice Oranges	Rice Oranges
Sirionó Indigenous Territory	Bushmeat	Bushmeat	Honey	Honey
Naranjito	Rice Meat	Rice Meat	Fruit Firewood Coal Palm hearts Labour	Fruit Firewood Coal Palm hearts Labour

Source: own data from Benefit Flow Analysis: 1999.

involvement in the market is based on the sale of labour in a labour market segmented by gender and which discriminates against women. This means that both men and women value women's contribution less. Here, the situation of women is less advantageous than in Puerto San Lorenzo. This latter feature is similar to that of Naranjito, although there are differences in the types of product sold.

In contrast, in the case of the Yuracaré in the communities of San Pablo and Tres de Mayo residence tends to be in the man's home but the way in which labour is divided implies a significant degree of autonomy as far as men's and women's livelihoods are concerned. However, involvement in the market is based on goods produced by men, who also control both production processes and marketing. This means that women's situation is less secure than in the communities of other ethnic groups.

In the case of the Sirionó residence is generally in the woman's home, in the division of labour women work together with men, and market involvement is based on honey which is produced and marketed by both women and men. This shows that women's situation is considerably better than in the other groups.

These findings corroborate those of Stock (1984), who made a comparison between the Candoshi, the Cocamilla and the Shipibo of the Peruvian Amazon in terms of the position of women, attempting to show that women's prestige and autonomy are related to their control over the production and distribution of internally and externally valued resources, as in the case of the Trinitario of Puerto San Lorenzo and the Sirionó of the SIT.

To back up these findings, we studied the distribution of rest time between men and women. We found that the only case in which

this distribution is equal is among the Sirionó, while in the other groups, even taking age differences into account, the men have more rest time than the women.

## ETHNIC GROUP REPRODUCTION

The study of inter-ethnic marriages shows that they are an ethnic group reproduction mechanism, providing that certain prior conditions are in place. Among these conditions are that the included "others" are a minority in the community, that those included accept and practise the established norms, and that the fundamental values (which vary between the ethnic groups) maintain their vitality.

Although the research carried out in just six communities represents an advance in the study of this issue, it does not exhaust the universe of possibilities, which would include all ethnic groups. This suggests that the greater or lesser possibility of ethnic group reproduction is related to the greater or lesser flexibility in their boundaries or, in other words, the greater or lesser willingness to include members of other groups and socialise the children of these individuals in terms of the group's fundamental values. This greater or lesser possibility of reproduction is related in turn to the level of tolerance in the wider society in terms of acceptance of the ethnic groups' fundamental values. In other words, if the wider or national society accepts, protects and esteems the ethnic groups' fundamental values, their reproduction will be made easier. However, it is clear that the wider society's tolerance is limited to those elements closest and most similar to its own, and does not include the more distant elements. It seems it is easier to tolerate the festive, Catholic, "well organised", settled Trinitario who live in a concentrated community than the Yuracaré who live in scattered settlements, have

greater demographic mobility, celebrate by sharing chicha made of "chewed manioc", mostly speak their own language and much less Spanish, and have had less access to schooling. The wider context will therefore be more favourable to the reproduction of the Trinitario, who are relatively closer to western models of behaviour, than that of the Yuracaré.

Historical analysis shows, however, that the inclusion of members of other ethnic groups through marriage has certain limits. Once these are crossed it gives rise to processes of ethnogenesis or the emergence of a new ethnic group. The most illustrative case is that of the Mojeño who, following the expulsion of the Jesuits, formed four clearly different ethnic identities: the Trinitario, the Ignaciano, the Loretano and the Javeriano. These processes contradict evolutionist and linear views of ethnic group reproduction, which postulate that the assimilation of indigenous societies into the national society constitutes the final stage in a sort of naturally established order, and would end fatefully in these societies melting into the wider society (Moreno [1887], 1973).

The chronicle of a traveller in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Gibbon [1852], 1993) describes how elite Loretano families refused to accept inter-ethnic marriages between their members – men and women – and the recently arrived 'whites'. Likewise, observations in the community of Puerto San Lorenzo and the family trees drawn up for this study provide evidence that the Trinitario elites are quite conservative about inter-ethnic marriage. These elites are currently distinguished by their ownership of cattle or their learning, inherited from the Jesuits. It is therefore likely that this conservative attitude to inter-ethnic marriage contributes in certain social nuclei to the reproduction of ethnic groups with a not inconsiderable internal social differentiation.

Critical events brought about consciously or unconsciously by the ethnic groups themselves, or by the state and national society, become complex mechanisms for ethnic group reproduction. Examples of such events are the 1990 Indigenous March for Territory and Dignity, which had a positive impact on self-esteem, particularly among the Sirionó, and the cultural revival processes that take place through the messianic searches for the Promised Land among the Trinitario (Lehm, 1999).

Finally, except in the case of the Trinidad Indigenous District, the study shows that the rural communities studied are dependent on the natural resources in their environment, especially for basic needs like housing and food. The case of Naranjito shows that the process of deterioration in natural resources has been heavily influenced by the inappropriate land tenure system. This was brought about by the Agrarian Reform process of 1953, which awarded titles to plots of land that are far too small. Added to this is the community's location in an island of forest surrounded by savannah land, title to which was awarded to third parties. Analysis of the Naranjito economic system shows that it is thanks to the kinship networks and the development of a sophisticated system of cooperative labour that the community has managed to mitigate, to a certain extent, the negative impact of the deterioration of their natural resources on their reproduction process as a community. But at the same time these cooperative labour systems have become one of the fundamental values in their ethnic identity, enabling reproduction. Even so, it is clear that these adaptive processes have their limits. This is why the Guarayo of Naranjito have now felt it necessary to ask the state for land once again.

The inhabitants of the Trinidad Indigenous District, in contrast, undergo a process of

reducing their dependence on rural natural resources leading to a stronger dependence on the market, according to when they migrated to the town. Those family units that have migrated most recently maintain links with relatives in rural communities who, to some extent, will provide them with agricultural produce and natural resources. On the other hand, those family units who migrated earlier are almost totally dependent on the market. This transition process is surprisingly swift. It has implications for ethnic group reproduction, because it also has an impact on the inter- and intra-family reciprocity systems, which tend to be replaced by more mercantile relations. While these reciprocity networks have a great deal of vitality in the rural communities and are an important ethnic group reproduction mechanism, in the town this function is performed instead by the system of festivities, which take place more frequently and are more lavish than in the rural areas.

## DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS

Population data are undoubtedly relevant to ethnic group reproduction. We therefore undertook an analysis of demographic aspects, although they only refer to a few of the communities that belong to the different ethnic groups we studied.

The communities studied show a significant correlation between inter-ethnic marriages and population stability or growth trends. This is associated with the ethnic group being more disposed to have inter-ethnic contact, and this is especially noticeable among the Guarayo; the opposite is the case with the Yuracaré. The former have the clearest indicators of population growth, while among the latter the indicators provide evidence of a situation that throws doubt on the



## Childbirth and Fertility Indicators

INDICATOR	TID	PTO SAN LORENZO	SAN PABLO	3 DE MAYO	SIT	NARANJITO
Overall birth rate	40	52	42	19	49	67
Overall fertility rate	204	412	195	118	308	454
Average age at first union	16.5	14.5	16.7	15.7	15.5	16.0
Average number of pregnancies	5	7	5	6	5	6
Average number of children born alive	4	6	4	5	4	6
% of children born alive who were boys	53.7	54.2	50.2	50.4	54.8	48.0
% of children born alive who were girls	46.3	45.8	49.8	49.6	45.2	52.0
% of children born who survived	73.3	77.8	73.1	70.4	76.7	73.2
% of children born who are boys now alive	39.8	39.2	37.6	39.1	54.3	34.0
% of children born who are girls now alive	33.5	38.6	35.6	31.3	45.7	39.2

Source: own data from community censuses, 1999, and survey of women over the age of 12, 1999.

stability of their population, as it is tending to decline.

The demographic structure in the ethnic groups and communities studied shows that the male population is higher than the female. In the overall departmental and national data the situation is the opposite.<sup>10</sup> Historical review of the population of the groups studied shows that the male population was proportionately higher in almost all periods, and it was only at times of marked population growth – as in the case of the Trinitario at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Block, 1997) – that the female population was in the majority. This would seem to indicate

instability in population growth among the indigenous peoples studied. The proportionately larger male population is the result of more boys being born and is not attributable to higher female mortality or migration. Neither can it be explained by cultural practices that favour the survival of sons.

All the communities in the study have high rates of mortality. However, infant mortality among the Yuracaré is higher than in the other groups. Likewise, the causes of death recorded in a wide range of sources – consulted with regard to deaths of children born to women over the age of 12 by community – were as follows:

<sup>10</sup> According to the 1992 census, Beni department had a total population of 276,174, of whom 142,627 (51.5%) were women and 133,547 (48.4%) were men (National Institute of Statistics, 1993).

## Most Frequent Causes of Death by Community

COMMUNITY	MOST FREQUENT CAUSES OF DEATH
Trinidad Indigenous District	Lockjaw or tetanus, unknown diseases, diarrhoea and respiratory diseases
Puerto San Lorenzo	Witchcraft, diarrhoea, lockjaw or tetanus
San Pablo del Isiboro	Diarrhoea, fever, unknown diseases, lockjaw or tetanus
Tres de Mayo	Fever, lockjaw or tetanus, diarrhoea, witchcraft
Sirionó Indigenous Territory	Diarrhoea, lockjaw or tetanus, respiratory diseases
Naranjito	Respiratory diseases, eruptive diseases, lockjaw or tetanus

It is alarming that the most frequently mentioned causes of death are diseases that can be prevented by improving health services.

Analysis of the data on migration shows that there is a strong tendency to migrate to urban centres such as Trinidad and Santa Cruz, particularly among the Trinitario of Puerto San Lorenzo and the Sirionó of the SIT. In the case of Naranjito it was found that there is a sort of strategy of dual residence in the rural community and in Trinidad. The communities with the lowest rates of migration from the rural community to urban centres are the Yuracaré of San Pablo and Tres de Mayo. Their temporary migration patterns involve going to other rural areas in their traditional territory, such as the Chapare river.

The demographic factor that has the most impact on inter-ethnic marriage is migration. This not only involves the millenarian migrations in the Search for the Promised Land, but also migration in search of access to services such as education and health, and sources of employment. Migration patterns are somewhat different for men and women. Although more men migrate from their rural communities, they tend to return after a time. In contrast, although fewer women migrate, they tend to stay in towns such as Trinidad and move from there to Santa

Cruz. Migration by women is directly associated with inter-ethnic marriage and conflicts with the norms and values of their ethnic groups, which are mainly endogamous but more permissive with sons in terms of their choice of wife. In almost all cases, except that of the Yuracaré, inter-ethnic marriages are therefore more frequent among women than among men. The nature of the rupture or transgression involved in migration by women is demonstrated by the fact that it is mainly daughters whose whereabouts are unknown to their mothers.

### SITUATION OF THE YURACARÉ OF SAN PABLO AND TRES DE MAYO

The study found that the Yuracaré communities are in a highly vulnerable situation. This vulnerability is expressed in the population data series from different years (although these data are less reliable than those on the other ethnic groups). These show that the population is stagnant; the demographic structure has an age-group pyramid that is smaller at the base (the population in the 0-4 age group is smaller than that of the 5-9 age group); infant mortality rates, which are high in all the communities studied, are even higher in the Yuracaré communities;

there are fewer individuals over the age of 65 than in the communities belonging to the other ethnic groups; the birth rate is lower in these rural communities than in those of the other ethnic groups; the overall fertility rate is lower and the percentage of surviving children is smaller.

This situation seems to be reflected in the Yuracaré people's level of self-esteem. This was measured by asking a representative sample balanced by sex and age to rate their own self-esteem and give a rating for the other ethnic groups. The results showed high ratings for the others, particularly the 'whites', and very low ratings for themselves.

Finally, when the interviewees were asked about the aspects that make peoples different from one another, both the Trinitario and the Yuracaré mentioned the way of organising festivities and the system of organisation, while religion was mentioned specifically by the Trinitario. These interview results were compared with observed practices. The comparison showed that, while the Trinitario measure others by means of these values, which are their own attributes and the basis for

reaffirming themselves as a group and therefore increasing their self-esteem, the aspects mentioned by the Yuracaré are based on comparing themselves with the Trinitario. This indicates that a sort of self-negation is taking place here, which would seem to imply a loss of self-esteem.

The most notable difference between the aspects mentioned by the Trinitario and the Yuracaré is that the latter reaffirm themselves by speaking their own language. The use of their language is in fact widespread in all age groups. But this also leads them to be much more selective in terms of including inter-ethnic marriages and the children of these marriages. In the Trinitario community the socialisation process places less emphasis on children speaking the Trinitario language, and therefore the process of inclusion for the child of an inter-ethnic marriage is made easier. In the case of the Yuracaré, in contrast, whether the child of an inter-ethnic marriage does or does not speak the Yuracaré language represents a substantial difference, and the process of his or her inclusion in the ethnic group will be more demanding.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Altamirano, Diego Francisco

1979 *Historia de la misión de los Mojos C.A. 1715*.

Instituto Boliviano de Cultura. La Paz: Collection: José Agustín Palacios Library.

Barth, Fredrik

1974 "Esferas económicas en Darfur". In: Firth, R. (comp.). *Temas de antropología económica*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

1976 *Los grupos étnicos y sus fronteras*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Block, David

1997 *La cultura reduccional de los llanos de Mojos*. Sucre: Historia Boliviana.

Brito Sandóval, Sonia

1998 *Mujeres indígenas protagonistas de la historia*. La Paz: Tijaraipa.

Cardoso de Oliveira, Roberto

1976 *Identidades, etnia y estructura social*. Sao Paulo: Livraria Pineira Editora.

De la Cadena, Marisol

1997 "Las mujeres son más indias". In: *Espejos y travestis. Antropología y mujer en los 90*. Isis Internacional.

Gibbon, Lardner

1993 *Exploración del Valle del Amazonas*. Vol II circa 1852. Monumenta Amazonica. Quito: Ceta – Abya-Yala – IIAAP.



González Montes, Soledad  
1993 "Hacia una antropología de las relaciones de género en América Latina". In: *Mujeres y relaciones de género en la antropología latinoamericana*. Mexico: El Colegio de México.

Grupo Temático de Género  
1997 *A propósito del género 1: propuesta metodológica*. Lima.

Jones, James  
1980 *Conflict between Whites and Indians on the Llanos de Moxos, Beni Department: a Case Study in Development from the Cattle Regions of the Bolivian Oriente*. PhD thesis. University of Florida (unpublished).

Lagarde, Marcela  
1993 *Los cautiverios de las mujeres: madresposas, monjas, putas, presas y locas*. Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de México.

Lehm, Zulema  
1996 "El saber y el poder en la sociedad Mojeña: aproximación desde una perspectiva de género". In: Rivera, Silvia (comp.). *Ser mujer indígena, chola o birlocha en la Bolivia postcolonial de los años 90*. La Paz: Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano. Secretaría Nacional de Asuntos Etnicos, de Género y Generacionales. Subsecretaría de Asuntos de Género.  
1999 *Milenarismo y movimientos sociales en la Amazonía Boliviana. La búsqueda de la Loma Santa y la Marcha Indígena por el Territorio y la Dignidad*. CIDDEBENI, Oxfam America, APCOB.

Mead, Margaret  
1935 *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*. New York: W. Morrow.

Moreno, Gabriel René  
1973 *Catálogo del Archivo de Mojos y Chiquitos [1887]*. La Paz: Ed. Juventud.

Orellana, Antonio de  
1906 "Carra del Padre... Sobre el Origen de las Misiones de Mojos, 18 de Octubre cerca 1687". In: Maurtua. *Juicio de límites entre el Perú y Bolivia*. Vol. 10. Printed by the children of M.G. Hernández.

Paulson, Susan  
1996 "Familias que no 'conjugan' e identidades que no conjugan: la vida en Mizque desafía nuestras categorías". In: Rivera, Silvia (comp.). *Ser mujer indígena, chola o birlocha en la Bolivia postcolonial de los años 90*.

Paz, Zarella  
1991 *Hombres de río, hombres de camino: relaciones interétnicas en las nacientes del Río Mamoré*. Unpublished graduation thesis. Cochabamba: Universidad Mayor de San Simón.

Ribeiro, Darcy  
1977 *Fronteras indígenas de la civilización*. Fourth edition. Mexico: Siglo XXI.

Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia  
1996 *Ser mujer indígena, chola o birlocha en la Bolivia postcolonial de los años 90*. La Paz: Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano. Secretaría Nacional de Asuntos Etnicos, de Género y Generacionales. Subsecretaría de Asuntos de Género.

Rubin, Gayle  
1996 "El tráfico de mujeres: notas sobre la 'economía política' del sexo". In: Lamas, M. (comp.). *El género: la construcción cultural de la diferencia sexual*. Grupo Editorial Miguel Ángel Porrúa. Programa Universitario de Estudios de Género.

Stocks, Kathleen and Anthony  
1984 "Status de la mujer y cambio por aculturación: casos del Alto Amazonas". In: *Amazonía Peruana* 10. Lima: Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica.

Stearman, Allyn  
1987 *No Longer Nomads: The Siriono Revisited*. University of Central Florida. Boston: Hamilton Press.

Vargas, Miriam  
1994 *Organización política y práctica socioeconómica de los juracaré, movima en el Territorio Indígena Multiétnico*. Trinidad-Beni: CIDDEBENI.

Zajechowski, Kelly  
1989 *Cultural and Economic Changes in Three Trinitario Communities in the Face of Increasing Colonization in the Isiboro Secure National Park*. Lesley College Graduate School.

# APPENDIX

COMMUNITY	MAJORITY ETHNIC GROUP	TYPE OF ECOSYSTEM	ACCESS TO THE MARKET	Nº OF FAMILIES / Nº OF INHABITANTS
Naranjito	Guarayo	Alluvial plain crossed by rivers	Frequent. Distance to Trinidad: 30km on unpaved road	30 nuclear families 152 inhabitants
Sirionó Territory <sup>11</sup>	Sirionó	Alluvial plain crossed by rivers	Frequent. Distance to Trinidad: 65km on unpaved road	110 nuclear families 427 inhabitants
San Pablo del Isiboro	Yuracaré	Alluvial plain on the banks of the Isiboro river	Relatively frequent. Access to Trinidad only by river, but frequent river transport between Puerto Villarroel and Trinidad	33 nuclear families 192 inhabitants
Tres de Mayo	Yuracaré	High forest on the riverbank	Infrequent. Access to Trinidad only by river with infrequent river transport	22 nuclear families 103 inhabitants
Puerto San Lorenzo	Trinitario	Alluvial plain on the banks of the Sécuré river	Relatively frequent. Access to Trinidad only by river. River transport according to demand. Becoming a commercial link between Trinidad and Alto Sécuré communities	25 nuclear families 134 inhabitants
Trinidad Indigenous District	Trinitario	Alluvial plain regularly flooded by the Ibare and Mamoré rivers	Very frequent. Located in the town.	113 nuclear families 498 inhabitants

<sup>11</sup> When the research started there was only one community in the Sirionó Indigenous Territory, called Ibiato. While the study was being carried out, this community divided, giving rise to a second called Nguiray. The study took into account the population of both communities.



*Tito Kuramoto*



“NOW MY DAUGHTER IS ALONE”  
**Rethinking Violence and Kinship  
in the Bolivian Andes<sup>1</sup>**

**Krista E. Van Vleet<sup>2</sup>**

**In this article, the author presents some of the results of her research in the rural Andean community of Sullk'ata. This valuable information broadens the analysis of the multiple contexts in which violence takes place.**

As Michelle Rosaldo (1980: 408-9) pointed out more than twenty years ago, “warmth and altruism are rarely the unique prerogatives of close coresident kin,” yet too often scholars assume to “know just what...it means to be a parent, sibling, spouse, or child.” She challenged anthropologists and feminists alike to closely examine the intricacies of kinship relationships, not only the intimacies but the hierarchies as well, and to “ask how varying relationships within the home might influence relationships outside it”. Inspired by her

words as well as those of the women of the highland Andean region of Sullk'ata, in Chayanta province in the department of Potosí, Bolivia,<sup>3</sup> I trace kinship relationships through various events of domestic violence that occurred during my field research in 1995 and 1996. Almost every instance of physical abuse that I know about from that period of eighteen months involves affines, or in-laws: violence erupted between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, husbands and wives, and sisters-in-law. The violence between husbands

- 
- 1 This article was published in *T'inkazos* 12, June 2002. The complete version in English was published in *American Ethnologist* 29(3), August 2002. *T'inkazos* is grateful to the American Anthropological Association for having granted permission to publish this version in English, which corresponds to the edited Spanish translation published in *T'inkazos* 12.
  - 2 Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Bowdoin College, 7000, College Station, Brunswick, ME 04011. This article is based on research conducted in Bolivia during 1995 and 1996 that was funded by a Fulbright-Hays Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship and a University of Michigan Rackham Thesis Grant, both of which are gratefully acknowledged. I have benefited from comments on earlier versions of this paper offered by Susan Bell, Coralynn Davis, Sarah Dickey, Julie Hastings, Oren Kosansky, Diane Lakein, Bruce Mannheim, Nancy Riley and the 1998 “Community of Scholars” Fellows at the University of Michigan Institute for Research on Women and Gender.
  - 3 Within recent memory, some community members spoke Aymara, in addition to Quechua. Now, however, only a handful of elderly community members are bilingual in these indigenous languages. Currently, the overwhelming preference is to speak Quechua within the community; however, Sullk'atas are increasingly bilingual in Spanish and Quechua due to public education and migration. See Howard-Malverde (1995) for a discussion of the relationship of these three languages in the region of Chayanta, Bolivia.

and wives is more readily acknowledged, and more frequent, than violence among women affines in Sullk'ata. However, many women in Sullk'ata recount stories of the violence of their mothers-in-law, and unequal relations of power between women affines have also been acknowledged in other parts of the Andes (de la Cadena, 1991, 1997; Harvey, 1993, 1994; Weismantel, 1988). Although violence between spouses in the Andes has been closely examined (Harris, 1994; Harvey, 1994), little attention has been directed to the violence among women affines or the overlapping discourses that sustain asymmetries of power among affines, both women and men (but see Harvey, 1994).<sup>4</sup>

I explore relationships of intimacy and power among affines in order to expand understandings of both domestic violence and kinship in Sullk'ata, and more generally. Analyzing domestic violence in terms of the complexities of kinship, particularly affinal, relationships, illuminates the ways that moments of violence are shaped by multiple aspects of identity and power.<sup>5</sup>

In societies organized by kinship, marriage is an arena in which relationships of inequality, such as sexuality, ethnicity, gender, age, and class, mutually constitute each other (see, for example, de la Cadena, 1991, 1997). Affinity is also itself

a category of identity and trajectory of power that influences relationships among variously positioned individuals and groups, not only husbands and wives. I explore how discourses and practices of relatedness and conflict among husbands and wives, mothers- and daughters-in-law, and sisters-in-law in Sullk'ata unevenly overlay each other, creating a context in which violence occurs and is normalized. My discussion contributes to scholarship on domestic violence that recognizes the significance of unequal relationships of power to violence, simultaneously incorporating gender as a category of power and extending analysis beyond the differences between men and women.<sup>6</sup> Integrating affinity into an analysis of domestic violence in Sullk'ata demonstrates the ways that relationships of power and violence may stretch beyond any singular household, thereby reconfiguring the boundaries of 'the domestic' and domestic violence.

Conversely, incorporating domestic violence into a discussion of kinship relationships reinvigorates anthropological interpretations of kinship and gender in the region by bringing attention to the modes of interaction and expectations among kin and the negotiation of power asymmetries in relationships. The material and emotional ways that individuals are

4 Harris (1994) emphasizes the symbolic as well as material foundations for domestic violence between spouses, exploring gender and masculinity as well as diverse contexts and types of violence in the Andes. Harvey (1994) argues that the relationship of affinity, in addition to sexual difference, is significant to violence between spouses. For discussions of violence in Andean courtship practices and between married partners, also see: Allen (1988), Bolin (1998), Bolton and Mayer (1977), Cereceda (1978), Daza (1983), Harris (1978, 1994), Hopkins (1982), Millones and Pratt (1980), Platt (1986), Starn (1999).

5 Feminist scholars have long emphasized that power hierarchies are experienced along multiple trajectories, which cannot be experientially or analytically isolated. Among many others see Abu-Lughod (1993), Collins, P. (1990), de la Cadena (1991, 1997), Haraway (1991), Kulick (1998), Rivera, ed. (1996), Weismantel (2001), Yanagisako and Delany, eds. (1995).

6 By focusing on the power asymmetries between men and women as a foundation of abuse, feminist movements and scholarship since the 1970s have enormously influenced the attention directed toward the global issue of domestic violence. More recently increased attention has been directed toward child abuse, broadening the focus on the context of violence from the married couple to the household. For example, see Harvey (1998) on the abuse of children in an Andean context. In addition, scholars of queer theory, feminist theory, and masculinity studies have more recently brought attention to power hierarchies and violence in 'same-sex' relationships. For ethnographic examples see Gutmann (1996), Kulick (1998), Parker and Gagnon, eds. (1995).

intimately involved with each other and the negotiated aspect of 'relatedness' in the Andes (Van Vleet, 1999: Chapter 3; Weismantel, 1995) are brought to the fore through attention to asymmetries of power, including instances of physical abuse. Moreover, attention to women affines as perpetrators as well as victims of violence who are caught up in webs of broader relationships highlights the ways that affinity, as well as gender, are processual and potentially contradictory. Individuals of the same 'sex' may nevertheless be gendered in relation to each other; likewise, affinity is differently valenced for differently positioned individuals, in particular contexts, at particular moments in time. Ultimately neither kinship nor violence may be understood outside of the lived relationships of individuals which are at once structured by multiple trajectories of power (that are variously claimed and contested) and are embedded in, yet at times transgress, the intimacies and ideally sociable sentiments of home.

The violence between kin in Sullk'ata is a point in a pattern of domestic violence that occurs among individuals of virtually all social classes, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, and ages. Far from a suggestion that domestic violence is an issue exclusive to ethnic minorities or to a particular socioeconomic status in Bolivia my attention to this particular ethnographic context emerges from my research experiences. I present it in hopes of generating and extending analyses of the multiple contexts in which violence occurs and the ways that relationships of power are differently constituted and contested in the everyday lives of individuals, both kin and non-kin, in the Andes. I begin by sketching the broad social and economic context of affinity in Sullk'ata. I then situate my analysis in terms of what Sullk'ata women say about the violence of their affines. I incorporate ethnographic examples

of violence both between mothers- and daughters-in-law and husbands and wives in order to trace the ways that local discourses of drunkenness, custom, and sexuality work to normalize affinal violence. This juxtaposition of events and interlocutors also illuminates the intertwining of discourses about and acceptable explanations for the violence of mothers-in-law and husbands. In the following section, I turn to a discussion of the relationship of affinity between *suegras* (Sp.), or mothers-in-law and *qhachunis* (Q.), or daughters-in-law, tracing the unequal exchanges of labor and ambiguities of affect and hierarchy that shape power asymmetries among women affines. In the final section, I examine the interwoven strands of kinship associations in two incidents of violence, the first between sisters-in-law and the second between a married couple. Using affinity as an analytic concept, I explore the ways that events of violence are implicated in a wide nexus of kin relationships and histories of interaction in Sullk'ata. In the final pages of the paper I reflect on the implications of this analysis of violence in the particular ethnographic context of Sullk'ata for understanding violence and kinship more generally.

## THE CONTEXT OF AFFINITY IN SULLK'ATA

Sullk'atas are unevenly integrated into the global economy, and the majority of households depend on both market production and subsistence agriculture and herding for survival. In the past two decades the articulation of subsistence agriculture and market production has rapidly shifted. Mines have shut down in highland regions of Bolivia, migration to lowland agricultural regions and urban areas has increased, and the informal and service sectors of the economy have expanded. Both women and men work in the market economy. Although Sullk'ata women tend

to migrate to cities to work as domestic servants before marriage, after marriage they more typically remain in rural communities in charge of subsistence production while their husbands seasonally migrate for wage work. Subsistence production is organized through kinship and permeated by conceptions of reciprocity that integrate human and supernatural beings and worlds (see, for example, Abercrombie, 1998; Allen, 1988; Bolin, 1998; Gose, 1994; Platt, 1986). Because labor is often the scarcest resource in the region, people depend on individual networks of labor exchange relationships to sustain subsistence production; women exchange labor with other women and men exchange labor with other men (see, for example, Collins, 1988).

Marriage in Sullk'ata is not based on ideals of 'love' or companionship so much as ideals of gender opposition and complementarity that permeate the economic, social, and political practices necessary for daily life.<sup>7</sup> Although a married couple is conceived of as a unit, *qusawarmi* (or husband-wife, Q.), they do not exchange labor as a unit, and husbands and wives do not necessarily establish exchange relationships with individuals in the same households. Moreover, marriage embeds husbands and wives in a broad network of kinship relationships. Married couples traditionally live together in the household of the husband's parents for the initial 2 to 5 years of marriage. While she lives with her in-laws, a woman is compelled to work for her mother-in-law: herding sheep, cooking over an open fire, washing clothes in the stream, assisting with the harvesting and planting of potatoes, fava beans, and corn. At the same time that a young

wife is working for her mother-in-law, she is also trying to establish more reciprocal labor exchange relationships with other women in the community. In contrast, a son-in-law may have relatively little to do with his affines outside ritual contexts (cf. Harris, 1994: 54). Most Sullk'ata women simply laughed when I asked whether her husband worked for or helped her father. Unless a woman expects to inherit land from her parents, there is little reason for a man to return to his wife's community to help her parents with planting or harvesting. Because both kinship obligations and networks of labor exchange extend beyond a husband and wife dyad, and because obligations are not equivalent, individuals living within any particular household negotiate competing material and emotional demands within and between households.

Moreover, the demands of balancing subsistence and wage labor constrain men and women, at various stages in the life cycle, in different ways. Once a young couple establishes a separate household, the daughter-in-law is less entangled in kinship and labor obligations to her mother-in-law. In recent years young couples have drastically reduced the amount of time they live with the husband's parents by buying building materials, household items, and land with money earned by both partners prior to marriage. However, Sullk'atas also recognize that a married woman, even when living only with her husband and children, contributes more labor to the household than her husband. Within the terms of a national discourse of modernization, married men who work for wages are considered to be more 'advanced' or 'civilized' (de la Cadena,

<sup>7</sup> Complementary opposition has been a theme in anthropological discussions of gender, kinship and marriage in the region since the 1970s. See for example Allen (1988), Arnold (1992, 1997), Bolin (1998), Bolton and Mayer, eds. (1977), de la Cadena (1997), Harris (1978, 1981, 1994), Harvey (1994), Hopkins (1982), Millones and Pratt (1980), Ossio (1992), Platt (1986), Rivera, ed. (1996), Spedding (1997), Valderrama and Escalante (1997), Van Vleet (1999).



1991). Thus, relationships of asymmetrical labor exchange between affines remain significant to patterns of market and subsistence production and to the trajectories and experiences of conflict even after a couple established their own household. I return to these aspects of the broad social, economic, and political context throughout my analysis.

## LOCAL DISCOURSES OF VIOLENCE AND AFFINITY

As in other Andean regions, women in Sullk'ata discuss violence openly in everyday gossip (also see Harris, 1994: 52; Harvey, 1994: 66). A woman will most typically recount an affine's abuse to other women, but in their talk about violence women simultaneously normalize and criticize violence. In this section I discuss local discourses of domestic violence and trace the ambivalences of those discourses by introducing a double distinction between the unevenness of normalizing and marking violence in discourse and the variabilities of women's power and vulnerability in Sullk'ata.

Both men and women normalize affinal violence by pointing out the drunken state of the abuser or by claiming that violence is 'custom' (*custumbrilla*, Q. or *costumbre*, Sp.). In spite of gossip about specific events of violence, the notion that affinal violence is customary indicates relative lack of an explicit metadiscourse on violence. However, the violence of affines, and particularly that of spouses, is also marked. Women lament and complain about affinal violence not only to other women but sometimes to local and state

authorities. Women sometimes fight back, abandon abusive spouses, or refuse to work for or live with their mothers-in-law. Yet women, as well as men, also joke and make innuendoes that link violence and sex. Attention to the cross-cutting axes, or planes, of ambivalence in these discourses indicates the complexities of the lives, relationships, and stories of women who are clearly suffer from abuse but are not simply powerless in relation to their affines.

Moreover, the meanings of violence emerge not only in what is said, but also in the interstices of that which remains assumed, open to interpretation, unspoken, or even unspeakable. Different interlocutors, including the anthropologist, access a variable array of experiences, knowledges, explanations, or common sense understandings in their interpretations of events. For example, affinal violence for Sullk'atas is in part shaped by a social and historical context that includes state sponsored violent repression of miners, campesinos, and coca-growers; regional conflicts between native Andean ethnic groups over land; traditional ritual battles or *tinkus*; strife among community members; and the physical punishment sometimes used to reinforce hierarchy between parents and children.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, much of my understanding of domestic violence in Sullk'ata is refracted through informal interchanges during my fieldwork with Sullk'ata women; some were my friends and *comadres*, others were simply my neighbors or acquaintances, and many were linked to each other by kinship or *compadrazgo* ties.<sup>9</sup> Sullk'ata women usually initiated these discussions of

8 Little has been written on the relationship between state sponsored violence and domestic violence in the Andes, but see Johnson and Lipsett-Rivera (1998), Morrison and Biehl (1999), Nash (1993), Starn (1999), Stephenson (1999). On the relationship between Andean ritual battles (*tinkus*) and courtship practices, see the references in footnote 3.

9 *Comadres* and *compadres* are women and men, respectively, who are linked by a relationship of ritual kinship or *compadrazgo*.

affinal violence, and I was asked on more than one occasion whether my husband hit me, if we fought, if he had another wife in the city. Thus, my account of affinal violence is based on ethnographic evidence that is 'situated' and partial (Abu-Lughod, 1993; Collins, 1990; Haraway, 1991). My positionality as an anthropologist and a gringa from the United States, as a married yet childless woman living apart from her husband and far from her family, is not inconsequential to what Sullk'atas told me about affinal violence.

### THE CASE OF CLAUDINA AND HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

One of the first instances of violence between affines that I heard about was between a mother-in-law (Claudina<sup>10</sup>) and her daughter-in-law. I did not witness the incident, but my *comadre* Ilena did. She told me about it that evening as I sat preparing a meal with her. Claudina, the *suegra*, was in her late fifties, and she and her husband had just sponsored one of the largest and most financially demanding fiestas in the community. Their children, all married adults, had arrived with their families to help with the preparations and to celebrate the fiesta, which took place over the course of a week. On the final day of the fiesta, Claudina accused her *qhachuni* of failing to collect eggs or assist with cooking that day's mid-day meal. Angry and drunk, Claudina hit her daughter-in-law in the eye.

Claudina's explanation for hitting her daughter-in-law – that she had failed to cook – is the most common explanation given for a woman being hit, whether by her husband or her mother-in-law. Cooking and serving food indexes not only gender identity, but also adulthood and specific kinship relationships with other household members

(Weismantel, 1988). In the context of everyday life in the Andes, the primary task of a married woman in the household is cooking. Cooking may be understood as a locus of power for a wife, in control of the consumption and distribution of subsistence products (Allen, 1988; Arnold, 1992; Weismantel, 1988). However, more than one woman may live in any particular household, and when a daughter-in-law lives with her husband's family one of her main tasks is cooking for the household. Although the mother-in-law typically serves the food, emphasizing her role in allocating household resources, the daughter-in-law demonstrates her proficiency, obedience, and care for the sustenance of the household, by cooking. The attitude and efficiency with which a daughter-in-law cooks is practically and symbolically associated with how she will contribute to the reproduction of, and become integrated into, her new household and community (Valderrama and Escalante, 1997: 166).

Though not outside a system of gender, then, cooking and violence are also laminated upon relationships and discourses of kinship. Even after a *qhachuni* has moved out of the household of her husband's parents, she is still bound by obligations to her mother-in-law and may be hit by her. However, the daughter-in-law's position within a network of relationships shifts over the course of time, altering the ways in which relationships among mothers- and daughters-in-law, husbands and wives, and mothers and sons are negotiated. In this case Claudina's daughter-in-law and son were no longer living in Claudina's household. The daughter-in-law was already well established as a *warmi* (woman and wife, Q.) with six children of her own (one of whom was soon to be married), a household in another community, and extensive labor exchange relationships in both communities. When Claudina's son heard about the conflict that

---

10 This and all subsequent names used in the article are pseudonyms.

day, he supported his wife rather than his mother in the dispute. The daughter-in-law and son returned home with their children the next morning. Five months later when I asked Claudina about the incident, the son and daughter-in-law had not yet returned to visit Claudina and her husband, refusing to come even for Carnival when families throughout Bolivia return home, sometimes traveling great distances to celebrate and bless natal households and communities.

### NORMALIZING AND CONTESTING THE VIOLENCE OF AFFINES

The ways in which women negotiate potentially violent situations or react to the physical abuse of an affine vary according to the contingencies of situation, the histories of individuals, and the more general social and historical context in which violence takes place. Sullk'ata women, like others in the Andes and elsewhere, may challenge the abuse of their affines, as did Claudina's daughter-in-law. Women at times fight back physically (Spedding, 1997: 65), or inflict pain through other means as in Weismantel's (1988: 181-2) description of a woman who offered bowl after bowl of food to her abusive husband, who was obliged to eat in spite of his hangover. A Sullk'ata woman may simply leave her in-laws and return home to her parents, especially if her marriage has not yet been formalized by a civil or religious wedding ceremony and community fiesta. Although I know one woman who moved out of the house that she shared with her husband after many years of marriage due to the severity of his beatings, most women do not have the financial, material, or emotional resources to live alone.

In extreme situations, women go to their

godparents or state authorities to complain formally about affinal violence. For Sullk'atas, the godparents who helped sponsor the marriage (*padrinos de matrimonio*, Sp.) are considered the most appropriate people to arbitrate a disagreement between affines. Andean scholars of various regions and periods have noted that native Andean women as well as women of Spanish descent have historically appealed to the colonial and republican state authorities in instances of domestic violence (Barragán, 1997; Hünefeldt, 2000; Spedding, 1997). However, by going to a judge or to the police, a woman puts herself into a potentially contradictory position, having to take on non-native Andean notions of family, and of gender and femininity (as Harvey, 1993: 135, has noted), as well as racial and class stereotypes, language, literacy, and financial barriers. During my residence in the community three women notified the police or the judge of a spouse's violence and a fourth woman threatened to turn her sister-in-law in to the police because of physical violence. In one instance, the police put the husband in the provincial jail until his mother was able to collect enough money to bail him out. The young woman returned to her parents' home as her marital relationship was not yet solidified by either a civil or religious ceremony.

Although a woman will most typically recount an affine's abuse to other women, both men and women normalize affinal violence through discourses of drunkenness and custom. Quechua speakers conceive of drunkenness as an altered state, similar to a dream state. The same verb tense is used for drunkenness, dreams, and the long distant past.<sup>11</sup> The grammatical distinction reflects the understanding, widespread in the Andes, that a person cannot be held responsible for their actions when they are drunk

---

11 For the standard grammatical explanation on this point see Cusihamán (1976: 170-171).

(Harvey, 1991, 1994; Mannheim, 1991a, 1991b; Saignes, ed., 1993). For example, when Claudina told me her version of the story months after she had hit her daughter-in-law, she reiterated how drunk she had been at the time, crying all the while. In some instances of violence the disclaimer of drunkenness does not go uncontested; however, all of the violence among affines in Sullk'ata that I know of occurred during the feast days of the annual ritual calendar or other ritual contexts in which people were drunk.

Drinking is an integral part of community rituals, and drunkenness is crucial to the sustenance of the spiritual and material world of Catholic Quechua speakers (Abercrombie, 1998; Saignes, ed., 1993). The fertility of the earth and fecundity of animals and human beings is regenerated through libations to *Pachamama* (generalized as 'Earth Mother' and also understood as various manifestations of the Virgin Mary) and to the mountain spirits (or *urqus*, Q.). Native Andeans are careful to attend to their obligations of reciprocity with the supernatural. Drinking also creates and sustains relationships of reciprocity and sociability among people, but people are also far more likely to express conflict and to become violent when drunk (Harvey, 1991, 1994; Harris, 1994). Women make libations and drink with their affines, although most women do not reach the same state of extreme inebriation as many men. Women, in contrast to men, are responsible for continuing to cook for their families, for herding sheep (a daily necessity), and for being caretakers of their drunken male kin – usually their husbands and sons.

The discourse of drunkenness is also intertwined with a discourse of 'custom' through which women in Sullk'ata bring attention to the ways that violence is at once publicly disclosed and beyond public discourse. At times the

normalization of violence through a discourse of custom is implicit, as when Ilena told me about the incident of violence between Claudina and her daughter-in-law. She said that she regretted the incident had ever occurred: Ilena had work exchange relationships with both the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law involved in the dispute. She did not directly criticize Claudina's actions, however. Instead she recounted stories of her own mother-in-law's violence, and ended with:

"I suffered badly. I lived there for 5 years and I had to do everything."

"Did you and your suegra get mad at each other?" I asked.

"Yes," she said.

"What did your husband do?"

"He went back to his mother. He should have been with me. She really hated me."

Here, Ilena positions Claudina's actions within a more general context of affinal relationships and affinal violence among women. Especially older women told me stories of their *suegras* and the difficult years that they endured living in the households of their in-laws, and although women emphasized the painfulness of their experiences, they did not suggest that their experiences were exceptional.

At times, the normalization of violence through a discourse of custom is far more explicit. The gap between my own sensibilities and those of the women I had come to know, as well as the overlapping recognition of the painfulness of violence, became most apparent to me during the week of Carnival in 1996 when Máxima was hit by her husband. Both of them were probably in their late sixties. Máxima came to the fiesta one afternoon and told the women that her husband had hit and kicked her two nights before. She

asked me to go with her to Sucre because she had nobody in the community and her children lived there. I agreed to accompany her. Later I asked another woman, Roberta, if she'd heard what had happened to her *comadre* Máxima.

"It's the custom," she said. "When men are drunk they scold and they hit their women."  
"Does [your husband] hit you?"  
"Yes," she said. "It's the same with [my husband]."

At the time, Roberta's reaction surprised me: I knew her and her husband well and did not think of their relationship as 'abusive,' or of domestic violence in Sullk'ata as 'custom.' Yet Roberta's statement also challenged me to recognize that Sullk'atas have proper and improper ways of doing and talking about violence, as well as accepted ways of being in relationship with human and supernatural beings, with kin and non-kin.

Thus, although women recognize some degree of variation among individuals (with some more inclined to violence than others), the more pervasive notion is that violence is associated with particular states (such as drunkenness) and positionalities (such as affinity). In Sullk'ata affinal violence is custom when people are drunk, as Roberta states, but violence between affines is decidedly not considered to be custom when people are sober. The one incident of violence that I heard of between a husband and wife that occurred when both were sober was met with

horrified exclamations and discussion of the man's improper upbringing. And although criticism of an affine's actions and expressions of pain may be intertwined with the details of personal circumstances and normalizing discourses in peoples' talk about violence, the general notion that affines may use violence is rarely challenged by Sullk'atas. Máxima, as it turned out, did not go with me to Sucre; she told me she could find no one to herd her sheep while she was gone. Finally, the disjuncture between my emotional response and the attitudes of my Sullk'ata companions highlights how deep-seated cultural assumptions – such as ideas about 'love' in marriage and the stigma associated with being a 'victim' of abuse – may become entangled with very different sets of assumptions and material conditions through the contingencies of fieldwork, as I discuss further below.<sup>12</sup>

## SEXUALITY AND VIOLENCE: MARKING THE VIOLENCE OF HUSBANDS

Thus, discourses of custom and drunkenness normalize the violence of both male and female affines in Sullk'ata. However, Sullk'ata women tend to emphasize the violence of their husbands. This emphasis may indicate the greater frequency of abuse by husbands. The underscoring of spousal abuse might also reflect the greater potential for harm that a husband's violence inflicts, whether because of his physical strength or the social and economic consequences that ensue from the conflict. The intensity and

---

<sup>12</sup> Advocacy groups in the United States use the term 'survivor' rather than 'victim' of abuse in part because of this stigma. Neither term fully represents my understanding of how Sullk'ata women talk about themselves and events of violence in which they are involved. In a similar vein Harvey has noted, "I was struck by the fact that their toleration of actions, which I found horrifying, was not based in a sense of shame or passivity; they talked with pride about how they fought back and were perfectly willing to complain to others about their treatment. The difference between their attitude and mine was that they appeared to accept this confrontational aspect of their relationships as one of the unpleasant consequences of falling in love and forming a stable partnership" (Harvey, 1994: 66).

significance of the relationship between husbands and wives tends to increase over time. Although partnerships are easily dissolved early in the relationship, after a series of marriage rituals and the birth of children, separation is infrequent. In contrast, the significance of the relationship between mothers- and daughters-in-law tends to lessen over time, as a woman establishes her own household, family, and labor exchange relationships with other women.

In addition, the highlighting of a husband's violence reflects people's access to a greater range of public discourses giving voice to men's violence against women. In late December of 1995 former President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada signed Bolivia's Law Against Family Violence (*Ley contra la Violencia Familiar* or *Ley 1674*). According to the text of the law, any family member, male or female, adult or child, is protected against the abuse of another family or household member as long as the abuse is reported within 24 hours. The law was advertised on the radio, but the announcements broadcast in Quechua referred only to men's violence against women.<sup>13</sup> The explicit emphasis on gender difference and sexuality in many of these discourses blurs the significance of affinity to the emergence of violence between

spouses and simultaneously conceals the violence that occurs among women in Sullk'ata.<sup>14</sup>

Yet, the overlapping of the discourses normalizing violence and the emphasis of Sullk'ata women on the violence of husbands (as opposed to other men) indicate that affinity is a significant aspect of spousal violence. In Sullk'ata, the similar explanations and justifications given by husbands and mothers-in-law for hitting a woman and the overlapping discourses of drunkenness and custom that normalize affinal violence suggest that gender difference is not a sufficient category of analysis for domestic violence in the region. Further analysis of kinship relationships, in particular relationships among women affines, is necessary for a more complicated understanding of the power hierarchies that structure those relationships as well as the ways in which violence emerges in the networks of interactions among kin in Sullk'ata.

#### SUEGRAS AND QHACHUNIS: READING AFFINITY AMONG WOMEN

My emphasis on affinity complicates but does not seek to supplant feminist scholarship that has emphasized gender as a category of analysis of

13 The literature on the issue of domestic violence published in Spanish by the Bolivian Ministry of Human Development and the international organization UNICEF emphasizes the rights of women and children against domestic violence as human rights. For example see: *Ley 1674 contra la Violencia en la Familia o Doméstica* (pamphlet). La Paz, Bolivia: Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, Secretaría Nacional de Asuntos Étnicos, de Género y Generacionales, Subsecretaría de Asuntos de Género (1996); *Más que Madres* (pamphlet). La Paz: Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, Secretaría de Asuntos Étnicos, de Género y Generacionales, Subsecretaría de Asuntos de Género (1996); *Legislación Andina y Violencia contra la Mujer* (Seminario Andino "Legislación y Violencia" Cochabamba 1995), edited by Amanda Dávila. La Paz, Bolivia: Vicepresidencia de la República de Bolivia y Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano (1996).

14 Public discourses also entangle Sullk'ata notions of sexuality and fertility in sexual reproduction with national and transnational ideologies of gender difference and ethnic 'otherness'. For example, some have used the phrase 'Andean love' (*amor andino*, Sp.) to refer to violence in Andean courtship practices and marriage relationships. Among others Degregori (1989), Millones and Pratt (1989), Platt (1986) and Harris (1994) have used or discussed the phrase 'Andean love.' As public discourses on sexuality and violence have already been well analyzed (Harris, 1994; Harvey, 1994), I do not discuss this theme here. For further details of discourses of gender, sexuality and violence in Sullk'ata, see Van Vleet (1999). On domestic violence and power in other parts of the world see, for example, Harvey and Gow, eds. (1994), Heise (1995), Morrison and Biehl (1999).

domestic violence and men's violence against women as both symptom and foundation of gender hierarchy. Gender and kinship are not separate or bounded in the experiences of people (Collier and Yanagisako, eds., 1987; Weston, 1993; Yanagisako and Delany, eds., 1995). However, collapsing relationships of affinity into a notion of gender opposition not only has the consequence of weakening the analytic force of affinity, but also confines 'gender' as an analytic category to a binary opposition between homogeneous categories of men and women. Thus, differences among women are also essential to understanding affinity and the ways that relationships of power are structured and negotiated in the Andes. I explore the ways in which affinity is enacted between mothers-in-law, or *suegras* (Sp.), and daughters-in-law, or *qhachunis* (Q.). I focus on two interrelated aspects of the power asymmetry between women affines – asymmetrical exchanges of labor and competing ideals of affection and respect – to demonstrate the salience of affinity for understanding domestic violence and of differences among women for understanding kinship in the Andes. Relationships between *suegras* and *qhachunis* are not, however, isolated from other kinship relationships or wider discourses of identity and power. Thus, I also draw into the discussion an analysis of kinship relationships among parents and children and draw out from the discussion some implications for understanding violence among sisters-in-law.

## BECOMING KIN

The affective and economic relationship between a mother and daughter-in-law is intertwined with the structural relationship and more general system of values that shapes relationships with parents and children. However, daughters-in-law are only partially integrated into their husbands' families, and may never become 'true kin'

(Harvey, 1994). Thus, for the woman's family, a recently married daughter or sister is understood to have a difficult time, living with her in-laws, far from her family. On the first night of the Fiesta for the Virgin of Rosario, for example, Seferina sat on a church bench sobbing as people lit candles. "Now my daughter is alone," she wailed. I was confused at first, for I had attended her daughter's wedding only two months before. I thought that maybe her daughter's husband had died in a truck accident, but that was not the cause of her daughter's aloneness, or of her own pain and sadness. Seferina made me understand that her daughter, living in a nearby community, was alone because she had no close kin, no 'true kin' (*parientes legítimos*, Sp.), there.

The husband's family celebrates the addition of a daughter-in-law, but also has the burden of incorporating a stranger into the household. A new daughter-in-law is not only understood to be 'from' somewhere else, but she is constitutionally different from her affines. For Sullk'atas 'true kinship' is bound up with notions of 'raising' (*wiñachiy*, Q.) a child. When she marries, not only does a woman move from the network of kin with whom she grew up, but she also moves the material sources through which her body developed, and the familiar pantheon of sacred places. As Weismantel has discussed for native Andeans in Ecuador, people who eat the same food are quite literally understood to be composed of the same flesh. The material of the human body is built up through "various substances and acts: ingesting food and drink, sharing emotional states with individuals or spirits, being in close physical proximity to people or objects" (Weismantel, 1995: 694). Thus, the process of integrating a *qhachuni* into the kin network of her husband's family takes place only over an extended period of time.

Kinship relationships are forged between a

*qhachuni* and her affines through the same daily interactions and practices – feeding and eating and working together – that recreate relatedness among parents and children. Feeding a child is the primary means through which parents express love and nurturing. Feeding a child ‘raises’ a child, even before birth (Arnold and Yapita, 1996: 311-12; Van Vleet, 1999; Nash, 1993; c.f. Weismantel, 1995). Feeding children is also a primary means of establishing hierarchy within the family (Harvey, 1998: 74-5). Until children establish themselves in productive relationships in the community or elsewhere, they are understood to be dependent upon their parents. In distinction to exchanges of food and labor among adults in which the return of reciprocal food and labor is expected, the relationship of kinship between parents and children is, as Harvey (1998: 75) has stated, the result of “having been fed by others whom one does not oneself feed.” As part of this relationship, a child is expected to work for his or her parents and to respect and obey his or her parents and older brothers or sisters. Thus, the practices that forge affective relationships also map out hierarchies and inequalities among kin (Harvey, 1998; Weismantel, 1995).

During the time that she lives in her mother-in-law’s household, a *qhachuni* is dependent on her affines for food and shelter and is positioned as a child who is morally obligated to work because she is fed. As Anacleta, an elderly Sullk’ata woman who still lives with her husband in the household compound that her parents-in-law built, said to me, “Where else would we have lived? We had nothing when we married. No animals, no land, no house, no pots or bowls or spoons.” Although no automatic intimacy is expected between mothers- and daughters-in-law, the *qhachuni* is expected to address her *suegra* as ‘my mother’ while the *suegra* addresses her as ‘my

child.’ A daughter-in-law contributes agricultural labor to her in-laws’ household until her husband is given his share of land to farm. She often herds her mother-in-law’s sheep. While she lives with her in-laws she cooks for the entire family, a time-consuming and labor intensive process.

Moreover, because of the gender division of labor, the *suegra* is initially the main locus of integration into the household and community for a *qhachuni*. A *qhachuni* may spend more time with her *suegra* than with her husband. Yet, the *qhachuni* is responsible for developing a relationship of good will or affection from her *suegra*. Through her facility in the kitchen, willingness to work, her obedience, and her ability to be sociable and lively, a new daughter-in-law is encouraged to win the approval of her *suegra*. The *qhachuni* is also expected to respect her mother-in-law’s authority and to take orders from her.

Especially early in the relationship, a *qhachuni* is positioned as a child who is dependent upon her affines, but she also partakes of the positionality of a person who is not kin. By marrying and moving out of her natal household a *qhachuni* is also becoming an adult, a process that is further solidified after the birth of her first child. While living in her mother-in-law’s household, a *qhachuni* may not easily extract herself from labor obligations to her mother-in-law. A daughter-in-law is especially vulnerable to the criticism and potential abuse of her *suegra* if she does not yet have children of her own. Nevertheless, a *qhachuni* contributes labor to her in-law’s household with the expectation of an eventual return of equivalent labor or products, as in more reciprocal forms of labor such as *ayni*.

## AMBIGUITIES OF POWER

The disjunctures in their economic and affective relationships are negotiated by mothers- and



daughters-in-law in their daily interactions and are tied to more general ambiguities of hierarchy and authority among kin. Successful kinship relationships, as Harvey (1998: 75) notes, are relationships where a hierarchy remains intact, where respect is given to the appropriate individuals: children “who do not learn this respect do not become social human beings and when they die they become [condemned souls].” Thus, if a child does not demonstrate proper respect by taking care of animals, carrying out tasks readily, watching over younger siblings, or addressing adults in a proper manner, he may be reprimanded by a parent or possibly an older sibling. A parent may meet a child’s defiance, or the perception of disrespect, with varying degrees of reprimand and may scold (*rimay*, Q.) or hit (*maqay*, Q.) the child to reinforce physically the understood hierarchy between parents and children. Physical violence between parents and children may occur when parents are sober and is not considered inappropriate unless the violence is extreme, yet adults do not typically reprimand other peoples’ children.<sup>15</sup> Because the relationship between *suegra* and *qhachuni* partakes of, but does not completely mesh with, the relationship between parents and children, affinity becomes an arena for rapprochement and potential conflict. Although a daughter-in-law who does not show her affines respect is criticized, even hit, she is not said to become a condemned soul at death, as is a disrespectful child. Conversely, a daughter-in-law may directly challenge her *suegra*’s violence or her claims to authority by pointing out the fact that the *suegra* is not ‘true kin.’ Thus, the very lack of control in the already ambiguous relationship of affinity may also trigger an

outburst of violence in an attempt to resolve the ambiguity and reestablish harmonious kinship relationships (Harvey, 1991).

The ambiguity and potential for negotiation in kinship categories and the uneven overlap between different categories of hierarchy are recognized by Sullk’atas who mobilize various discourses to negotiate positionality and power among affines. Daughters-in-law explicitly bring attention to their ambiguous position by highlighting their ‘aloneness’ in times of distress. Women recognize that in their affines’ community they have little recourse; there is no one, really, to protect their interests. A mother-in-law’s abuse may be checked by her son (as in the case of Claudina’s daughter-in-law), or a husband’s abuse may be lessened by the presence and intervention of his parents. However, whether or not a husband or *suegra* will support a woman is not clear-cut, as indicated by Ilena’s claim that her husband often sided with his mother in disputes. Even after a woman has lived in a community many years and established her own household and family, a daughter-in-law may cry about ‘being alone,’ without a mother and father, whether or not her parents are dead.

Sullk’ata women’s claims that the ‘best’ marriages are when a daughter marries a man from her natal community suggests that a network of consanguinal kin provides a woman potentially greater protection from violence or a more secure position from which to operate on a daily basis. Harris’ (1994: 54) claim that in the nearby *ayllu* of Laymi, Bolivia a woman’s brothers will beat her husband in return for his violence to her also supports this view. However, in Sullk’ata a brother’s protection rests not only on his

15 There are exceptions to this. For example, parents acknowledge the authority of school teachers and may themselves draw upon the paternal authority of the state by threatening to send children (especially older children) to state authorities (teachers, police, judges) when they do not behave properly (Mannheim, personal communication; Harvey, 1997).

knowledge of the event of violence but also on the contingencies of his relationship with his sister's husband. A brother may, for example, participate in work networks, be linked by relationships of *compadrazgo*, or rent land from his sister's husband. As Máxima expressed in an example above, her brothers are 'with her husband,' she would not go to tell them of his violence, but instead would go to her sons. Of the specific instances of violence between spouses that I discuss in this paper, two involve women who were married to men from their natal communities.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the ambiguities of affinity extend to relationships among kin more generally and shape the contingencies of actions and interactions among people.

Moreover, because the affinal relationship between *suegra* and *qhachuni* also intersects with other relationships of power and identity, a *qhachuni* may contest the asymmetry of her relationship with her mother-in-law through national and transnational discourses of class and ethnicity, family and gender. These urban discourses, which emphasize the relative status of speaking Spanish, earning money, being educated, buying consumer goods such as clothing and electronics, living in the city where electricity and running water keep people, clothing, and streets cleaner, allow younger women to stake out a ground of superiority which their older women affines cannot as readily access. Refusing to live with her affines may enhance a daughter-in-law's status according to national or urban discourses of culture and class even as local evaluations of sociability may criticize those actions. A *suegra* may, for example, reverse

national discourses of ethnicity and class which stigmatize native Andeans, and instead disparage a *qhachuni* who is 'beautiful' and 'white', who does not know how to work or to be sociable with other women (Valderrama and Escalante, 1997: 167).

More recently, some young *qhachunis* simply refuse to live with their *suegras* for more than a couple months after marriage, possibly further hampering a woman's integration into her husband's kin group and enhancing her isolation. The two most recently married women in the community refused to live with their *suegras* at all. Their initial years of marriage, prior to a religious ceremony, were spent with their spouses in Bolivian cities earning money. When the young couples returned to live in the rural community, they built houses of their own. At the time of my fieldwork, each of their husbands had migrated for wage work and were absent for months at a time. Even so, each young woman would eat and sleep in her own house with her baby. Although each daughter-in-law would herd her mother-in-law's sheep daily, they each declined to cook for their affines. As one woman told me: "There are still too many people at my *suegra's* house. It is a lot of work to cook. Here I cook quickly, just for me and my baby on that gas stove." For both these young women the alternative to living with her in-laws was to live alone, a choice considered unsociable and somewhat odd by Sullk'atas. Whether living in the rural community or the city without having undertaken the more traditional obligations of a daughter-in-law increases a woman's isolation and her vulnerability to her husband's violence even as she is less

<sup>16</sup> Both women in this case were hit by their husbands, not their mothers-in-law. In general brothers may provide some protection for sisters in abusive relationships when they are willing to help support sisters who leave their affines. Additionally, those women who inherit land or moveable property more substantial than their husbands may be less subject to the demands and violence of their affines, a topic that requires further research.

constrained by her *suegra's* demands is a question that remains to be explored.

The relationship between a *suegra* and *qhachuni* changes over time, and even a very dutiful daughter-in-law does not remain in the household of her *suegra*. The *suegra's* ability to control the relative isolation or integration of a *qhachuni* and her greater control of intra- and inter-household resources are initially significant aspects of the power asymmetry between them. Once she has her own household, a daughter-in-law's obligations to her *suegra* are reformulated. Although a *qhachuni* is expected to always act respectfully toward her mother-in-law, over the course of time the daughter-in-law develops a greater position of power. As she consolidates her relationship with her husband, establishes kinship bonds with her children, and develops labor exchange relationships with other women, a *qhachuni* eventually becomes established in the community as a *warmi* (both 'adult woman' and 'wife' in Quechua).

Yet as much as a *qhachuni* may highlight her ability, plans, and desires to live in the city and earn money, or her status as a *warmi*, while she lives in the *campo*, she is not outside a hierarchical though ambiguous network of relationships among kin. Thus, some women in Sullk'ata told me that they lived with their *suegra* out of affection, but others criticized the moral character of their *suegras*. On one occasion I brought a tape of regional Andean songs to the kitchen where Ilena, her daughter Marissa, and I were preparing dinner. The song "My Good Suegra" (*K'acha swiritay*) was transformed by Ilena's singing over the refrain "my evil *suegra*" (*sagra swiritay*) for the length of the song. When she was newly married, Ilena lived for five years with her *suegra*, but even after many years of living in separate households Ilena's mother-in-law continued to cause her aggravation. Like other women in Sullk'ata, both *suegras* and

*qhachunis*, Ilena draws on personal experiences and local and national discourses of ethnicity, class, gender, and family to normalize violence, to actively contest affinal authority, and to mark their negotiations for positionings of power. Thus, as much as a woman may profess to be alone, in Sullk'ata daughters-in-law are not isolated from multiple sets of economic, social, and political relationships that cut across and extend beyond any particular household.

## THE ENTANGLEMENTS OF KINSHIP

Not only do relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law partake of the power hierarchy established between parents and children, but differential expectations, obligations, and potential rewards link kin and non-kin to each other, to their marriage partners, siblings, and parents. A focus on the binary relationships between mothers- and daughters-in-law though perhaps necessary as a heuristic device ultimately falls short of the contradictions and negotiations of kinship as it is lived in everyday interactions. In this section, I trace the trajectories of unequal exchanges and ambiguous hierarchies through two instances of violence. Both incidents involve my *comadre* Ilena and her affines, but the relationship of these events goes beyond an individual life history of Ilena. The two events – the first between Ilena and her sister-in-law and the second between Ilena and her husband – were separated by six months. Initially I did not perceive the events as related. However, I would argue now that the tensions between Ilena and her sister-in-law, and Ilena and her husband, are inextricably intertwined on multiple levels: the interactions of individuals, the more general structural relationships among the siblings and affines of the same generation, and the more general social and economic context of Sullk'ata.

I first describe the instance of violence between Ilena and her sister-in-law and focus analytically on the network of kinship relationships and individual interactions that radiate outward from that event, incorporating the incident of violence between Ilena and her husband into the discussion further below.<sup>17</sup>

The physical conflict between Ilena and her sister-in-law (her husband's brother's wife) occurred during the New Year's celebration in January 1996 when both women were drunk. Ilena's sister-in-law berated Ilena for having borrowed an ox a few months earlier without properly asking permission. Ilena defended herself and her husband, Marcelino, by pointing out that they had borrowed the ox to plow Marcelino *father's* field, not Marcelino and Ilena's field. Ilena suggested that her sister-in-law should be thankful that she and Marcelino did so much work for the elderly parents of their husbands. Then her sister-in-law punched Ilena, grazing her cheek. Ilena returned the punch and bloodied her sister-in-law's nose. When Ilena's sister-in-law woke up the next morning with blood on her face and apron, she needed someone to tell her what had happened. For days afterwards Ilena's sister-in-law threatened to turn Ilena in to the police. Ilena's husband's brother eventually dissuaded his wife. Although Ilena's sister-in-law eventually dropped discussion of the matter, the ill will among them continued to simmer just below the surface.

The overlapping and intersecting obligations of kinship provide a textured ground from which to interpret this event. First, like the relationship of affinity between mothers- and daughters-in-

law, relationships among siblings and in-laws of the same generation are characterized by ambiguities of hierarchy and affect. Sisters-in-law stand in a highly ambiguous relationship with each other. Sisters-in-law are not usually 'true kin' and do not typically create the material and affective relations of kin through their daily practices as mothers- and daughters-in-law attempt to do. Although a young man and his wife will typically live in his parents' household along with unmarried siblings, it is uncommon for more than one married brother to live in the household at any time. Thus the wives of brothers do not work, eat, or share space with each other in their mother-in-law's household. Brothers and their wives living in the same community rarely develop labor exchange relationships or relationships of ritual kinship, although brothers and sisters and their respective spouses, and sisters and their husbands, often do. There is little camaraderie among the wives of brothers unless they come from same natal community.

The relationship between sisters-in-law is also shaped by the respective relationship between their spouses. Although brothers are ideally close companions, the potential for ambiguity and disruption in the kinship hierarchy between brothers is high. The understood kinship hierarchy among siblings places the older (*karaq*, Q.) in a position of authority over the younger (*sullk'a*, Q.) sibling. However, because the youngest son eventually takes over the natal home, he traditionally receives the greatest material inheritance, and often the most affection, from the parents. In particular, the negotiation and

---

17 As others have noted anthropologists are often drawn into already ongoing histories of relationships among interlocutors that begin long before the anthropologists' arrival (Mannheim and Tedlock, 1995). My close relationship with Ilena contributed to an already contentious situation. I should note that it has in part been through the process of trying to make sense of Ilena's explanations of her husband's violence that I have developed the analysis in this paper, but the analysis here is incomplete. I discuss the incident of violence between Ilena and her husband, as well as Ilena's explanations of that event and the ways I became intertwined in these relationships more thoroughly in Van Vleet (1997, 1999a, 2000).

competition around land inheritance may take place over many years, creating tensions within and extending beyond any singular household as siblings perceive inequalities in a context of scarcity. Although agricultural land is ideally divided equally among sons sometime after one of them marries, a father may maintain control of the land by continuing to sow the fields. A son often assists with the agricultural labor on the land that he will eventually inherit. While I was living in the community, tensions over land inheritance and labor erupted numerous times into verbal conflict, and less frequently into physical violence, between brothers. Arguments over inheritance also occurred between the wives of brothers. Daughters usually receive inheritance in moveable wealth, but many women in Sullk'ata noted that their youngest brother's wife would inherit their mother's sheep. Because of their proximity in terms of residence, overlapping obligations to family and community, and participation in community fiestas and work projects, siblings and their spouses inevitably compare responsibilities and recompense. Even those who do get along may become entangled in conflicts as they protect the perceived interests of their children.

Moreover, kinship relationships including those between sisters-in-law, spouses, and brothers are inflected by unequal exchanges of labor. Obligations to work and care for parents are generally associated with the social and moral values of reciprocity and of relatedness in kinship; the sacrifices required of parents to raise children may be understood as the initial half of a cycle of *ayni*, or reciprocal exchange, in Sullk'ata (also see Nash, 1993: 67). A son has a moral obligation to care for his parents, according to Sullk'atas. As Arnold and Yapita (1996: 320-21) report for Aymara-speaking Qaqachakas in a nearby region of Bolivia, "Although the son may bring a

daughter-in-law to the house, he will cry for his parents and will bury them. In contrast, they say, the daughter will be far away and will just say: 'Oh, they died and they went to bury them after a while'." Daughters, like daughters-in-law, are understood to be less emotionally and materially involved in the lives and deaths of parents. Parents may call upon all of their children to assist them with agricultural labor. However, the obligations to work and care for parents are also linked to inheritance and require unequal amounts of time and energy from various family members.

The most appropriate person to help elderly parents is the youngest son, who eventually inherits the household compound of his parents. The obligations of a son may create tension within households, as sentimental and economic attachments to parents compete with the developing economic, social, and affective relationships with a spouse, or children. When the youngest son is married, his obligations to help his parents also fall upon his family. Particularly if her husband migrates seasonally for wage labor and is absent for long periods at a time, the demands of extended kinship relationships may be heavy for the wife of the youngest son.

From this perspective, the dispute over borrowing the ox is part of more complicated negotiations around unequal labor obligations that are linked to the economically and politically significant issues of the inheritance and the distribution of power and authority within and between generations. Ilena emphasized that she did more work for her affines than her sister-in-law. Ilena's husband Marcelino was the youngest son of aging parents. She and her husband had lived with her in-laws for five years when first married, and Ilena had contributed a large amount of labor to running her *suegra's* household. After living for a number of years in

a mining town, she and her husband returned to her husband's natal community because of his familial obligations. She and her husband routinely assisted his elderly parents with agricultural tasks, especially plowing and planting fields and herding sheep. Although her husband's older brother and wife (with whom she had the dispute) also lived in the community, they did not assist with caring for the parents. They did not help with daily or seasonal subsistence tasks. Ilena complained that her sister-in-law had never, in fact, even lived with her mother-in-law.

In contrast, her sister-in-law claimed that Ilena and her family received preferential treatment from their elderly parents-in-law. She was especially aware and critical of the times Ilena and their mother-in-law combined their respective herds into one group and took turns herding the sheep. This exchange enabled Ilena to accomplish other tasks on those days that her *suegra* herded, but also allowed Ilena to make an implicit future claim on the sheep. Similarly by plowing his father's field, Marcelino was reiterating an inheritance claim to that land, even though he plowed with his brother's ox. That Ilena's sister-in-law scolded Ilena (rather than Marcelino who actually did the plowing) reflects both the gendered constraints on activities and interactions among Sullk'atas and the ways in which conflicts may spill over into multiple relationships.

During the months following the fight between Ilena and her sister-in-law, a growing divide developed among Ilena and her affines. Her sister-in-law refused to greet Ilena. In February and March of that year, Ilena voiced her suspicions that her sister-in-law was circulating malicious gossip about her to other women in the community with whom she exchanged labor. In May her brother-in-law scolded Ilena while Ilena's husband was absent,

working in the city of Cochabamba. In June 1996 during the final week of my fieldwork in the community Ilena was beaten by her husband, who had recently returned from the city. Her husband, Marcelino, was drunk, having stayed up all night at the wake of a community member. He accused her of infidelity as he hit her. The next day, Ilena went to the godmother of her marriage and then to the judge in the nearest town. I assumed that Ilena had gone to the judge to accuse her husband of domestic abuse. When I spoke with Ilena about the incident, however, she said that she had gone to the judge to complain about the malicious gossip of people in the community that had caused her husband's abuse. "They talk and talk and then when [my husband] is drunk he hits me. He hits me from their talk about me. The *señoras* talk a lot don't they?" she said to me. By voicing her concerns about gossip, Ilena points toward the structural relationships of rivalry and competition among siblings and in-laws of the same generation. She does not explicitly name her sister-in-law but grounds the moment of conflict with her husband in a specific history of interactions with her own affines that I have partially described above.

The conflicts between Ilena and her affines, both her husband and her sister-in-law, are also embedded in a more general social and economic context. Most households cannot survive solely on wage or subsistence labor, and continuing access to land requires working that land. Thus, husbands who work in urban areas depend on the labor of their wives in rural communities for subsistence production. This has consequences that extend beyond the relationship between spouses to relationships among same generation affines. First, married men who migrate seasonally depend upon their kin and *compadres* to watch out for and support their families. Yet in these months prior to the instance of violence between

Ilena and Marcelino, the structural ambiguities of the relationship among affines developed into a more critical rupture. His wife, his brother, his brother's wife, and their respective children were no longer speaking with each other when he returned from the city. From this perspective, Marcelino's violence is not simply about the control of Ilena's sexuality or his altered state of drunkenness. His violence also resonates with the ambiguities of kinship relationships that require the physical presence of people to reinforce intimacies and hierarchies and the vulnerabilities of husbands who require, yet cannot control, the labor power of their wives in a context of more general economic instability and shifting social conditions.

Second, because of the ways kin and non-kin relationships in Sullk'ata are interwoven, the strain on the relationship between Ilena and her sister-in-law also extended to relationships among women more generally in the community. Particularly in regions such as this where men seasonally migrate and children go to school, women like Ilena increasingly depend upon labor exchange relationships with other women to carry out agriculture requirements of a subsistence economy. Although Ilena and her sister-in-law did not exchange labor with each other, the physical conflict between them, as well as the continuing tensions, negatively affected other networks of interaction and everyday relationships between Ilena and other women in the small community. Relationships among women are inflected by ideals of communality; a woman's emotional, social, political, and economic well-being is in part balanced on the state of those relationships. Ilena and her sister-in-law's drunken violence as well as Ilena's reactions to her husband's violence, refract the unequal exchanges and ambiguities of hierarchy among affines through the everyday gravity of

enhancing connections among other individuals, non-kin as well as kin.

Inevitably conflicts and compromises radiate outward because the associations among people overlay each other. Rather than isolated events that serve as examples of static structures of kinship, then, these events of violence may be better understood as 'busy intersections' (Rosaldo, R. 1989: 20-21) of intertwined but ongoing and lived relationships among individuals. The conflicts between Ilena and her affines are embedded in the general social and economic context of Sullk'ata, the structural asymmetries that shape the daily practices of sisters-in-law, siblings, and spouses, and the more specific history of interactions among particular individuals. By drawing attention to the conflict among affines, both women and men, a more complicated understanding of kin relationships in Sullk'ata emerges. In addition, violence is revealed as part of a more intricate negotiation for positioning among multiple structural relationships of power than a straightforward opposition between 'abuser' and 'victim' suggests.

## CONCLUSIONS: REFLECTING ON VIOLENCE AND KINSHIP

Notions of 'kinship', 'the domestic', and 'violence' are intertwined with individual experiences of violence and broader discourses – local, national, and international – that give 'domestic violence' particular meanings and implications. Yet, even in the shadow of the event, an affine's violence may seem less problematic than living without that person, or cut off from the network of encompassing relationships of kinship in Sullk'ata. Women may not be prepared to denounce their abusers: they may not have alternative places to live or means of economic

and emotional support, conceive of life outside of marriage as a viable possibility, or trust the adequacy of the protection of the state. Public discourses may fail to recognize the varying constraints under which women and men live, the material, social, and political options that they may access or mobilize, and the ways in which differently positioned individuals may interpret or 'read' a law in a context of multiple asymmetries of power.

Moreover, assumptions about who may be a perpetrator or victim of domestic violence, what actions constitute domestic violence, and whether violence is acceptable, or not, are intimately tied to unequal relations of power. Attention to the discourses and practices around the violence of husbands and wives, mothers- and daughters-in-law, and sisters-in-law in Sullk'ata demonstrates that gender discourses and hierarchies alone do not adequately explain the ways that domestic violence emerges among Sullk'atas. Although gender hierarchy is not an inconsequential aspect of domestic violence in the Andes, kinship obligations and ambiguities of hierarchy and affect, significantly shape the ways in which relationships are negotiated and create the conditions for the emergence of violence among individuals.

Thus the violence among women, though not as frequently acknowledged as violence between husbands and wives, is crucial to a more general understanding of domestic violence in the Andes. Examining the violence among women who are related through affinity highlights the ways that domestic violence, which is so seemingly gendered in public discourses and practices, also arises in relationships among 'same gendered' individuals. Attention to relationships between mothers- and daughters-in-law contributes to defining the parameters of affinity that partly

establish the conditions for conflict. Analyzing violence through the lens of affinity shifts both the meanings and general underpinnings of violence, locating violence in a network of negotiated yet hierarchical relationships among kin.

Furthermore, in Sullk'ata kinship and violence extend beyond the walls of a household, affecting and affected by wider relationships of power. Rather than existing in a distinct category (something other than 'domestic' violence), violence between affines in Sullk'ata requires a more complicated and expansive notion of both the 'domestic' and 'domestic violence.' Husbands and wives, mothers- and daughters-in-law, and sisters-in-law who may or may not reside in the same household, are bound by the obligations, opportunities, and expectations of affinity, and kinship more generally. As exemplified by the conflicts among Ilena and her affines, various instances of violence and multiple households may overlay each other. From this perspective, a narrow definition of domestic violence that only incorporates violence between married couples, or those living within the same house, obscures both the instances of violence among women affines, the particular histories of events, and the discourses of power that make violence possible in Sullk'ata. Expanding the boundaries of the domestic might enable more integrative interpretations of domestic violence that occurs within and across generations, both in Sullk'ata and elsewhere. In many localities like Bolivia and the United States, legal definitions of domestic abuse incorporate notions of heterosexuality and/or residency into the formalization of 'who is protected from whom.' The individuals involved and law enforcement and judicial systems might then see certain abuses as more or less legitimate, constraining how abuse might be interpreted



against wider asymmetries and limiting who might claim to be abused or gain assistance.<sup>18</sup>

Conversely, integrating physical violence and interpersonal conflict, as well as social and affective intimacy, into ethnographic accounts of kinship works against the tendency to reduce the strategic interactions and practices of individuals to static structures. Kinship structures are lived in and through individual bodies and subjectivities, in the everyday interactions of individuals. Siblings and sisters-in-law, mothers- and daughters-in-law, and husbands and wives, among others, interact with each other and through these interactions the intimacies and hierarchies of kinship are deployed and transformed. Not only are power hierarchies constantly reproduced in the interactions of individuals, but the life histories of each individual, the histories of interaction of various individuals, and the specific situational contexts are also significant to how relatedness and conflict are played out and interpreted. The analysis of affinity in Sullk'ata, thus, raises the question of how emotional and material realities of embodied individuals are intertwined in other social and cultural contexts. For example, the obligations, expectations, and affective ideals intertwined with a daughter-in-law's labor are particularly important to household dynamics in Sullk'ata and are linked to an array of other economic and social inequalities. Yet, domestic violence is often implicitly or explicitly associated with sexually intimate or 'romantic' relationships, at the same time that the economic aspects of these relationships and intersecting aspects of inequality are obscured. To what extent is a rethinking of the complex realities of kinship and marriage in

situated localities warranted, in order to reassess the contingencies of domestic violence as well as analytical frames through which we understand domestic violence?

Finally, comparing the violence among women affines in Sullk'ata further demonstrates that gender relations and hierarchies are not just about the differences between homogeneous categories of 'men' and 'women.' Gender also extends to the relationships, practices, and interactions that constitute differences among men and differences among women such that distinctive identities and positions of power are embedded in specific contexts. Women contend with the obligations, unequal exchanges, and ambiguities of affect in affinity as mothers-, sisters- and daughters-in-law. Yet both gender and affinity are experienced and negotiated in different ways depending on age and generation, relationship with spouse, access to resources such as wage work and education, among other things. Just as gender is not necessarily the only, or the primary, axis of inequality that structures a woman's life at any particular moment, affinity is not the only or necessarily the primary category that shapes the identity and experiences of power asymmetry among affines. Attention to relationships among women and relationships among men may, thus, be fundamental to understanding the ways that power is deployed between women and men in other contexts as well as in Sullk'ata.

Violence in Sullk'ata is culturally embedded and reflects interpersonal negotiations for positioning and power in the context of multiple structured inequalities. Thus, in spite of the

---

<sup>18</sup> The violence in gay and lesbian partnerships is, thus, rarely recognized as domestic violence: gay and lesbian partners are at once assumed to be of the 'same' gender, and gender difference is assumed to be the locus of power and violence. See Letellier (1994); NCAVP (1996). The ways that violent abuse and the individual and public interpretations of abuse are embedded in interlocking systems of race, gender, and class oppression have been particularly well examined. See for example Collins (1990).

seemingly universal nature of domestic violence, violence like kinship requires complex and locally relevant modes of interpretation and understanding. In this paper I have widened the focus on domestic violence to incorporate the webs of power within which women and men find themselves or through which they might actively seek to alter their circumstances. I have brought attention to kinship as lived through people who are sometimes in pain and relationships that are sometimes fraught with uncertainties. These networks of relationships, and the individual interactions that are implicated, shape events and the ways that interlocutors, including an anthropologist, may interpret 'kinship' or 'violence,' as lived interactions. Thus, to understand violence and kinship, and to understand the place of each in dynamic relationships that converge in yet extend beyond the domestic arena, requires detailed analysis of spoken and unspoken meanings, the micropolitics of interactions, and historical structurings of power in particular places at specific moments in time.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abercrombie, Thomas  
1998 *Pathways of Memory and Power: Ethnography and History among an Andean People*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila  
1993 *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Allen, Catherine  
1988 *The Hold Life Has: Coca and Cultural Identity in an Andean Community*. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Arnold, Denise  
1992 "La casa de adobes y piedras del inka: género, memoria y cosmos en Qaqachaka". In: Arnold, Denise; Jiménez, Domingo and Yapita, Juan de Dios (eds.). *Hacia un orden andino de las cosas: tres pistas de los Andes meridionales*. La Paz: HISBOL/ICLA.  
1997 "Introducción". In: Arnold, Denise (ed.). *Más allá del silencio: Fronteras de género en los Andes*. Vol. 1. La Paz: CIASE/ILCA.
- Arnold, Denise and Yapita, Juan de Dios  
1996 "Los caminos de género en Qaqachaka: saberes femeninos y discursos textuales alternativos en los Andes". In: Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia (ed.). *Ser mujer indígena, chola o birlocha en la Bolivia postcolonial de los años 90*. La Paz: HISBOL/ICLA.
- Barragán, Rossana  
1997 "Miradas indiscretas a la patria potestad: Articulación social y conflictos de género en la ciudad de La Paz, siglos XVII-XIX". In: Arnold, Denise (ed.). *Más allá del silencio: Fronteras de género en los Andes*. Vol. 1. La Paz: CIASE/ILCA.
- Bolin, Inge  
1998 *Rituals of Respect: The Secret of Survival in the High Peruvian Andes*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bolton, Ralph and Mayer, Enrique (eds.)  
1977 *Andean Kinship and Marriage*. Washington DC: American Anthropological Association.

- Cereceda, Verónica  
1978 *Mundo Quechua*. Cochabamba, Bolivia: Editorial Serrano.
- Collier, Jane and Yanagisako, Sylvia (eds.)  
1987 *Gender and Kinship: Essays Toward a Unified Analysis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Collins, Jane  
1988 *Unseasonal Migrations: The Effects of Rural Labor Scarcity in Peru*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Collins, Patricia Hill  
1990 *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Cusihamán G., Antonio  
1976 *Gramática Quechua, Cuzco-Collao*. 1st ed. Lima: Ministerio de Educación.
- Daza, Jaime Luis  
1983 *The Cultural Context of Courtship and Betrothal in a Quechua Community of Cochabamba, Bolivia*. Doctoral Dissertation. University of California-Los Angeles.
- Degregori, Carlos Ivan  
1989 "Introducción". In: Millones, Luis and Pratt, Mary Louise. *Amor brujo: Imagen y cultura del amor en los Andes*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.
- de la Cadena, Marisol  
1991 "Las mujeres son más indias: etnicidad y género en una comunidad del Cusco". *Revista Andina* 9(1).  
1997 "Matrimonio y etnicidad en comunidades andinas (Chitapampa, Cusco)". In: Arnold, Denise (ed.). *Más allá del silencio: Fronteras de género en los Andes*. Vol. 1. La Paz: CIASE/ILCA.
- Gose, Peter  
1994 *Deathly Waters and Hungry Mountains: Agrarian Ritual and Class Formation in an Andean Town*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Gutmann, Matthew  
1996 *The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Haraway, Donna  
1991 *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Harris, Olivia  
1978 "Complementarity and Conflict: an Andean View of Women and Men". In: La Fontaine, J. S. (ed.). *Sex and Age as Principles of Social Differentiation*. Association of Social Anthropologists Monograph 17. London: Academic Press.  
1981 "Households as Natural Units". In: Young, Kate; Wolkowitz, C. and McCullagh, R. (eds.). *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination in International Perspective*. London: CSE Books.  
1994 "Condor and Bull: The Ambiguities of Masculinity in Northern Potosí". In: Harvey, Penelope and Gow, Peter (eds.). *Sex and Violence: Issues in Representation and Experience*. New York: Routledge.
- Harris, Olivia; Larson, Brooke and Tandeter, Enrique (eds.)  
1987 *La participación indígena en los mercados surandinos: estrategias y reproducción social, siglos XVI a XX*. La Paz: CERES.
- Harvey, Penelope  
1991 "Drunken Speech and the Construction of Meaning: Bilingual Competence in the Southern Andes". *Language in Society* 20.  
1993 "Género, comunidad y confrontación: Relaciones de poder en la embriaguez en Ocongate, Perú". In: Saignes, T. (ed.). *Borrachera y memoria: la experiencia de lo sagrado en los Andes*. La Paz: HISBOL/IFEA.  
1994 "Domestic Violence in the Andes". In: *Sex and Violence: Issues in Representation and Experience*. New York: Routledge.  
1998 "Los 'hechos naturales' de parentesco y género en un contexto andino". In: Arnold, Denise (ed.). *Gente de carne y hueso: Las tramas de parentesco en los Andes*. La Paz: CIASE/ILCA.
- Harvey, Penelope and Gow, Peter (eds.)  
1994 *Sex and Violence: Issues in Representation and Experience*. New York: Routledge.

- Heise, Lori  
1995 "Violence, Sexuality, and Women's Lives". In: Parker, Richard and Gagnon, John (eds.). *Conceiving Sexuality: Approaches to Sex Research in a Postmodern World*. New York: Routledge Press.
- Hopkins, Diane  
1982 "Juego de enemigos". *Allpanchis* 20.
- Howard-Malverde, Rosaleen  
1995 "Pachamama is a Spanish Word': Linguistic Tension between Aymara, Quechua, and Spanish in Northern Potosí (Bolivia)". *Anthropological Linguistics* 37(2).
- Hünefeldt, Christine  
2000 *Liberalism in the Bedroom: Quarreling Spouses in Nineteenth-Century Lima*. University Park, PN: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Johnson, Lyman and Lipsett-Rivera, Sonya (eds.)  
1998 *The Faces of Honor: Sex, Shame, and Violence in Colonial Latin America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Kulick, Don  
1998 *Travestí: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Léons, Madeline Barbara and Sanabria, Harry  
1997 *Coca, Cocaine, and the Bolivian Reality*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Letellier, P.  
1994 "Gay and Bisexual Male Domestic Violence Victimization: Challenges to Feminist Theory and Response to Violence". *Violence and Victims* 9(2).
- Mannheim, Bruce  
1991a *The Language of the Inka since the European Invasion*. Austin: University of Texas Press.  
1991b "After Dreaming: Image and Interpretation in Southern Peruvian Quechua". *Etnofoor* IV(2).
- Mannheim, Bruce and Tedlock, Dennis  
1995 "Introduction". In: Tedlock, Dennis and Mannheim, Bruce (eds.). *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Mannheim, Bruce and Van Vleet, Krista  
1998 "The Dialogics of Southern Quechua". *American Anthropologist* 100(2).
- Millones, Luis and Pratt, Mary  
1989 *Amor brujo: Imagen y cultura del amor en los Andes*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.
- Morrison, Andrew R. and Biehl, María Loreto (eds.)  
1999 *Too Close to Home: Domestic Violence in the Americas*. Washington DC: Inter-American Development Bank.
- Nash, June  
1993 [1979] *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us: Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP)  
1996 Annual Report on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Domestic Violence. <http://www.vaw.umn.edu/FinalDocuments/glbtrdv.htm>.
- Ossio, Juan M.  
1992 *Parentesco, reciprocidad, y jerarquía en los Andes: Una aproximación a la organización social de la comunidad de Andamarca*. Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú.
- Parker, Richard and Gagnon, John (eds.)  
1995 *Conceiving Sexuality: Approaches to Sex Research in a Postmodern World*. New York: Routledge.
- Platt, Tristan  
1986 [1978] "Mirrors and Maize: The Concept of Yanatin among the Macha of Bolivia". In: Murra, John; Wachtel, Nathan and Revel, Jacques (eds.). *Anthropological History of Andean Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia (ed.)  
1996 *Ser mujer indígena, chola o birlocha en la Bolivia postcolonial de los años 90*. La Paz: HISBOL/ICLA.
- Rosaldo, Michelle  
1980 "The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding". *Signs* 5(3).
- Rosaldo, Renato  
1989 *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Saignes, Thierry (ed.)  
1993 *Borrachera y memoria: la experiencia de lo sagrado en los Andes*. La Paz: HISBOL/IFEA.
- Spedding, Alison P.  
1997 "'Esa mujer no necesita hombre': en contra de la 'dualidad andina' - imágenes de género en Los Yungas de La Paz. In: Arnold, Denise (ed.). *Más allá del silencio: Fronteras de género en los Andes*. Vol. 1. La Paz: CIASE/ILCA.
- Starn, Orin  
1999 *Nightwatch: The Politics of Protest in the Andes*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Stephenson, Marcia  
1999 *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Valderrama Fernández, Ricardo and Escalante Gutiérrez, Carmen  
1997 "Ser mujer: Warmi kay - la mujer en la cultura andina". In: Arnold, Denise (ed.). *Más allá del silencio: Fronteras de género en los Andes*. Vol. 1. La Paz: CIASE/ILCA.
- Van Vleet, Krista  
1997 "Disrupting the Domestic: Working Men, Envid Women, and the Intimacies of Gossip". Paper presented to the 119th Annual Meeting of the American Ethnological Society, Seattle, WA, March 1997.  
1999 "'Now My Daughter is Alone': Performing Kinship and Embodying Affect in Marriage Practices among Native Andeans in Bolivia". Doctoral Dissertation. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan.  
2000 "A Political Economy of Emotion: Gossip, Envy, and Ethnography in the Andes". Presented to the 99th Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. San Francisco, CA. November 16-19, 2000.
- Weston, Kath  
1993 *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Weismantel, Mary J.  
1988 *Food, Gender, and Poverty in the Ecuadorian Andes*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.  
1995 "Making Kin: Kinship Theory and Zumbagua Adoptions". *American Ethnologist* 22(4).  
2001 *Cholas and Pishtacos: Stories of Race and Sex in the Andes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Yanagisako, Sylvia and Delaney, Carol (eds.)  
1995 *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*. New York: Routledge.

## On Violence against Women

Krista Van Vleet's article is one of only a few studies of domestic violence in rural areas, and we took advantage of its publication to generate a debate. Our first participant is Sonia Montaña, a well-known feminist and pioneer in work with women. As the first Under-Secretary of Gender Affairs, Montaña pushed forward the Law against Domestic Violence in Bolivia, which was enacted while she was in office. She is currently

working for ECLAC in Chile. We also invited Denise Arnold, an anthropologist and well-known researcher who has published a number of studies of the Andean world, many of which were written jointly with Aymara linguist Juan de Dios Yapita. After Montaña and Arnold answer our questions and express their opinions, the author Krista Van Vleet responds to the comments on her article.

### THE MAGNITUDE OF URBAN VIOLENCE IN BOLIVIA<sup>1</sup>

21,504 cases of violence against women were recorded in 1995 in four cities and by 14 institutions. Of these, 71 were reported by married or co-habiting women who denounced their husband or partner as the aggressor. The 1999 UNDP report states that a total of 7,307 cases or complaints were registered nationwide by 67 institutions over five years. Of these, 93% involve domestic violence and 98% of the incidents were reported by women. The figures from 1998 are even more shocking. The Family Protection Brigades recorded 44,965 cases in

departmental capital cities.<sup>2</sup> This gives an average of nearly 5,000 cases per city; 416 per month in each, or 104 cases reported every week. Moreover, these figures should be multiplied, because it is calculated that only one out of every four or five cases is reported.

#### OPPOSING PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENCE IN RURAL AREAS AND "ETHNIC" GROUPS

More implicitly than explicitly, there are opposing perspectives on gender relations and

violence in rural areas. At the risk of being schematic, I will briefly characterise two conflicting views.

**First position:** Gender and women over and above culture and ethnic difference. This perspective is found in NGOs that have worked with women, mainly in the popular urban sectors, and in the Under-Secretariat of Gender, now the Vice-Ministry of Gender. They feel that the cloak of culture or indigenous peoples' rights and multiculturalism hides essentialist positions that idealise not just gender

1 We specify "urban violence" here because, as we will see, existing studies only provide figures on violence in urban areas. Rossana Barragán was responsible for collecting and systematising the data.

2 García *et al.*, *Sistemas públicos contra la violencia doméstica en América Latina. Un estudio regional comparado*. Costa Rica: GESO / IDB, 2000, p. 33-35.

relations but also the whole set of social relations within a culture.

**Second position:** Cultural and indigenous rights over and above gender differences. This position has two variants. The first believes that gender relations in the Andes are complementary. This position has been nourished by ethnographic studies and

research that date back several decades. The second variant asserts that the situation of women is not so idyllic. In both cases, however, there is an opposition to outside interventions. They believe that the attitudes of those who defend the first position, who generally belong to the middle classes, are characterised by a paternalistic, missionary,

colonialist and even civilising discourse. This is because they try to "teach" how gender relations, sexuality or the female body ought not to be. Alison Spedding has criticised them on this basis. She points out that by devoting themselves to poor and marginalized groups, they paint a picture "to justify and maintain interventionism" and their own jobs.

## QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS – SONIA MONTAÑO

**Questions from Rossana Barragán.** After reading this article, what are your reactions and reflections, and to what extent do you feel it changes our understanding of the analysis of violence? Apart from that, what is your response to and analysis of the second position just described with regard to gender relations and women in rural areas? What should the role of a state institution like the Vice-Ministry of Gender be? When you were the Under-Secretary, you pointed out in the introduction to the research coordinated by Silvia Rivera that there was a very cautious attitude to gender inequality in ethnic groups or indigenous peoples, and you felt that policies needed to be developed because inequality and discrimination also affected women in those groups. To what extent do you reaffirm what you maintained before, and what would be the best option? Should rural women themselves take on board and address the solution to this situation because it is part of their culture and rights as indigenous peoples? Or do you think

state policies should be developed to deal with it? And, if so, what would the conditions be? Is it not the case that programmes or laws applied in a top-down way are also authoritarian and not very democratic? Denise Arnold, for example, is very critical of all this interculturalism being implemented by the state. Even if the intentions are good, she feels that it is still anything but intercultural.

**Responses from Sonia Montaña.** To start with I want to say that the opposing perspectives on violence against women refer to the degree of acceptance or recognition of sexual difference as an organiser of social hierarchies, not to the opposition between violence against rural or indigenous women and violence against urban women. Violence is present in different territorial and cultural spaces and is not limited to one geographical or cultural area. The damage it causes is the same everywhere, and although cultural tolerance varies, this cannot be an argument for lessening the seriousness of the crime.

This debate was played out during the Fourth

World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, where women from different parts of the world clashed with the representatives of various conservatism/fundamentalisms over the issue. In fact, the relatively correct idea that violence is culturally specific, and cannot be understood except as part of a worldview or cultural system, has been one of the arguments used to obscure the criminal nature of violence against women, and the fact that it violates human rights. This argument has fed efforts to make the crime relative, to decriminalise it and obscure its seriousness. The discussion revealed that in general arguments about the cultural dimension are usually applied only in relation to women, and are not used to promote the defence of their rights. More curiously still, those who defend cultural rights over and above gender fail to understand that gender relations are by definition a cultural construction.

I think, therefore, that the introduction to the questions biases the debate by presupposing that the discrepancies are related to the understanding of the rural or the indigenous context, when it could well be that the discrepancies refer to gender and the feminine. It seems to me that the debate is between conservatism/fundamentalism and modernity. To suggest that it is a question either of gender over and above culture and cultural rights, or of indigenous peoples over and above gender differences – which is certainly schematic – does not contribute to an interdisciplinary debate or to social dialogue. Even so, it is evidently a provocation that could turn out to be healthy if we deal with it in the right way, by acknowledging and explaining the perspective from which we are taking part in this debate.

One of feminism's contributions has been to question the supposed neutrality of science, including social science, and to emphasise the

importance of explaining where we are coming from in any debate. This enables us to recognise the biases, likes and dislikes with which we operate, question, respond or express doubts. So there are no innocent questions, let alone neutral answers. I am going to respond from the starting point of my commitment to the feminist movement, my solidarity with abused women and my absolute conviction that human rights are or should be universal. From that point of view, I declare myself against cultural relativism, and in favour of eliminating all usages and customs that act against human rights.

With that introduction, I would now like to say that Krista Van Vleet's article is an excellent piece of work that contributes to our knowledge of violence in a certain context, in this case the rural Andean world, and it does so quite competently. It is so good that it encourages debate. I liked very much the bibliographic contribution she makes around the issue of kinship and the different approaches to it from the indigenist anthropological perspective. I think she has reviewed the best that there is in circulation on this issue. Secondly, I found the attempt to link the gender approach to the kinship approach interesting. I very much liked the way she looks at it from the perspective of power relations, a key concept for analysing the phenomenon in question. Her remarks about the normalising role of the discourse on custom, drunkenness and its ambivalences are interesting. Particularly interesting is her concern with relations between women and violence between them, which is explained on the basis of kinship relations.

I know rural Bolivia well and many of the accounts are familiar to me. Even so, reading them has not (yet) changed my views on the issue of violence, which are somewhat different to Van Vleet's. As a feminist, I have shared many of her



concerns when, thanks to the work of Indian, Islamic and Catholic feminists, I understood why the violence of mothers-in-law forms part of the patriarchal scaffolding that sustains gender violence. Feminism also made me see that it was necessary to go beyond violence in the domestic sphere and associate it with society's forms of organisation/domination. In fact, if we analyse the international legal framework on domestic violence such as the Belém do Pará convention, we see that it adopts broader and more complex definitions of violence than those used in the Law against Domestic Violence in Bolivia. But I will come back to that later.

The article we are analysing suggests that, in societies organised on the basis of kinship, marriage is the arena where unequal relations are constituted with regard to "factors" such as sexuality, ethnicity, gender, age and class. It also suggests that its analysis helps us to look "beyond" relations between men and women. According to the author, kinship as an analytical category would help to give us a broader view that goes beyond the domestic sphere, placing emphasis on the dynamics of relationships situated in a specific time and place.

I agree that it is important to view things in all their complexity in order to avoid simplifications. But, as I said before, while the author makes a contribution by showing the complexity and power of the concept of kinship as an analytical tool, unfortunately she does not do the same with the gender approach. In general she tends to treat it in a simplistic way, reducing it to just another variable like age, or otherwise simplifies it as a binary opposition – man-woman,

abuser-victim<sup>3</sup> – which goes against the main feminist theories.<sup>4</sup> Van Vleet states that her study makes it possible to show that "gender difference is not a sufficient category of analysis for domestic violence in the region." She says that it is the analysis of kinship that changes the meaning of violence and its foundations, without acknowledging the contribution made by gender analysis to the understanding of violence and social relations. Gender analysis is systemic and always implies establishing links with other forms of domination.

To argue in favour of the kinship approach, Van Vleet alludes to the need to look at other aspects such as violence between women, the practices of drunkenness and family obligations, as though these problems had not been taken into account by gender studies. Feminist anthropology has made significant efforts to establish a less frustrating communication with classical anthropology, demonstrating the changing nature of kinship systems and the fertile relationship there can be around the issue of difference (sexual-cultural), while recognising that there are real tensions around the concept of collective rights and women's individual rights.

To award the concept of kinship such a broad analytical value, without submitting it to a critique of the androcentric approaches to it that exist, prevents recognition of the fact that behind the notion of "indigenous Andean concepts", for example, lies a static view of kinship systems or indigenous Andean concepts. In my opinion, a review of the concept of power that constitutes the basis of feminist thought would help to

3 It should be mentioned that Sonia Montañó's comments refer to a previous version of Van Vleet's article, which we were unable to publish because it was too long. The author was asked to cut it. Nevertheless, the reference to "abuser-victim" can be found in Van Vleet's article.

4 I would mention Alda Facio, Violeta Bermúdez, Gladys Acosta, Haydé Birgin, Nieves Rico, Susana Chiarotti, and Julieta Montañó as the first names that come to mind of scholars who have established links between gender relations and other dimensions of domination in Latin America.

produce a better interpretation of violence and its relationship with gender systems, which include kinship systems based on patriarchal hierarchies. This is why it seems to me that the real debate is between conservatism/fundamentalism and modernity.

In my judgement, it is a question of finding the intersections and links that both perspectives offer from the analytical point of view, in order to identify the points of engagement and disengagement between the struggles of women and those of indigenous peoples. In the case of Bolivia, they have experienced similar defeats, but they also have areas of tension similar to those found in other countries and cultures. I would therefore like to mention certain reflections on the Mexican experience, where we can find some of the dilemmas that public policies have to deal with, and that must be addressed by any government institution concerned with equality.

## USAGES AND CUSTOMS

Although there are many more tensions, I will concentrate on one of the central dilemmas. This has to do with the need to get beyond notions close to essentialism such as "indigenous Andean concepts", for example. These suggest that there is an essential indigenous culture, and, furthermore, that it needs to be defended against many women's demands for the abolition of practices that harm them as subjects of individual rights.

In Bolivia, and the rest of the world, there is more than sufficient evidence of the seriousness of violence against women in the domestic sphere (and also in the public sphere) as one of the most

serious hidden forms of violence. This led Comandante Marcos in Chiapas, for example, to recognise that: "Certain usages and customs do not serve indigenous communities well: the buying and selling of women, alcoholism, the segregation of women and young people in collective decision-making, which is certainly more collective than in urban areas but still excluding. We need to do away with alcoholism, the sale of women, machismo and violence in the home."<sup>5</sup>

## THE LAW

Although the purpose of this article is not to defend the Law against Violence in Bolivia, it is necessary to point out that in every country, including Bolivia, the law is the result of consensus and therefore its approach is not rigorous from the conceptual point of view. The law sought to be effective from the policy point of view. Even so, the debates that led to a law such as the one we have in this country started from the fact that it was domestic violence that was not recognised, made visible or criminalised, while other forms of violence were already dealt with in the Criminal Code, even though there was and still is a lot to be done on this level. So the law does not reduce violence to the violence committed between men and women: it makes it visible, or takes an essential step in that direction.

It is interesting to recall that during the debate in Bolivia a united front was formed by indigenist anthropologists, "white collar" indigenists, religious groups and conservatives. When they took the floor they came out with similar arguments that talked about tradition, good customs, national values and the defence

5 Reply given by Comandante Marcos to the writer Carlos Monsivais in an interview quoted by Enrique Krauze in "El Evangelio Según Marcos", *Letras Libres*, Mexico, March 2001.

of the Bolivian family. They felt that this law was going to break up “our” culture in order to promote behaviour alien to the tradition of different clerical and indigenist tendencies. Many of them argued for diminished responsibility based on the impunity provided by alcohol, or stressed the defence of family relationships. They even went to the extreme of trying to oppose the setting up of Integrated Legal Services in indigenous areas, despite the fact that it had the support of indigenous leaders, Vice-President Víctor Hugo Cárdenas and Lidia Catari. They opposed it with the argument that it was a ‘western’ imposition and that traditional forms of conflict resolution should be respected. As we know, these often end up subordinating women.

By being slaves to tradition, which is a distinctive feature of pre-modern societies, they clashed with the message of change shared by women from all the different sectors, including many women from indigenous communities. This issue is essential for understanding the tensions caused by feminist critiques of these sorts of discourse, whether they be transnational (Opus Dei), national (religious / indigenist / Andeanist) or local (communitarian).

I would like to recall the words of Roger Bartra who, with regard to the debate on indigenous rights in Mexico, makes reference to the conservatism of some indigenous people who defend the subordination of women, and reflects on how this conservatism does not help them to defend their identity but instead makes them weaker: “The defence of ‘legal pluralism’ aims to have normative systems already existing in the communities accepted in the constitution; to legitimise those usages and customs considered ‘good’, such as recognising that the

husband who attends the community assembly brings ‘the participation of his wife’ (who stays at home); to have it accepted that in these assemblies ‘there is no voting’ but unanimous agreements imposed by the ‘true word’ of the elders; to have it recognised that it is more just to ‘repair the harm done than to punish the guilty party’ (a practice that can include a wide variety of traditions: from the public exhibition of the presumed guilty party in order to shame them, to lynching or forced labour in the service of those affected).” And he goes on to say that “these expressions of traditionalism and conservatism do not seriously affect the large financial, industrial or commercial powers, or only very minimally. Who do they affect? In the first place, they undoubtedly affect the indigenous peoples themselves.”<sup>6</sup>

The debate on usages and customs is extremely important because, as Van Vleet shows, current practices help to normalise violence against women, presenting it as an inevitable consequence of kinship obligations or as a consequence of inevitable drunkenness.

Another issue raised by the article is that of the way of resolving conflicts. It is as well to remember that in Bolivia, as in other countries, the discussion around the criminalisation of violence against women was very wide-ranging. One of its core issues was the debate about mediation, negotiation, punishment and state interference. Once again, some Andeanists and some critical criminologists came together to oppose criminalisation. For different reasons and from different perspectives they felt it was necessary to reduce the number of specified crimes. They therefore argued for removing domestic violence from the legal arena and leaving it in the arena of private negotiation.

<sup>6</sup> Bartra, Roger: “Derechos Indígenas”, in *Letras Libres*, May 2002, Mexico.

## ON "COMMON LAW SYSTEMS"

While recognising the legitimacy of many criticisms of the arbitrary nature of judicial institutions, the discrimination that goes on in the legal world and the whole series of criticisms formulated by the women's movement itself, I maintain that, from a perspective of universal human rights, and given that in all known cultures in this country women are at a disadvantage, the punishment of violence against women in the domestic sphere cannot be delegated to common law systems. There is a need to combat both traditional "usages and customs" and the so-called 'western' ones, because they both limit the possibilities of women's individual rights being respected. I think the law needs to be perfected, there needs to be more education, more prevention, and the police and the justice system need to be improved. But we definitely should not use the argument of rural life or culture to leave the violation of women's rights unpunished.

*Santiago, May 2002*

## QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS – DENISE ARNOLD

**Question from Rossana Barragán.** Denise, in all your work you have emphasised the particularities of the Aymara and Andean world and also the lack of understanding and knowledge of this world on the part of government officials, planners and public policy operators. As if to counter the widespread urban opinion that women do not have a role in political meetings and organisations, even in the communities, you have written, for example, that this characterisation is in fact external, just as the 'indian' was viewed as taciturn and silent at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. You have postulated

that we should go "beyond the silence", suggesting that in the end women "speak with other mouths" and have "other dominions". In the field of education, you and Juan de Dios Yapita have asserted that even in the best attempts at intercultural education there is still a "Hispanic-European" perspective, which preserves the criteria of the dominant group and ignores Andean perspectives. With all your knowledge of the Andean world, I would like firstly to hear your opinion of whether the violence analysed by Van Vleet constitutes an absolutely exceptional case.

**Response from Denise Arnold.** The cases of violence in Sullk'ata (Chayanta province, northern Potosí) described by Van Vleet are not exceptional. You hear comments about it in many rural Andean communities whose inhabitants "are unevenly integrated into the global economy" and where there are huge inequalities in access to resources, both at the local level and at the national (and international) level.

In my own experience I have also noticed marked regional differences, both in accusations of this type of violence and in women's reactions to it. For example, in the free *ayllus* of Oruro and northern Potosí that I know, where people experience all kinds of violence every day, women prepare themselves to confront it from an early age and often laugh while they are recounting their exploits. They don't come across as being oppressed women either. I have also seen evidence there of domestic violence against men, especially when they were drunk. In contrast to this situation, it seems that in the former landed estate communities in the La Paz region women are more afraid to confront this violence. In these circumstances, I think we would need to know much more about these regional differences before entering into debates charged with emotion and insult.

Furthermore, Van Vleet is not suggesting that

in Bolivia domestic violence only affects ethnic minorities (or people of a particular socio-economic status). She says that it “occurs among individuals of virtually all social classes, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, and ages.” (Several outstanding cases involving members of the country’s elite have become public knowledge, and on an everyday level we know about the popular fascination with TV soap operas that deal with domestic violence among these social groups.) Instead, her analysis concentrates on the ethnographic context only because of her “research experiences”.

Van Vleet’s contribution is important, both for ethnographic reflections over the last ten years on categories such as “kinship” and “affinity” (that used to be taken as given in classical anthropology), and for greater understanding of the structural situations of inequality between kin, which give rise to a series of everyday negotiations of power, including resorting to violence. In this sense, her analysis of affinity also deals with “universalisms” of power and resistance to it, which can be found in any society, including the England I know, though violence there takes other forms.

The problem with her analysis is that her review of the categories of kinship as “multiple aspects of identity and power” moves more from the periphery to the centre and not the other way round. In my opinion, it is not enough to suggest that “in societies organised by kinship, marriage is an arena in which relationships of inequality, such as sexuality, ethnicity, gender, age, and class, mutually constitute each other.” Or that “affinity is also itself a category of identity and trajectory of power that influences relationships among variously positioned individuals and groups, not only husbands and wives.” This methodological problem begins with Michelle Rosaldo’s challenge (quoted at the beginning of the article) of asking “how varying relationships within the home might

influence relationships outside it”. But would it not be better to begin the analysis from the opposite starting point, by looking at “how the different relationships in the way the nation is constituted might influence relationships within the home”?

## DISCOURSES OF POWER AND THEIR ORIGINS

Perhaps one of Van Vleet’s methodological shortcomings, which led her to ignore this question, is her overlooking of the “discourse of domestic violence” in her article. She did not witness these situations at first hand and therefore she only presents the cases that she heard about while she was doing her field work. She herself recognises an ambiguity in the way she situates the discourses of power when she speaks of “the lived relationships of individuals which are (...) structured by multiple trajectories of power”. She also admits that women “are not isolated from multiple sets of economic, social and political relationships that cut across and extend beyond any particular household”, which are based on “personal experiences and local and national discourses of ethnicity, class, gender and family”. But she does not go on to analyse precisely how these national discourses have an influence in the home.

Andrew Canessa, in contrast, in his essay “*My husband calls me ‘india’ when he beats me: reproducing national hierarchies in an Andean hamlet*”, situates the discourse of violence itself in the foreground, in order to better understand how national discourses, with their inherent hierarchies of gender, race and ethnicity, are reproduced in rural Aymara communities (supposedly on the periphery of the state) and in innumerable other contexts, both in the public sphere and in the intimacy of the home. In this way, Canessa is able to place greater

emphasis on the national racism that lies at the heart of the discourse of violence and is expressed in situations of extreme marital tension between “ethnically marked” individuals. In this context, when a man insults his wife in the Aymara-speaking community of Pocobaya (Larecaja province, department of La Paz), where Canessa works, he uses terms such as “dirty *india*” or “accursed *india*”. For Canessa, these insults are a micro-level expression of the gendered and racialised aspects that underlie the construction of the nation.

### THE GENDERED CONSTRUCTION OF THE NATION

I would like to develop this point a little more, basing my remarks on Canessa’s analysis. He mentions several studies from around the world that show that the feminine (or “iconic woman”) is a synecdoche for the nation, something that must be “esteemed, protected, defended, adored and controlled”. Studies by Hünefeldt (1997) and Barragán (1997) analyse this phenomenon in the more specifically Andean case. At best, the discourses of nation-building recognise the original and indigenous presence in the nation as something exotic, linked more to the “cultural” aspects of its history and constitution than to a presence that needs to be represented at the political, economic and social level. I would say that this phenomenon is not just a leftover from “colonial and republican policies” (as Barragán suggests), but something that emerges more forcefully at the core of the vision of the *mestizo* nation constructed around the national revolution of 1952, and in many subsequent state policies, including current ones.

In the case of women, the widespread entry of Aymara and Quechua women into public spaces, as the result of the wave of migration to

urban centres, is generating new colonising discourses. On the one hand, the different identities at the heart of the nation are becoming blurred through the use of more inclusive categories such as “gender” or “women”, in an attempt to redefine a hegemonic group of “women” (or “mothers” in the urban *criollo-mestizo* phenomenon of Mother’s Day) as those who reproduce the nation and transmit its values. On the other hand, the greater public presence of women is regenerating a colonising and programmatic discourse among the elites about hygiene and public morality, as we are seeing at the moment in the local government’s propaganda programmes in La Paz. In this way, Andean women find themselves caught once again in the tension between greater integration or rejection on the part of civil society.

The case of men is different. As Canessa points out, urban *criollo-mestizo* ideas of the nation have been able to reproduce themselves in the periphery thanks to the penetration of three key activities: state education, compulsory military service and the paid work of rural migrants in urban centres, all aimed until relatively recently at the male population (cf. Arnold and Yapita *et al.*, 2000; Quintana, 1998). As Canessa shows, these activities and the values they teach transform men’s attitudes to women in their own communities.

In fact, men as a gendered group travel more often to urban centres in search of paid work and then have more access to money, while women tend to stay in the rural community, where they are responsible for the work involved in subsistence farming. (With all the problems of the fall in agricultural production in the last few decades, there is not much of a surplus to take to the market and farmers do not get good prices for their produce.)

Men tend to learn more Spanish, both in

school and during compulsory military service and the time they spend in urban areas. And it is through these institutions and the media that they internalise most strongly the values of the *criollo-mestizo* vision of the country (in school text books or national citizenship rituals, for example). What these institutions teach is that to be “civilised” is to be “white” and Spanish-speaking, with all the bodily elements, clothing, etc, that accompany these stereotypes of the nation, and (until very recently) that to be a citizen is to be a “man” with urban property and salaried work. Van Vleet herself recognises that, within a “national discourse of modernisation”, married men who receive wages for their work are considered to be more “advanced” or “civilised”.

Canessa goes further by emphasising the masculine and military nature of this vision of the nation, with its patriotic calendars, hymns and rituals. Military service papers are thus a requirement for becoming a citizen, to obtain not just an identity card but also the right to vote or get a job (or a wife) or a degree in state universities. As a result, the nation imagined by the country’s dominant groups unfolds in a male gendered, hierarchical and racialised context, where the fatherland is also reproduced in the “micro fatherland” of the community. According to Canessa, because of this the masculine discourse in the communities expresses sexual conquest in terms of the conquest of the nation’s different racial elements.

In Canessa’s analysis, the suffering undergone by men as victims of everyday discrimination in school or in the barracks – whether because of their use of Aymara (or Quechua) in environments considered inappropriate or because of their “faulty” use of Spanish – is transmitted by them to their women. He describes how conscripts who have recently arrived in the barracks are accused of being effeminate and are

forced to parade dressed as women following any infraction. In the rural areas we know, it is common to hear a husband recently returned from the barracks ordering his wife to get up and put food on the table “by the time I count to ten”. It is also common to hear that these husbands “beat their wives”.

So, although the ideology of vernacular gender relations within the community would place emphasis on the famous “complementary relationships”, this complementarity must be situated in the wider networks of social, political and economic relations, where other ideologies prevail. From this perspective, women in the community are dependent on other women – including mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law – to expand their labour exchange relationships in the subsistence economy, by sharing the work of herding livestock or agriculture. Furthermore, as Canessa points out, husbands who have to leave their communities to seek paid (but badly paid) work become very vulnerable as they cannot control the labour of their wives in a general context of economic instability and changing social conditions.

This tension between machismo and male vulnerability is what sometimes results in men’s tendency to control their wives’ sexuality when they leave the community by using consecutive pregnancies as a social control mechanism and, in the worst cases, physical violence when they return. This is due to the value conflicts they have experienced outside the community. In this hierarchy of values, power and control, the *criollo-mestizo* state first manages to “whiten” men, and they then import these values to their communities, expressing them linguistically (by speaking more Spanish or introducing Spanish words into their Aymara or Quechua) and bodily, in clothing and “white” foods (bread, pasta and rice), in order to “refine” their families as well.

## TOWARDS A POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

These national ideologies also disguise the economic reality in which, as Van Vleet acknowledges, the majority of households are unable to survive either on paid work or on subsistence farming alone, and maintaining access to land requires working that land. This form of economy is what generates differences in access to the world outside the community. As Canessa emphasises, the employer does not contribute to these processes and neither have state policies so far concerned themselves with offering solutions to guarantee the physical and moral wellbeing of the rural workforce. Until recently, the community's resources were able to provide social security in cases of emergency and old age. But after continual droughts and migration, there are increasingly fewer resources to draw upon.

As Canessa (following Janvy) insists, the labour flexibility and cheap reserve workforce of semi-proletarianised farmers is essential rather than simply peripheral to the reproduction of capital in under-developed countries. This unjust economic system is in turn based on relationships that depend on a division of labour by gender, and on the communities themselves subsidising the state economically.

**RB:** What would be the best option? Should rural women themselves take on board and address the solution to this situation? Or should state policies be developed to deal with it? And, if so, what would the conditions be? Are there any other options?

**DA:** In this context, in my opinion, if middle class women develop another sexual-moralistic discourse about family behaviour in the intimacy of the home in rural communities, this would simply reproduce the old prejudices, and also

create a new round of urban proposals and guaranteed jobs for this class. Once again it would be a case of a sweeping process of "rooting out idolatries". What also worries me is the "ethnification" of national representations of the problem of domestic violence, as for example in the propaganda put out by the Ombudswoman and other state institutions. All this reproduces the same national hierarchies without questioning much the institutional violence against women perpetrated by other social classes in the nation.

I would say that the alternatives should come both from above and from below. From above, there is a need to question and change the current ideologies of the nation and, at the same time, expand and enhance the representation and participation of original and indigenous peoples, not just in discourse but also in practice. This would involve a new round of changes in the Constitution and forms of government.

Also from above, there a need to deal more seriously with the problem of increasing alcohol abuse in rural and peri-urban communities. Van Vleet mentions the "local discourses of drunkenness" and "custom" as mechanisms that normalise and justify the violence that often occurs when someone is drunk. But these mechanisms need to be located within the messages put out by the mass media; the interests of the state and local government, which ignore the problems created by alcohol because it benefits them by generating vast sums in tax revenue; and women's gradual loss of control over the local production of drinks, which are now mass-produced (cf. Castellón, 2002).

Meanwhile, from below, with the increase in participation by Aymara and Quechua women in national public life, the way in which the "nation" is understood is currently being questioned, as the value of the contributions made by indigenous peoples to the country's identity is recognised. The famous symbolic capital of seeing the male-female



Cárdenas-Katari complementarity in action during his vice-presidency is only the start (Arnold, 2000).

At the same time, there is a struggle to renegotiate gender parameters at all levels. In the Aymara and Quechua nations, for example, there is a process of redefining gender relations in accordance with their own values. But in relation to the new international norms, it is still incipient in the tensions between gender norms at the regional, national and international level. There is a notable lack of guidelines for rethinking this question in today's indigenous laws (including ILO Convention 169), as their approach is aimed more at development issues. A gradual rejection of North American "unisex" concepts of gender that have been imposed (for example in the Education Reform texts) is currently giving rise to a vernacular reformulation of gender.

**RB:** Both in Van Vleet's article and in other studies it is noticeable that there is a very marked gender difference with regard to access to resources. So, although the relationship between violence and land tenure is not made explicit in the article, one can see that, in part, the conflicts analysed have to do with the exclusion of women from land inheritance. This means that they have to go and live with the husband's family, entering into a relationship of subordination to the mother-in-law, especially to start with. Isn't women's access to land a central problem in their position? Or are we thinking in 'western' terms?

**DA:** The question of access to resources must go much further than the question of land (or women's inheritance of flocks of sheep). We need

to rethink the relationship between peripheral and central economies, including the prices paid for produce, the subsidy systems (for wheat, for example), and beyond that to the relations of economic dependence at the international level.

**RB:** Going beyond economic factors, we can see (as also shown by studies that have been done and others now underway) that both in rural communities and among urban Aymara migrants there are very marked age and gender differences. These differences appear to be hierarchical and some would even say authoritarian. What surprises me personally is the close relationship between the principles of paternal authority that characterised the colonial and 19<sup>th</sup> century republican period, and what has been said about this community. As I analysed in one study, paternal authority was the domination, authority and legitimate violence fathers could exercise over their children, the landowner over his "servants", and also the husband over his wife. This leads me to the following question: is it not the case that these unequal, hierarchical relations of power and violence have been internalised so much that they are today part of the "Andean" world as well?<sup>7</sup> In other words, are there not aspects that today seem Andean and that in fact mask the old colonial and republican practices of inequality and violence?

**DA:** First we need to locate the current wave of protest by women (and men) against domestic violence in its socio-historical context. Studies by Barragán (1997) and others have shown how, in both colonial and republican times, indigenous

---

7 Another case has to do with theft in the "Andean" world. Marcelo Fernández, in his book *La Ley del Ayllu*, and in his article published in *T'inkazos* 9, states that the punishments imposed for theft in rural areas are drastic because this is in keeping with the Andean world's ethical and moral values. However, we should not forget that theft was also punished harshly in all medieval Spanish, colonial and early republican laws. I do not wish to suggest here that medieval and colonial law was the origin of this, but to draw attention to the fact that what is analysed as Andean today may also be due to historical intersections.

Andean women (and those of Spanish descent) appealed to state authorities in cases of domestic violence, but only in certain circumstances. They suggest that in rural communities it used to be customary to appeal to godparents and community authorities. But with the increase in migration to urban centres and the loss of these social control mechanisms, people resorted to the church or other civil society institutions. Is it not the case that the same thing is happening now as a consequence of modernisation, and that today's institutions are precisely the Ombudswoman's office, the Family Protection Brigades and the People's Free Tribunal?

With regard to the question of whether speaking of the "Andean world" masks old colonial and republican practices of inequality and violence, I would say that the nation-building process we have today is actually a post-1952 *criollo-mestizo* phenomenon, whose de-structuring of rural communities is what may have worsened the incidence of these events.

RB: And therefore, when we defend what is "Andean" are we not also defending these inequalities?

DA: I would say that "what is Andean" in this case (if it exists) has to do with modes of interpreting reality, from the perspective of what people imagine to be "their own identity". Both Van Vleet and Canessa analyse domestic violence "from outside": Van Vleet at the level of individual

experience, culturally contextualised, and Canessa in terms of the hierarchies created by the economic structures that influence the different levels of the nation. However, both authors fail to take into account certain Andean regional ways of perceiving the violence that is experienced as the continuation of a long previous history.

For example, in *El rincón de las cabezas* (Arnold *et al.*, 2000), we suggested that what goes on in the school or the barracks is determined not only by the state but also by the community. Likewise, the time spent by young rural women as domestic workers in urban centres and by young men in the barracks is sometimes perceived as a historical continuation of previous obligations to serve as *agllas* and warriors in alternative Andean models of the state. The same could be said about the post-marital obligations of the couple, including the son-in-law who is ignored by Van Vleet.

To defend "what is Andean" in this sense is not to defend current inequalities but a way of proposing alternatives for the future. The work done by Van Vleet and Canessa helps us to do this by making clear that "cultures" (including Andean ones) are continually being reconstructed in state arenas, where many of the tensions involved in conflicting identities, created from above, find their expression in the ambiguities of violence in the home. They enable us to understand that only by making fundamental changes at the heart of the nation can we mitigate these inequalities.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arnold, Denise Y.

2000 "La participación de la mujer en el proceso de reivindicación de los derechos indígenas en los Andes". Paper presented at the workshop "El ayllu y sus autoridades: perspectivas de las demandas y el proceso organizativo indígena en los Andes de Bolivia", 19-21 June 2000.

Arnold, Denise Y., Yapita, Juan de Dios *et al.*

2000 *El rincón de las cabezas: luchas textuales, educación y tierras en los Andes*. La Paz: UMSA; ILCA.

Barragán, Rossana

1997 "Miradas indiscretas a la Patria Potestad: articulación social y conflictos de género en la ciudad de La Paz, siglos XVII-XIX". In: Arnold, D.Y. (comp.). *Más allá del silencio: las fronteras del género en los Andes*. La Paz: CIASE; ILCA.

Canessa, Andrew

2001 "My Husband Calls me 'India' when he Beats Me: Reproducing National Hierarchies in an Andean Hamlet". Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Conference, Washington.

Castellón Q., Iván

2001 *Procesos de alcoholización en Chilimarca*. Cochabamba: Editorial Serrano.

Hünefeldt, Christine

1997 "Las cartas femeninas en las desaveniencias conyugales. Las mujeres limeñas a comienzos del siglo XIX". In: Arnold, D.Y. (comp.). *Más allá del silencio: las fronteras del género en los Andes*. La Paz: CIASE; ILCA.

Quintana T., Juan R.

1998 *Soldados y ciudadanos. Un estudio crítico sobre el servicio militar obligatorio en Bolivia*. La Paz: PIEB.

Weismantel, Mary

1998 "Viñachiña: hacer guaguas en Zumbagua, Ecuador". In: Arnold, Denise Y. (comp.). *Gente de carne y hueso. Las tramas de parentesco en los Andes*. La Paz: CIASE; ILCA.  
1995 "Making kin: kinship Theory and Zumbagua adoptions". *American Anthropologist* 22.

## COMMENTS IN RESPONSE – KRISTA VAN VLEET

The commentaries of Sonia Montaño and Denise Arnold, like my article and my comments, are partial in both senses of the word: in the sense of being incomplete, unable to tell the whole story or provide the final word on the complexities of gender, kinship and violence, and of being written from particular perspectives, with implicit and explicit political projects, and differing arrays of knowledges.<sup>1</sup> By reading these perspectives critically and in conjunction with each other, we move toward a more complex understanding of domestic violence as it occurs in Bolivia, the contingencies inherent in addressing violence as a social, political and humanitarian issue of great magnitude, and the ways discourses on violence (including the one that emerges in this edition of *Tinkazos*) are gendered and racialized. Although there are many interrelated themes and issues that deserve fuller attention, I will confine my comments to addressing two specific critiques, one from each author, and reiterating for the importance of understanding violence in terms of multiple relationships of power. I offer these comments as part of a collaborative effort in continuing to create arenas for meaningful dialogue about issues of violence.

At the outset I want to reiterate that the analysis of gender has been and continues to be a powerful lens through which we may understand and mobilize against domestic violence. As I note in my article, and as Montaño and Arnold reiterate, gender oppression is systematic and always linked to other forms of domination. Feminists have shown both that gender and gender hierarchies are differently structured and experienced by women of different ethnic, racial,

class and sexual orientations and that gender in turn shapes other relationships of inequality. In writing the article, I attempted to bring attention to kinship as a category of identity and power, that is not typically recognized in the hegemonic trinity of oppressions (race, class and gender) but that also structures relationships of power and instances of violence among women and between men and women in Sullk'ata. In her comments, Montaño offers the critique that such detailed discussion of kinship requires a simplification of gender and comes only at the expense of acknowledging the ways gender is linked to other inequalities. Yet by detailing the "differences among women" and in particular analyzing violence between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law and sisters-in-law in Sullk'ata, my article challenges assumptions of a homogenous category of "woman" or a simplistic concept of gender that takes account only of binary oppositions between men and women.

Although most feminists would argue that gender is a pervasive and omnipresent structural inequality, feminists have differed in the degree to which we assume that gender subordination is the most significant oppression at each moment in a woman's life. This has consequences for whether a social theorist, feminist or not, considers gender the **primary** category of analysis in **every** context. For example in the United States by the 1980s Black, Latina, and Asian American scholars and activists had thoroughly criticized the predominantly white, middle class "Women's Movement" and much feminist scholarship for ignoring the multiple oppressions that "women of color" must negotiate on a daily basis and the ways that racial and class hierarchies reinforce and are reinforced by patriarchy. I take the perspective that we need to ground our understanding of

---

1 I would like to thank Bruce Mannheim for discussing the ideas I develop in this commentary.

power asymmetries, including gender, in specific contexts, in instances of social and linguistic interaction between people as well as broader social, political and historical arenas and discourses, in order to trace how these mutually constitute each other. Although kinship is not the only organizing structure of violence in Sullk'ata, ignoring kinship weakens not only our scholarly understanding of violence but blocks potential avenues for addressing the issue of violence in rural communities.

Arnold also critiques the article's emphasis on kinship, but from a very different perspective. In her commentary, Arnold suggests that "the problem" in my analysis is methodological: my attention to kinship, she writes, "moves more *from the periphery to the centre*". She asks, (reversing the logic of Michelle Rosaldo's quote, which I cite at the beginning of my article) "would it not be better to begin the analysis from the opposite starting point, by looking at 'how the different relationships in the way the nation is constituted might influence relationships within the home'?" Arnold responds with a detailed account of national discourses embedded in Aymara men's experiences in public schools, military service, urban migrant labor, based on an unpublished manuscript by Andrew Canessa. Arnold's comments expand upon my article, and like her, I find compelling Canessa's analysis of the mutual intertwining of race, class, national identity, and gender in the instances of violence that he describes. Many possibilities exist for integrating these analyses, one from the center to the periphery and the other from the periphery to the center, into a more complex whole: my analysis and Canessa's might be seen as complementary.

But like all complementarities in the Andes, this one is also hierarchical, at least in the context of Arnold's commentary. To be specific, Arnold

privileges an analysis that moves *from the center to the periphery*, reiterating hegemonic discourses that are thoroughly gendered and gendering. Rosaldo's original statement was offered in critique of the distinction between domestic and public spheres and the related assumption that the (male) public sphere acts upon the (female) domestic sphere. Rosaldo (1980) suggests a reframing of analysis that recognizes the blurriness of the boundaries between domestic and public, as well as the ways those individuals traditionally associated with the domestic (women, children) are active social agents, who also appropriate and reconfigure "public" discourses for the own ends. Of course Rosaldo's critique of the public/domestic opposition applies to other binary oppositions (such as First World/Third World, core/periphery, modern/premodern, civilized/uncivilized) which are also gendered and gendering, racial and racializing, and are implicated in theories of modernization and development (Escobar, 1995) as well as the government discourse on domestic violence. To be clear: it is not the orientation of Canessa's article per se but the notion that an analytic move from the periphery to the center is "a problem"; certainly Arnold's own detailed ethnographic research tempers her emphasis here.

Different methodological and theoretical orientations do, of course, address different questions and issues. The issues of nationality, citizenship, racism and sexism, in an increasingly urban and transnational context, are significant in Bolivia at this historical juncture. Although the original version of this article included a section on public discourses on gender difference, ethnic 'otherness', and domestic violence, in order to reduce the length of the article the section was almost completely deleted. This choice reflects my own positioning as a

relative outsider to the current configuration of discourses around violence in Bolivia as well as the context of my fieldwork in 1995-96 in a marginal (though, of course, thoroughly national and transnational) rural community. That violence must be addressed as a national problem, that is international in scope but manifested in locally grounded ways, is abundantly clear. Bolivia's Law against Family Violence is a significant step toward addressing the daily instances of abuse. Domestic violence cannot, however, be understood or ameliorated without also addressing other systematic relations of power.

Although this debate has been framed along the rhetoric of "gender over and above ethnicity and social class" versus "ethnicity and social class over and above gender", I agree with both Montañó and Arnold who suggest (though in different ways) that this opposition fails to do justice to the profound and complex ways that class, race, and gender intertwine with and shape each other, in ways that are specific to social, cultural, and historical settings. Recognizing universal human rights provides a foundation for a politics that challenges these intertwined vectors of power. As a feminist and anthropologist, I support such a transformative politics and scholarship, yet I am wary of collapsing a discussion of universal **rights**

with an analytical stance that universalizes the causes and consequences of violence. Recognizing that we live in a world of multiple, structured and dynamic power relations, should we not also ground our politics and policies in a sober analysis of the roots and patternings of domestic violence in specific contexts and everyday interactions as well as national and transnational discourses? Without doing so, we may fail to recognize the ways in which hegemonic discourses reenter our scholarship and politics, and we mobilize one more exercise of elite, urban, state, transnational domination – domination that is always itself gendered.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Escobar, Arturo

1995 *Encountering Development: the Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rosaldo, Michelle

1980 "The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding". *Signs* 5(3).

Van Vleet, Krista

2002 "The Intimacies of Power: Rethinking Violence and Affinity in the Bolivian Andes". *American Ethnologist* 29(3).

### III. MIGRATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE



*Gildaro Antezana*





# From Tarija to Argentina: Lives on the Border<sup>1</sup>

**Alfonso Hinojosa Gordonava,  
Guido Cortez Franco and Liz Pérez Cautín<sup>2</sup>**

**Another PIEB research project, this time in southern lands. This article summarises the ways in which small farmers from Tarija's central valley earn their living partly on horticultural farms in northern Argentina. Whole families shift between two worlds, two cultures and two countries. In the end, most return to their birthplace.**

Many factors are involved in population movements, acting with differing intensity and at different times. These movements can therefore be thought of as a "continuous historical process", meaning something that has taken place repeatedly and frequently in time and space throughout the history of humanity.

We need to accept that migration forms part of everyday life in rural areas and is included in families' livelihood strategies (Preston, 1999). In Bolivia, however, because of the magnitude of these movements to foreign countries, whether they be neighbouring countries or the US or

Israel, migration signifies a continuous loss of human capital, especially if we bear in mind that two out of ten Bolivians live outside the country (Guevara, 1999).

One element needed to address the issue has to do with the distinction between temporary or seasonal migration and permanent migration. Permanent migration should not be thought of as unilateral. It is characterised above all by the displacement of the centre of production and acquisition of goods (material or symbolic) to somewhere outside the community of origin, and also by the management of time. This

- 
1. This article was published in *Tinkazos* 6, May 2000. The research results were published with the title *Idas y venidas. Campesinos tarijeños en el norte argentino*. (Comings and Goings. Small Farmers from Tarija in the North of Argentina. PIEB, 2000).
  2. Alfonso Hinojosa is a sociologist, and is taking a masters in social sciences with a mention in anthropology. He currently teaches at the Juan Misael Saracho University (Tarija) and works as a researcher at the Tarija Border Studies Centre. Guido Cortez is a sociologist who works as an adviser to indigenous organisations in the Chaco region. Liz Pérez is a sociologist, and is taking a masters in social sciences with a mention in sociology. She works as a consultant on organisational issues for the municipal government of Bermejo, and is a researcher at the Tarija Border Studies Centre.

methodological distinction is not rigid. Although permanent migration requires prior experiences of a temporary nature, it can also take place in reverse, meaning that someone who is assumed to have migrated permanently may return to the temporary migration circuit where the community of origin is considered the centre.

We will therefore speak of seasonal migrants and “visiting” or “dual residence” migrants. There is widespread consensus among those who have studied the issue that seasonal migration has to do with livelihood strategies that tend to mitigate the structural under-employment resulting from the seasonal nature of agricultural production in Tarija’s central valley. “Dual residence” or “visiting” migration, on the other hand, given that it is also a strategy used by small farmers with previous temporary migration experiences, is aimed at the search for opportunities that will define a new way of life for the family. This does not in any way imply that links or relations with the community of origin are broken. Instead, both sides are changed from within. It also implies establishing the family or community reproduction capacity wholly (or mostly) in the horticultural farms of northern Argentina. Links with the community of origin are maintained through yearly visits. These only last a few weeks (December-January) but have a high economic, social, cultural and political impact.

In Tarija’s central valley the main causes that explain the constant growth in migration from rural communities to Argentina are:

- The division of land into smaller and smaller plots due to inheritance
- The fall in productivity
- The insecurity of the urban market in Tarija.

These reasons form a triangle giving decisive encouragement to temporary migration in this region. We should also add the serious droughts caused by the El Niño phenomenon<sup>3</sup> in 1982-83 and 1997-98 and their repercussions on the small farming economy, and the new economic policy implemented in Argentina in 1991 that fixed parity with the dollar. In practice, this has meant that income saved during the migration period and sent back or brought in person to communities of origin in Tarija’s central valley has greater purchasing power.

Furthermore, we should also acknowledge the existence of cultural and ideological factors that influence the decision to migrate. Among these, access to new goods and experiences linked to a “modern mindset” associated with the Republic of Argentina attracts the interest of younger age-groups:

We are therefore speaking not of contemporary livelihood strategies but of a “habitus”, a way of life, a practice associated with a particular worldview that would enable better and more sustainable use of natural resources; not for the “survival” of a family, but for the life and reproduction of a whole community/society (Guevara, 1999).

## FEATURES OF A FARMING FAMILY ECONOMY

The department of Tarija is in the extreme south of Bolivia and has a population of 291,407, according to the National Population and Housing Census (INE, 1993). At the time of the census, 54.7% of the population lived in urban centres and the remaining 45.3% in rural areas.

---

3. The El Niño phenomenon: a natural phenomenon that caused serious droughts on the Bolivian high plateau and floods in the tropical lowlands.

51.6% of the department's rural population and 58% of the urban population were living in the central valley of Tarija (CVT), where the departmental capital is located.

The CVT covers an area of 3,444,527 hectares. 6.3% of this land is used for agriculture and 2.1% is at risk. These figures help to explain why migration is predominantly seasonal. The average amount of land owned by 58% of families in the CVT ranges between 0.5 and 4.9 hectares, which is an indication of the pressure on the land and the decreasing size of plots (Gutiérrez, 1989). The main crop is potatoes, because of their profit margin, and they are grown on an average of 3.71 hectares. Maize is grown for family consumption and for livestock (Boada, 1995).

The CVT is characterised by its temperate climate (an average of 18°C), and there are two seasons:

- The rainy season, with constant rainfall from November to March
- The dry season, from April to October.

These seasons determine the agricultural cycle or year in the communities. Although the region enjoys a temperate climate, it also suffers from frosts, hailstorms, floods and drought, as well as the considerable erosion that affects 65% of the valley's soil.

The CVT farming economy is based on reproduction of the family unit, understood to be the centre of production and consumption that provides work for all its members. Small farmers in Tarija have agriculture as their main activity, but they also combine it with other work that enables them to satisfy their basic needs. These strategies are linked both to subsistence and "opportunity management", and are based on multiple occupations.

The small farmer (or rather the farming family unit) is at once a grower of crops, a raiser of livestock, a collector of natural products, a maker of handicrafts, and often also a worker receiving a wage, either in the community of residence or as a temporary migrant in other places (Reboratti, 1996).

The farmer's life depends on external factors that he/she does not control, or at least not totally:

- First, his/her production depends on climatic conditions
- Second, the type of (ploughing) technique he/she uses is defined by the force of tradition (socio-cultural context)
- He/she does not control prices in an insecure urban market in which he/she also buys manufactured products that help to balance his/her diet to a certain extent.

From the commercial point of view, he/she is "a very inefficient producer, who works a great deal, produces few and bad quality goods, and charges a price below that of the market" (Ibid: 130).

## FEATURES OF MIGRATION TO ARGENTINA

The majority of small farmers from the CVT who migrate to Argentina work in activities linked to agriculture. These migrants have specialised mainly in horticultural production and to a lesser extent in harvesting fruit and vegetables. Almost all migrant farmers go to farms devoted to horticulture. The main crop grown on these farms is tomatoes, followed by a smaller proportion of peppers, string beans, aubergine and corn.

Horticulture has been the main agricultural activity for rural migrants from Tarija in Argentina

since the 1970s. On the farms in north-west Argentina there are two ways of organising work. One is the classic or traditional employer-employee structure, and the other is share-cropping. In the first, the farm owner organises production and hires agricultural workers temporarily. The second is a form of partnership in which farm owners and workers share the risks and profits.

Share-cropping has now become one of the main forms of work in horticulture in several regions of Argentina. In the process, Bolivian labour replaced Argentinean agricultural workers first and later some tenant farmers and farm owners (Benencia and Karasik, 1995).

Four occupational roles can be distinguished in the horticultural production carried out through share-cropping. These categories make up a vertical social mobility structure to which the term "Bolivian ladder" has been applied. This term was used first by Lynn Smith and taken up by Benencia (1999), and we adapted it on the basis of our results. In ascending order the occupations are as follows:

### FARM LABOURERS OR FARMHANDS

These are waged workers who perform the tasks of planting out tomato seedlings, tying the plants to sticks and cleaning out irrigation ditches. These tasks are the hardest and most badly paid on the farm. Rural migrants generally begin their work experience as farmhands or day labourers. Wages range from 8 to 11 Argentinean pesos. Over the month, their average income ranges from 160 to 200 dollars. They are mostly young and adolescent men, and those who are married tend to travel without their families. The income they earn is barely enough to support their families through the dry season. This type of waged worker is the most numerous in the Tarija valley.

### CARETAKERS AND PACKERS

Caretakers are responsible for looking after the tomato plants for two to three months until the fruit is ready to be picked. At the end of this time they receive a single payment per line of tomato plants (each line measures about a hundred metres).

In the north-west of Argentina they are paid about nine dollars per line. If they take charge of 110 lines, they would then earn 990 dollars for three months of work. The work requires dedication and experience.

A category close to the caretaker is that of the packer who does piece-work in the packing and selection of tomatoes. It is a job that is quite sought-after by the migrants from Tarija, but it is necessary to earn the trust of the farm owners and managers. Packers are paid 50 cents for each box and they can earn about 40 dollars a day during the harvest. Women migrants from Tarija have recently joined this occupational group.

### SHARE-CROPPERS

Share-cropping is a form of labour based on partnership with a farm owner for the production of a certain crop. It performs the function of reducing the risks of agricultural production by sharing them with the farm owner. The share-cropper is directly responsible for production, while the farm owner contributes the land, seeds and inputs.

Share-cropping has expanded rapidly in the last few decades. Several migrants state that in the 1980s share-croppers were able to take advantage of the favourable market situation and use their profits to buy machinery, inputs, houses and even land, finally becoming farm owners themselves. But they add that in the 1990s the

conditions that could be negotiated with the owners, who were often Bolivian, were more adverse to share-croppers. They now receive between 25 and 35% of the profits for the same amount of work. Pests, soil exhaustion and climatic risks in the last two years have contributed to make share-cropping less profitable. Share-croppers migrate with their sons and as they establish themselves economically they gradually bring the rest of their families.

### TENANT FARMERS AND FARM OWNERS

The tenant farmer is a horticultural producer working on rented land. Tenant farmers are generally accompanied by their families, with whom they live in the nearest village. To be able to farm on their own, buy seeds and fertiliser and use machinery, they must have a significant amount of capital, saved during their time as share-croppers. In Salta and Jujuy, and depending on the fertility of the soil, rent per hectare ranges between 800 and 1,500 dollars for one season. The amount of land farmed by a tenant farmer can vary from five hectares with two farm labourers to 20 hectares with more labourers, according to the capital available.

The farm owner occupies the highest rung of the agricultural ladder. Many have worked for more than 20 years to become the owners of medium-sized farms and handle large sums of money every year. We found that some of the most well-established farm owners from Tarija are abandoning share-cropping and going back to hiring illegal labourers for six-month periods, paying them a fixed wage. This means they do not have to share the benefits with share-croppers and are able to increase their profit margins. They may be farming up to 200 hectares, including their own and rented land.

### SEASONAL MIGRATION AND THE AGRICULTURAL CYCLE

Abandoned by the State at central and departmental level, farming communities in Tarija have subsisted in a situation of official neglect, having to deal with climatic risks, severe erosion, and the scant demand for their produce among a relatively small urban population. Faced with such an unpromising prospect as having to subsist on the basis of a seasonal maize or potato crop, young men and women are the group most inclined to leave their families and communities temporarily.

The medium-term prospect of setting up their own households encourages them to accept as "natural" the idea of working abroad for several years to accumulate some savings. The regular visits by contractors or recruiters who offer transport and guaranteed work in the neighbouring country are taken advantage of by young people without much hesitation. In some communities almost all the young people emigrate, as in the case of Churquis, where only two men were left in 1998. The possibility of saving a certain amount of money each year is one of the clearest incentives encouraging migration.

Over the last few years a significant number of young and adolescent rural women in Tarija have also chosen to migrate to Argentina. As domestic workers or labourers on the horticultural farms there, they earn an monthly income that is on average six times higher than what they could earn in the town of Tarija.

Seasonal rural migrants find work on the horticultural farms owned by Argentines or Bolivians through information networks of family members, friends and compatriots. Work on the farms is demanding, and they have to work nine to ten hours a day, watched by the farm manager or the share-cropper. At the start of 1999, farms

in the north-west were paying between 8 and 10 Argentinean pesos per day, with food and board included in the case of the lower rate. Further south wages are higher, and one can earn from 15 to 25 dollars a day, but transport costs are also higher. Some migrants who worked for a couple of months in Santa Fe and Buenos Aires said that the winter there is very cold and therefore work in the fields is harder. This is why they prefer to stay in Salta and/or Jujuy. When the harvest season is over, they must move in search of new employment or return to their communities in Tarija. They usually cover a wide area in their travels.

### SEASONAL MIGRATION FROM UNIRRIGATED AREAS

In the communities whose land is unirrigated, agricultural activities occupy the available labour from October to March, which is the rainy season. Here the main crops are maize and, on a much smaller scale, potatoes. The rest of the year, which is the dry season, between half and three-fifths of the population do not live in their own community but somewhere in Argentina. In comparison to those areas that have irrigation and can grow two crops a year, family income in these communities is obviously much lower. Those who do not migrate stay to look after their livestock: cattle, sheep and poultry, which they sell in times of need.

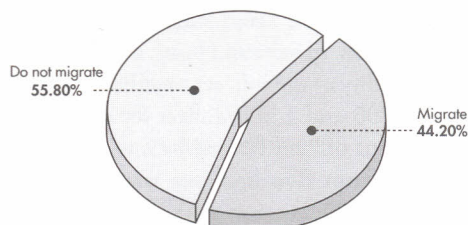
### THE CASE OF PINOS SUD

To give an example of the problems of seasonal migration in communities with unirrigated land and high rates of migration, we will analyse the case of Pinos Sud. This is a small farming community with a population of 380 in 80 families. It is in an agricultural region growing

seasonal maize and potato crops, in the headwater area of the Tolomosa river and about 30km from the town of Tarija. The road linking it to Tarija is unstable in the rainy season. Public transport is provided by a lorry that leaves the community three times a week. The school only offers the first five primary grades and there is no health post.

Pinos Sud is a typical small farming community with one of the highest rates of seasonal migration, after Pampa Redonda (cf. below). According to the census we took in January 1999, in 61 of the 80 families in the community, one or more of their members had migrated the previous year. According to our figures, 168 people, or 44.2% of the population of Pinos Sud, migrated in 1998.

Figure 1: Migration in Pinos Sud, 1998 (%)



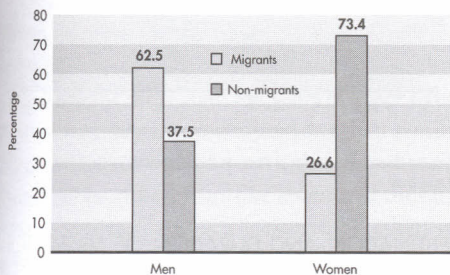
Source: Population census in Pinos Sud community, Tarija, 1999.  
Own data

A breakdown of the figures on those who migrated found that 42.9% of the total population went to Argentina and just 1.3% migrated temporarily to work in the town of Tarija. We found no-one who had migrated to other cities in Bolivia in 1998.

As figure 2 shows, 62.5% of the men in the community migrated in 1998, compared with just 26.6% of the women. This means that for a large part of the year almost 2 out of 3 men are not living in the community but in Argentina.

This obviously has a series of implications for the day-to-day life of the community and its families.

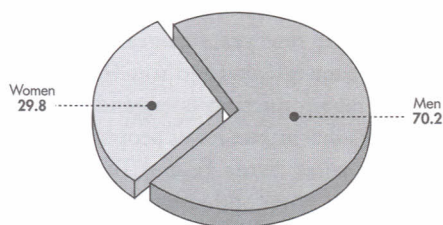
Figure 2: Migration by Sex (%)  
Pinos Sud, 1998



Source: Population census in Pinos Sud community, Tarija, 1999.  
Own data

If we only take migrants into account, we find that 70.2% are men and the remaining 29.8% are women.

Figure 3: Migrants by Sex (%)  
Pinos Sud, 1998



Source: Population census in Pinos Sud community, Tarija, 1999.  
Own data

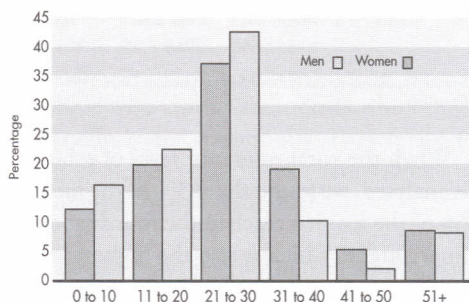
According to some interviews, the proportion of migrants who are young women has been increasing more sharply since 1991.

As the graph shows, young people of both sexes in the 21-30 age group account for almost 40% of rural migrants on average. If we group together the 11-40 age range we find that a total of 74.6% are men. This is an economically active population.

We should stress that migration does not usually involve the whole family, but rather young unmarried men and married men who leave their wives and children in the community in the care of their relatives. In the case of farm labourers, taking the family to Argentina implies spending more money to support them. Occasionally fathers will take a son or eldest sons will take a brother to work with them.

In the case of the older age group, these are people who travel to visit their relatives, with whom they stay for a couple of months. Of the few entire families who migrate every year, about five do not belong to the category of insecure seasonal migrants, unlike the large majority of migrants from the area. Instead, they are rising share-cropping families who have achieved a certain level of occupational and economic stability in Argentina.

Figure 4: Migrants by Sex and Age Group  
Pinos Sud, 1998 (%)



Source: Population census in Pinos Sud community, Tarija, 1999.  
Own data

## EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION

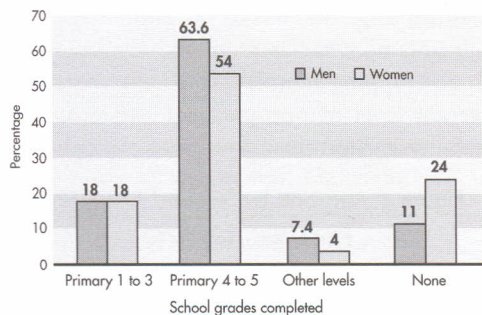
Among the community's migrant population the main occupation by far is agriculture, with housework in second place. Those who mention another occupation account for an insignificant percentage, just 2.4%. As in the other



communities there is a surprising absence of carpenters, masons, artisans or tailors. The number of migrants over the age of 11 who identified themselves as students is even lower, just 1.2% of all migrants.

Furthermore, although education is perceived as a mechanism for upward mobility, at the same time it is seen as an activity far removed from their daily lives. All in all, migrating temporarily to work in agriculture seems to have consolidated itself as a more practical choice.

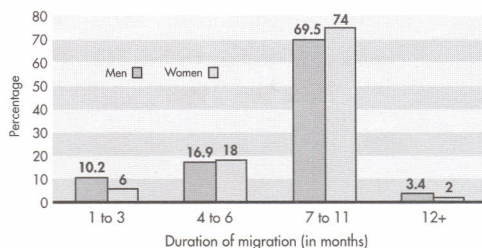
Figure 5 : Migrants by Sex and Level of Schooling (%) - Pinos Sud, 1998



Source: Population census in Pinos Sud community, Tarija, 1999.  
Own data

When the rural migrants' level of schooling was analysed, we found that 63% of the men and 54% of the women reached the fourth and fifth primary grade, which is also the highest level of schooling that can be reached in this community. 7.4% of the men and 4% of the women continued their schooling in another community, in the town of Tarija and occasionally in Argentina. The remainder are people over the age of 40, mainly women, who never attended school, and children who are not yet of school age.

Figure 6: Migrants by Sex and Length of Stay in Argentina (%) - Pinos Sud, 1998



Source: Population census in Pinos Sud community, Tarija, 1999.  
Own data

## DESTINATION AND DURATION OF MIGRATION

The farmers of Pinos Sud mainly migrate to two areas in north-western Argentina. The first is Fraile Pintado (Jujuy) and the second is Santa Rosa (Salta), at a distance of 17km and 100km respectively from the border town of Bermejo. Several of the share-croppers and farm owners who have settled in these areas came from the community of Pampa Redonda, and they mainly employ Bolivian labour.

In the last few years migrants have also travelled to Saravia (Salta) and Yuto (Jujuy), where horticultural production is expanding. Other destinations that attract fewer people are Buenos Aires, Corrientes, Santa Fe and Tucumán. The migrants from Pinos Sud know that daily wages are higher in these places, but they are also very aware that police check-ups are more rigorous on the roads and farms. This discourages the majority who do not have the residence papers that would enable them to work legally.

They also understand that the greater the distance they travel, the higher the transport costs will be, and therefore their small savings would be reduced.

Finally, as we mentioned before, only 1.3% migrate to the town of Tarija.

With regard to the amount of time migrants



stay in Argentina, we found that this was most often a period of 7-11 months, followed by a period of 4-6 months. Migration by women is in keeping with this trend. If we reflect on these figures we may conclude that it is a relatively large part of the year.

At the same time, and according to the interviews, we should mention that a significant number of heads of household have been migrating for more than ten years in order to earn complementary income to support their families. These migrants only live with their families for a couple of months a year. The absence of the father figure in these cases is a factor to be taken into account when analysing the impact of migration on the family and community.

Similarly, we should highlight the statements made by the migrants who work as farm labourers, who insist that they have no plans to take up residence in Argentina, "because the work there is very hard and you don't get used to it because it's a different environment". However, they realise that unless they find other alternatives they will continue to travel to Argentina in the years to come.

### SEASONAL MIGRATION FROM IRRIGATED AREAS

Communities that have irrigation all year round have moderate migration rates, but if we analyse the figures by age, we find that the majority of young people, both men and women, and heads of households, mainly men, are involved in migration. In the last few years, the consequences of the El Niño phenomenon, low prices for traditional agricultural produce and the competition from potatoes brought in from Argentina have combined to strongly discourage agricultural work.

In these agricultural communities potatoes, broad beans and carrots are grown and sold in

the town of Tarija. A large proportion of family labour is occupied in this work. Vehicles are acquired to provide public transport and even to pay for several family members to train to be rural teachers. We may conclude that for the moment these areas retain most of their population. In the medium term the extreme fragmentation of the land and demographic pressure will create a surplus population who, when they do not find a demand for their labour in Tarija's towns, will no doubt migrate seasonally to Argentina.

### DUAL RESIDENCE VISITORS

K. Paerregard has used the term "visiting migrants" in her research on rural-urban migration in Peru (1992) to describe those members of rural communities who do not live in their native village but travel every year to spend a few days or weeks there. We recognise the meaning and usefulness of this term, but we particularly value the local term used by farmers in the valley who consider the return of their relatives to be visits:

Those who visit us are tourists who bring benefits to the community. They spend a lot of money while they're here. (Don Lorenzo, Pampa Redonda)

The fact that they stay in the community for a couple of months (between November and January) is the first aspect that differentiates these migrants from those who migrate seasonally in accordance with the agricultural cycle. During these short periods of time the visitors devote most of their time to resting and reactivating their social ties through festivities, sporting events or fairs.

The second aspect, which also determines the proportion of migrants of this type, involves the

specific work they do on farms in Argentina: they are share-croppers, tenant farmers and farm owners. In the CVT they are significantly concentrated in the community of Pampa Redonda.

Other aspects that characterise migrants of this particular type are their monetary income and their spending capacity; migratory experiences that coincide with favourable periods in terms of the harvest, the market or the exchange rate; and the capacity to make provisions or manage risk in strongly mercantile economies.

The management of different geographical, economic and cultural spaces is expressed in the fact that they have dual residence. This means that they own property (houses, agricultural machinery, land and farm buildings) both in their community of origin and somewhere in the north of Argentina. They operate in the best possible way in the market economy, using hired labour and agrochemicals to produce tomatoes and peppers, and obtaining profits. These are aspects that do not coincide with the characteristics of the small farming economy they come from.

Apart from establishing the particular nature of their migration, all these elements that characterise the share-cropper, the tenant farmer and the farm owner represent a search for opportunities by the family, and rationality in the management of alternatives that go beyond community boundaries. But at the same time they maintain their symbolic spaces and ties of affection as components of a new identity that develops in the process, and that seems to enjoy a temporary territoriality.

## THE CASE OF PAMPA REDONDA

In the context of rural migration in Tarija, the size of the community of Pampa Redonda is unusual in the central valley and the department. Pampa

Redonda is famous for its share-croppers and farm owners, and their status is celebrated every year between November and January when they show up in their Ford trucks driving back from Argentina (mainly from Santa Rosa in Salta and Fraile Pintado in Jujuy). This gives a notoriety to their presence in the town of Tarija and they are the centre of attention in the community at this time of the year.

The community of Pampa Redonda is 25km away from Tarija, an hour's journey by bus. Administratively it belongs to the canton of Tolomosa and its neighbouring communities are Churquis, Pantipampa, Puesto Tunal and Pinos Sud, all of which are characterised by unirrigated agriculture. Arriving in the community one is struck by the large number of refurbished houses (brick, cement or corrugated iron) and those in the process of being built. There are a number of homes clustered around the school and church along the main road that runs through the community. The school has area status and in the 1998 school year it had 117 pupils in the pre-school and primary grades, which are taught up to grade 8. A few years ago the community managed to obtain electricity, thanks to its ability to pay for the installation costs, as well as the personal contacts made with the main departmental authorities. This was all undoubtedly due to the influence of the community's successful migrants.

In agroecological terms Pampa Redonda can be defined as a livestock farming community. The small amount of maize produced on unirrigated land is for family consumption and for livestock. The area's greatest constraint is the lack of irrigation, not just for agricultural production but also for fodder, given that pasturing is the system used to raise livestock.

The exodus of young people from Pampa Redonda to Argentina started to gather momentum in the 1970s:

It must be about 25 years ago that they started to go to Argentina, or it might be as much as 30 years ago that young people started to leave.... My brothers – who have died – they used to go, they were young, they used to go, but they only used to stay for a short time, they'd go in May and come back around October, and they didn't leave again until the following May. (Doña Inés, Pampa Redonda)

The start of this migration cycle in the community ties in with the farming season. Without irrigation, agricultural production is based on potatoes, maize and peanuts, which are planted in November and December. The crops are harvested from February to May. Livestock are taken to dry season pasture, traditionally to Tariquia, in May or June, and brought back to the area in November or December, after the first rains ensure that there will be pasture.

This information reinforces the idea that migration is a continuous process, involving a transition from seasonal migration to moving the centre of production but not emotional attachment. The destinations for that generation of migrants were the provinces of Salta, Jujuy and Corrientes, Santa Fe and Mendoza. Consolidation and social ascent, as a result of obtaining and investing the surplus earned from growing tomatoes and peppers, came in the mid-1980s and early 90s. This was when the sharecroppers and their families started to expand, to progress from share-cropping to renting and in some cases even managing to buy land and become farm owners.

We have large landowners here.... They take people to Santa Rosa and Fraile.... They rent land, and because they have their trucks they come and go. They have

managers, and they only go now to see what's needed on one or other of their farms. They rent 70 to 80 hectares just for tomatoes in several places, they no longer have just one farm, they're major landowners now. A large landowner will take 60 to 70 people. (Don Cardozo, Pampa Redonda)

The length of migration by the family unit today poses a problem: the children and their schooling. 23% of children between the ages of 0 and 10 migrate to Argentina for 7-11 months a year. From the point of view of their psychological and educational development, although they are well able to adapt, conflicts arise with greater intensity in the construction of new identities.

When the children come back they sometimes identify with Argentina, but because they're closer to their relatives, they feel more Bolivian. (Don Adolfo, Pampa Redonda)

As Calderón points out in the analysis of this issue, "A third country has emerged between Bolivia and Argentina (...). These are profoundly Bolivian citizens, but they are more than Bolivian, and their children are profoundly Argentinean, but they are slightly more than Argentinean" (La Razón, 21/3/99). We will come back to this idea later.

The school is now a part of this process. It is the breeding ground for potential migrants.

When they reach 16 or 17 and finish the third intermediate grade, they go to Argentina. (Teacher, Pampa Redonda)

Argentina is an important point of reference in the region's culture and economy. It is almost natural that this encourages people to cross

borders, not just in terms of geographical space but also in the temporal sense. For the rural adolescent, going to Argentina is the rite of initiation. It is extremely significant that no young men today have gone through military service, because this is considered as a lost year economically. The values of young men aged 18 to 21 revolve around economic considerations. For someone who, at the age of 15, can manage to save a thousand dollars by migrating for six or seven months, something that would be impossible in his community or in Tarija, it is logical to make that choice rather than obeying the call to serve the fatherland, although this will be valued in other dimensions. In short, the process of making these young rural men into citizens does not take place in the barracks but in the horticultural farms of northern Argentina.

Since the 1980s, share-croppers and tenant farmers have concentrated their economic ties and investments (farmland, houses, machinery and infrastructure for agriculture) in the two areas in the north of Argentina mentioned earlier, Santa Rosa and Fraile Pintado, though they are also present in other areas of Argentina, such as Río Negro, Mar del Plata, Corrientes and Escobar.

As an agricultural enterprise belonging to someone from Pampa Redonda, a typical horticultural farm in these areas will have about 30 hectares under production. Between seven and nine hectares of this land will be covered by greenhouses. These guarantee and maximise production of the crop, which is mainly tomatoes and peppers.

The human resources involved in this unit of production amount to about 40 people, whose ages range from 13 to 24, though some will be older. Only two to four of these workers will have come from Chuquisaca (from the areas nearest

to Tarija: Camargo and Culpina), while the vast majority will be from the CVT, including the farm manager. The administrator, on the other hand, who performs a variety of duties (making payments, dealing with clients or supporting the work in the fields), will be Argentinean.

The farms in the Santa Rosa area usually house their labourers in large sheds, which may or may not be properly built. However there are also "Bolivian neighbourhoods" in the area. In the Fraile area, in contrast, labourers, share-croppers and tenant farmers usually return to the village after the day's work, where they sleep either in large sheds or in their own rooms.

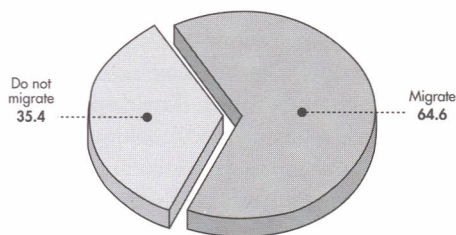
After a journey round the area, the following conclusions can be reached about the horticultural farms linked to solid markets in the north of Argentina:

- The horticultural business linked to solid markets in the north takes in all migrants, especially those from Tarija.
- In the areas of Santa Rosa and Fraile there are very significant numbers of share-croppers and farm owners. They have an impact on regional productivity by providing labour, technology and inputs and increasing the amount of land under agriculture.
- Kinship relations (family and community) structure a trans-territorial economic system based on the production of tomatoes and peppers, in which the "performance" of people from Pampa Redonda is outstanding.

## MIGRATION DATA

In a population census carried out in December 1998 we recorded 1,001 inhabitants in Pampa Redonda belonging to 206 families. 647 people (64.6%) had migrated to Argentina that year, as the following pie-chart shows.

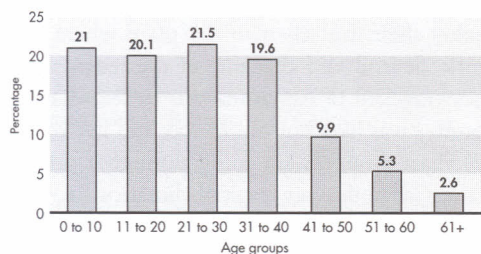
Figure 7: Migration in Pampa Redonda, 1998 (%)



Source: Population census in Pampa Redonda community, Tarija, 1999. Own data

Analysing the data by sex, we found that 70.1% of the men migrated in 1998, compared with just 58.8% of women. As we will see in the chart below, most of the migrants who have become share-croppers and tenant farmers and a few farm owners travel with their whole families to work in Argentina. Some leave their houses to be looked after by neighbours or “caretakers” from the highlands, and only live there for two or three months a year. Those who stay in the community are older relatives and some of the women who are looking after young children.

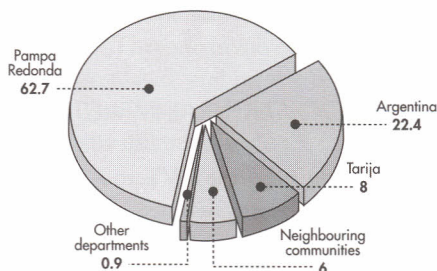
Figure 8 : Migration by Age Group, Pampa Redonda, 1998 (%)



Source: Population census in Pampa Redonda community, Tarija, 1999. Own data

Taken together, the age groups from 1-40 account for more than 80% of migrants. The first share-croppers and tenant farmers are now more than 40 years old. Their children have taken over the organisation of production on the farms. Grandparents and some parents usually travel to visit their children and grandchildren for two or three months, but they do not work during their stay.

Figure 9 : Place of Birth, Pampa Redonda Community, 1998 (%)

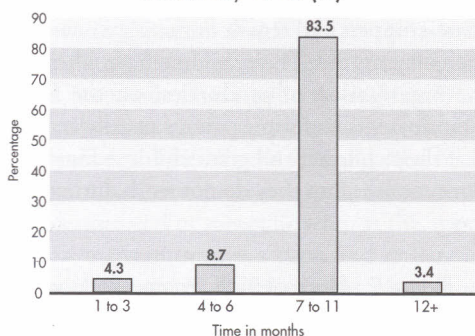


Source: Population census in Pampa Redonda community, Tarija, 1999. Own data

Pampa Redonda is one of the CVT communities with the highest number of inhabitants born in Argentina. 22.4% were born there, but they are all young and the eldest are no more than 25. Because their children were born in Argentina it was often easier for parents to obtain a residence permit for themselves and the rest of the family.

As Figure 10 shows, 83.5% of migrants stay in Argentina for 7-11 months. Rather than being determined by agricultural work, their return coincides with the end-of-year festivities and the resting period for those who work in Fraile Pintado (Jujuy) and Santa Rosa (Salta). According to their comments, the summer in Tarija is more pleasant than the very high temperatures in north-western Argentina.

Figure 10: Duration of Migration, Pampa Redonda, 1998 (%)



Source: Population census in Pampa Redonda community, Tarija, 1999.  
Own data

## SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT

Rural migration from the CVT to Argentina is on the increase. Young women are becoming involved in migration to work on the horticultural farms and as domestic workers in the larger cities. The fall in productivity of the traditional crops (maize and potatoes), the ongoing division of plots of land, and the insecurity of the market in Tarija discourage younger people from the idea of continuing to work in agriculture. Starting at the age of 12, rural migrants leave their communities to work as labourers on the farms in Argentina, and the lack of opportunities for education and employment in Tarija has an influence on earlier migration.

Family members living in the communities of origin receive a significant amount of money from the migrants in Argentina. The money is used to buy food, furniture and clothes and to pay for the basic services installed in the last two years (drinking water and electricity), or to buy vehicles for public transport. Many families would not be able to survive for most of the year if they did not receive these remittances. At the same time, heads of households who have been

migrating for the last 10-15 years live away from their families for 8-10 months of the year. This implies a certain degree of family and community break-up when migration is widespread.

Farm labourers spend their savings on the upkeep of their families. Their spending is characterised by buying food (cooking oil, sugar, pasta, rice and some vegetables), furniture, electrical goods and clothes, as well as participation in community festivities. There is a notable consumption of alcohol, especially beer, a product which is relatively expensive for rural areas. There is increasing consumption of goods made outside the community (wine, beer, and even vegetables and bread are often brought from the town of Tarija). Some successful migrants hope to be able to invest part of their savings in some commercial or productive activity in the town of Tarija or the surrounding area, but not in their own communities. The older migrants are the ones who contemplate the possibility of a definitive return to their communities. All the migrant labourers we interviewed in Salta and Jujuy stated that they had no intention of staying to live in Argentina. The instability of their employment, the separation from their families, the lack of residence papers and their lack of integration with the rest of Argentinean society makes them feel alien to the place where they work. Several said that one of the reasons why they travelled to Argentina was to see what the country was like, but not to stay and live there.

Share-croppers are going through a time of serious instability as a result of climatic risks, price fluctuation and their small share in the profits. Several of them told us that the conditions they negotiate with the landowners have deteriorated in the last ten years. They are currently receiving between 20 and 30% of the profits from the produce sold. After just one year of failure, share-croppers often have to find employment as



caretakers or packers in order to pay their debts and start saving again.

There is clearly a growing number of migrants with a significant amount of savings. The amounts vary from hundreds to hundreds of thousands of dollars. The share-croppers who are in a position to save more money invest it in Argentina by buying trucks, farm machinery, seeds and fertiliser. The most wealthy have bought houses where they live for most of the year with their families. This "successful" group, the nature of whose migration we have defined as the "search for opportunities", is made up of tenant farmers and farm owners who have consolidated themselves economically and manage their farms as businesses rather than family farms. They employ a significant amount of labour from Tarija and Chuquisaca. The wealthiest invest

large sums of money in introducing technical improvements (drip irrigation systems, greenhouses, hybrid seeds, etc) and increasing the amount of land farmed. The money they spend in their communities is very little in comparison with what they invest in Argentina, and they spend it mainly on sponsoring community festivities, football clubs and buying large amounts of food for their parents, as well as to make links with the town of Tarija.

The medium-term future for the migrants from Tarija working as labourers or share-croppers in horticultural production in northern Argentina is unknown. They are involved in a process that is not consolidated, and for the time being they live and work between two culturally and economically different worlds.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albó, Xavier; Sandoval, Godofredo and Greaves, Tomás  
1981 *Chuguiyawu: la cara aymara de La Paz*. Vol. 4. La Paz: CIPCA.

Antezana, Fernando  
1996 *Braceros bolivianos: drama humano y sangría nacional*. La Paz: Ichtus.

Balán, Jorge  
1980 *Migraciones temporarias y mercado de trabajo rural en América Latina*. Buenos Aires: Cedes.  
1992 "The Role of Migration and Social Networks in the Development of Migration Systems in the Southern Cone". In: Kritz, Mary; Lin, J. and Zilkotnik, Hania (eds.). *International Migration Systems. A Global Approach*. New York: Oxford.

Benencia, Roberto and Karasik, Gabriela  
1995 *Inmigración limítrofe: los bolivianos en Buenos Aires*. Centro Editor de América Latina, colección Biblioteca Política Argentina, N° 482.

Benencia, Roberto  
1999 *Migrantes bolivianos en el mercado de trabajo rural bonaerense: estrategias de movilidad social*. Paper presented at the seminar "Desarrollo Agrícola y Migración Rural en Tarija", 25-27 March.

Blanes, José *et al.*  
1983 *Bolivia: Agricultura, pauperización, proletarianización y diferenciación campesina: una reflexión teórica en torno al problema de migraciones y colonización en Bolivia*. La Paz: Ceres.

Boada R., Hugo  
1995 *Diagnóstico institucional de los valles interandinos de Tarija*. La Paz: SNV - UNITAR.

Carrillo de Bono, Ivone  
1995 *Aproximaciones al estudio de la corriente migratoria de origen boliviano en las provincias de Salta y Jujuy. Periodo 1895-1960*. Universidad Nacional de Jujuy.

Codetar

1992 *Diagnóstico social de la zona del Valle de Tarija*.

Tarija: Gerencia de Desarrollo Agropecuario.

1995 *Diagnóstico agropecuario de la Cuenca del Río Tolomosa*. Tarija: Cepsa.

1996 *Control de sedimentos en la Cuenca del Río Tolomosa, Tarija*.

Corrado, fray Alejandro

1990 *El Colegio Franciscano de Tarija y sus Misiones*.

Vol. I and II. Tarija: Ed. Franciscana.

Cortés, Geneviève

1998 "La emigración, estrategia vital del campesinado". *Tinkazos* N° 1. La Paz: PIEB.

Dandler, Jorge and Medeiros, Carmen

1991 "Migración temporaria de Cochabamba, Bolivia a la Argentina: patrones e impactos en las áreas de envío". In: Pessar, Patricia (comp.). *Fronteras permeables*. Buenos Aires: Planeta.

Giannechini, fray Doroteo

1996 *Historia natural, etnográfica, geográfica, lingüística del Chaco boliviano*. Sucre: Ed. Tupac Katari.

Guevara, Jean Paul

1999 *Migraciones: agenda boliviana para el siglo XXI a partir del caso tarijeño*. La Paz, mimeo.

Gutiérrez, José Félix

1989 *Tenencia y uso de la tierra en el departamento de Tarija*. Tarija: Cedla.

INE

1993 *Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 1992, Tarija, Resultados finales*, vol. 6, May.

Meillassoux, Claude

1971 *Mujeres, graneros y capitales*. Mexico: Siglo XXI.

Mingo de la Concepción, fray Manuel

1996 *Historia de las misiones franciscanas de Tarija entre Chiriguano*. Vols I and II (2nd ed.). Tarija: Ed. Universitaria.

Oteiza, E., and Aruj, R.

1995 "Inmigración real, inmigración imaginaria y discriminación en la Argentina". Paper presented at the 5th Jornadas sobre Colectividades, Buenos Aires, mimeo.

Paerregard, Karsten

1992 *Imaginando un lugar en los Andes: en la frontera de lo vivido, inventado y culturas analizadas*.

Preston, David et al.

1995 *Documentos de trabajo: investigaciones realizadas en la Cuenca del Río Camacho, 1993-1995, Tarija*.

1999 *La emigración dentro de las estrategias de vida en el Valle del Río Camacho: la transnacionalización de los campesinos posmodernos*. Leeds, UK. Mimeo.

Reboratti, Carlos

1996 *Sociedad, ambiente y desarrollo regional en la alta cuenca del Río Bermejo*. Buenos Aires: Instituto de Geografía, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, UBA.

Santamaría, Daniel

1996 "Migración laboral y conflicto interétnico. El caso de los migrantes indígenas temporarios a los ingenios azucareros saltojujeños". In: *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* N° 3, August, Buenos Aires.

Sassone, Susana

1984 "Tendencias de la migración boliviana en Salta y Jujuy". In: *Migraciones, temas y ensayos*. Buenos Aires: Caderns.

Sivak, Martín

1996 "El impacto neoliberal en Bolivia (1985) y su incidencia en la llegada masiva de migrantes a la Argentina". Paper presented at the 5th Jornadas Migratorias, Buenos Aires, mimeo.

Trigo, Bernardo

1979 *Las tejas de mi techo*. La Paz: Ed. E&G.

Vargas, Miriam

1997 *La migración temporal en la dinámica de la unidad doméstica campesina*. Sucre: PIED Andino.





*Lorgio Vaca*



# An Ultrasound Scan of Young People in El Alto<sup>1</sup>

Germán Guaygua,  
Angela Riveros and Máximo Quisbert<sup>2</sup>

**Mothers want to see their daughters wearing western dress so that they will be “young ladies” and not have to suffer the discrimination the mothers have experienced because of their Andean *pollera*.<sup>3</sup> But when girls get too far away from the kitchen and start going to discos, tensions explode at home. Being young in El Alto<sup>4</sup> is to live on the threshold of two cultures. This article presents the findings from a research project sponsored by PIEB.**

The city of El Alto's growing population of migrants from rural areas, villages and other Bolivian cities is, among other reasons, the consequence of bankrupt regional economies and the greater possibilities for work and personal development that are assumed to exist in the city. This view is generally reinforced by the mass media, which publicise patterns of behaviour and consumption that can only take place in urban areas. Being a city that receives a large number of

migrants, especially Aymara migrants, El Alto is therefore a space in which traditions and modernities come together, because it is made up of different socio-economic sectors, though with a notable predominance of Aymara culture.

The penetration of these cultural elements in the city of El Alto does not necessarily give rise to a “hybrid culture” in the terms described by García Canclini (1995). Instead, they structure a core that links the traditions and cultural elements

---

1 This article was published in *T'inkazos* 5, June 2000. The research results were published with the title *Ser joven en El Alto. Rupturas y continuidades en la tradición cultural*. (Being Young in El Alto: Ruptures and Continuities in Cultural Traditions. PIEB, 2000).

2 Germán Guaygua has a degree in sociology from the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA) and took a masters in social sciences at the Cordillera University; he specialises in culture, young people and labour issues. He is currently working as a researcher at CEDLA (Labour and Agrarian Development Studies Centre) in La Paz (Bolivia). Angela Riveros has a degree in anthropology (UMSA) and specialises in gender and cultural issues. She is currently teaching anthropology undergraduates at the UMSA. Máximo Quisbert has a degree in sociology (UMSA) and took a masters in social sciences at the Cordillera University; his specialist areas are gender, young people and politics. He is currently working at CIDESPRO (Productive Development Centre) in La Paz (Bolivia).

3 Item of traditional clothing worn by women of Aymara origin or *cholas* in La Paz.

4 City near La Paz at an altitude of more than 4,000 metres. It has a large number of Aymara migrants among its population.

transferred by previous generations: the rural community habitus is linked to the new social and cultural practices around which patterns of behaviour among young people are modified and given new functions. And it is precisely these patterns of behaviour that form the basis for the construction of young people's identities.

This article aims to show how new supplies of cultural goods are partially remodelling the structure of society, especially in the younger generation, meaning the children of Aymara migrants who were born in the city of El Alto. They are developing new links and codes of behaviour that give rise to tension in their relationship with their parents. In fact, parents and children experience the inter-generational tension common to all sectors of society, but in migrant Aymara families this is characterised by social and cultural changes.

Nevertheless, this gives rise to certain questions: Do parents and children participate in the processes of social and cultural change to the same degree? Or are antagonistic positions established between the two generations? Do young people in El Alto abide more by the logic of consumption, while their parents continue to abide by social and cultural practices with close links to the rural community habitus?

## CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

*"Kunaysas pintasta? Chacha thaquiri sarta? Why are you wearing all that make-up? Are you looking for a man?"* From our point of view, these questions migrant Aymara mothers ask their daughters who were born in the city encompass many of the contradictions to which young people are subjected. This is why we are using them as a starting point to reflect on what it means to be young in the city of El Alto.

To start with, faced with the communicational

and symbolic bombardment, the influx of migrants creates mechanisms of fragmentation and concentration in the cultural field. These link globalising information with local knowledge, which in turn gives rise to particular conflicts related to collective and individual identities.

The result of a situation like this is always rapid social and cultural change. However, certain cultural continuities can be observed in the behaviour of young people in El Alto within the family environment, and these are closely related to the parents' codes. On the other hand, this same "domestic environment" called the family is the stage on which the tensions between the two generations are acted out. This gives rise to new social and cultural positions as a result of the re-coding, re-functionalising and re-interpretation of the parents' habitus linked to new cultural practices.

The parents' habitus is linked to Aymara cultural codes, but above all to the concept of the authority they exercise over their children. This know-how about authority is transmitted from generation to generation so that children learn to behave in a certain way in specific circumstances. In some cases, the imposition of this know-how takes on authoritarian features such as physical and psychological punishments (blows, threats, bans or blackmail) which in the long term give rise to tension, negotiation and acceptance.

Here it is important to point out that this authority is exercised over both unmarried children and those living with a partner. In a case of marital infidelity either of the parents has the authority to scold and even severely punish the guilty party. In short, paternal and maternal authority must serve as a warning: "I'm hitting you for your own good". So from an early age young people get used to the idea that the best way of dealing with family disputes is to use physical violence.

In this context, parents also demand respect and obedience from young people in return for the economic and emotional support they provide. Parents argue that the exercise of their authority is backed by the experience they have accumulated, which gives them a different view of life and makes them deserve obedience and respect from young people.

The idea of arguing and answering back forms no part of the parents' cultural frame of reference. Listening in silence is a duty, and the mere fact of answering back is considered a serious fault that means that the person is bad-mannered or inconsiderate. Faced with this sort of attitude, parents usually resort to the argument of "When I was young I never answered my parents back".

The different rules fathers and mothers learned from their own parents mean that they do not understand their children's desire to belong to a group of friends or meet up on a street corner to chat or go dancing at a disco. Parents usually associate these activities with drinking, dropping out of school, bad influences and gangs.

However, a relative reduction in authority takes place when young people acquire more cultural capital than their parents through formal education (primary and secondary school, higher education institutes). Most parents only managed to get primary school education. To make their authority prevail in these cases, mothers mainly resort to relatives, friends or teachers. They may also seek support from an elder daughter when the younger has questioned their authority. The same thing happens with sons. When the father is unable to exercise his authority, he seeks help from elder brothers to achieve obedience.

The notion of authority is very important in migrant Aymara families. The loss of authority causes great disappointment, because it means they have failed in their role as parents. It also makes them vulnerable to criticism from relatives

and friends and idle gossip, because it is interpreted as the result of having failed to bring up their children properly and insist that they start work at an early age.

For parents, therefore, the ideal son or daughter is one who studies, works and shows respect, but above all one who is obedient, because this means that they will become a model for brothers and sisters, cousins and other relatives to emulate. When this does not happen, parents become extremely concerned. After exhausting all the possibilities (seeking out teachers, elder brothers and sisters or the psychologist) in "extreme cases" of rebellion and conflict, some parents decide to resort to a traditional healer "to cure them".

But although parents are concerned about their children's social behaviour in and outside the home, they are unaware of the dilemmas faced by their children because they go to a certain school and therefore feel marginalized by certain groups of young people, or because they are experiencing emotional problems caused by love relationships. Because they are working, parents are often unable to attend school meetings. Neither can they afford to give their children access to the type of cultural consumption that would enable them to participate in certain spaces or groups.

Likewise, parents do not know about certain cultural codes involved in love relationships, and this means that they underestimate the impact of their children's emotional failures. In general, parents tend to minimise their children's problems and consider them to be not very serious. This is because, according to the parents, these problems are unrelated to any economic and social responsibility. Parents accept that young people can be worried and sad only when a close relative dies, when they have an economic problem (losing money) or when they have failed the school year.

## NO EQUITY IN THE FAMILY

It is important to point out that when problems arise or young people need to ask for advice, permission or money, they generally go to the mother. The maternal role that traditionally implies being understanding, tolerant, flexible and self-sacrificing is thereby reproduced in migrant Aymara families as well, as mothers are much more willing than their husbands to talk to their children, give them permission for things or help them financially.

For their part, young people wish to experience new sensations such as travelling in a group or going on excursions to places nearby (Achocalla or Mallasa) or further away (Copacabana or Cochabamba). Parents are often unaware of the purpose of these activities and they therefore become suspicious and distrustful. They generally associate these trips with drunkenness, bad behaviour or premature sex, and therefore consider them to be dangerous, especially for daughters. Parents are more flexible about giving permission to sons.

In our field work young women said that when their parents refuse to give them permission to do something, they are quite frequently "forced" to lie. They pretend they are going to the library or to a friend's house to do a piece of homework, or in extreme cases to mass, when in reality they are going to discos.

Due to their low level of education, parents are unaware of the real demands made by the school and believe that their children really are going to "do research" in the library, when in fact they are to be found in recreational spaces such as the electronic games rooms.

Young women also take advantage of parents' visits to their rural community to go out and enjoy themselves. But before going out they have to enter into negotiations with elder and younger brothers and sisters to ensure that they all cover up for each other and don't let on to the parents.

In contrast to the strict treatment and control parents exercise over their daughters, they are more flexible and tolerant with sons. This is part of the parents' habitus, which sets the patterns for organizing social practices based on tradition. First-generation migrant Aymara women cannot play the role of "housewife", as middle-class women do, because in most cases they are selling goods in the market or are involved in trade.

This leads to a question: which members of the family do the household chores in these sectors? It is precisely daughters who have the "obligation" to perform tasks traditionally considered feminine (cooking, washing clothes, ironing and looking after younger brothers and sisters), while sons are exempt from it or otherwise perform only the lightest tasks.

It is in their peer group and in the street that boys find the ideal spaces for establishing and reaffirming their male identity in opposition to what they consider feminine. This means that they scorn any sort of domestic obligation, especially those tasks related to the day-to-day life of the household: "Group identity is formed through participation in certain exclusively male activities (sport, getting drunk, courting, dancing skills, playing musical instruments, jokes, bravery, physical strength, indifference to beatings, etc) and certain informal rites of passage (the first fight, the first drinking session, going to the brothel). In this context masculinity is defined as a status to be achieved and certain qualities to be developed by passing tests and by moulding sensibilities. This implies going through certain rituals in which the young man must show he is virile, meaning physically strong and sexually active. The 'other signifier' is the group of friends who confirm or deny the young man's achievements on the road to manhood. The

feminine acts as the border of the masculine” (Fuller, 1997: 119).

But as part of the formation of this male identity it is also considered very important to start working at an early age. The type of work done by young men is not very relevant, even if they are in a situation of exploitation or abuse by members of their own family.

These roles are not questioned in everyday life. They are accepted as “natural” because they are recognised by society. Despite the widespread and forced entry of women into the labour market, it is very difficult to reverse domestic roles so that men do the cooking and look after the children. Therefore, gender identities are constructed with close reference to the parents’ habitus.

### THE REIGN OF THE EPHEMERAL: CONSUMPTION BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN EL ALTO

Where consumption is concerned, young people do question their parents’ authority. At the same time this is the area in which changes take place. Young people enter the cultural goods market to act as consumers, because they have been seduced by advertising in the media, and this causes tension or conflict between the two generations. In the world of cultural consumption there is the possibility being better dressed (jeans, pumps, walkmans, CDs, cassettes), especially in well-known brands, although in reality they are buying imitation products (“rip-offs”) because these young people are living in a context where the real possibilities for consumption are extremely limited.

But although in many cases young people in El Alto are unable to consume these goods, there is the possibility of doing so symbolically in other ways (hairstyle, gestures, manners, listening to

certain types of music). These play a very important role in relations with the peer group.

The traditional means of social integration and ascent are increasingly restricted (the average level of schooling among our interviewees is the fourth grade and their jobs are temporary). What prestige can it give you these days to say that you work in a minibus shouting out the route or selling ice-cream? In this situation young people in El Alto try to gain access to a process of social ascent through consumption. The market more than fills the vacuum left by the traditional mechanisms (education and/or employment). You “are” when you buy or pretend to buy, and/or when you imitate those the market presents as successful.

The fact of “owning” certain cultural goods improves self-image, reduces frustration and awards a momentary sensation of happiness. Young people seek integration and ascent by looking fashionable.

Different types of cultural consumption among young people imply different social positions and representations. This means that there are different and contradictory ways of constructing and reconstructing social and cultural signifiers, both within the same generation of young people and between different generations (parents and children). This is an important aspect that marks the beginning of socio-cultural distinction.

These socio-cultural distinctions are not radical, however. The fact that young people in El Alto have tastes different to those of their parents and peculiar to their own generation is not a valid argument for stating that these young people have a habitus different to that of their parents. On the contrary, in some of the spaces unavailable to parents young people continue to recreate their parents’ habitus. In discos in El Alto, for example, it is common to maintain the

tradition of dancing in a group (dance troupe), as parents do in a folkloric dance fraternity.

We might say, then, that the identity of young people in El Alto is shaped through an interplay of very serious contradictory relationships. On one side are the changes brought about by globalisation and on the other the persistence of tradition.

In this society, young people's identities are framed within a pattern that imposes itself gradually, a model developed through the media, a media-based globalisation as a result of the "distance effect" described by Mardones (1998). Its structural foundations have no respect for the traditional economic and cultural roots inherited by young people.

The most visible result is a sort of cultural homogenisation characterised by consumption of the same goods: musical hits, the same fashion and identical tastes in food (hamburger or pizza chains). The aim of this "McDonaldisation of culture" (Beck, 1998) is to perpetuate the belief that young people always have the option to choose what is different, new and modern, although it is well known that the market sells the same standardised products to everyone.

This is why Giddens (1997) says we are witnessing significant changes: until today most past generations lived their own traditions unconsciously. These traditions were like the soil that nourished them, and were as solid and durable as granite. Today, in contrast, there is a widespread awareness of the relativity of our societies and cultures and the need to justify traditions. The result of this is a phenomenon that Giddens calls "de-traditionalisation". This does not mean that traditions disappear, although some are at risk. What is clear is that it is now necessary to justify traditions. In order to do this, a higher level of reasoning and argument is needed to support what used to be taken for granted.

So, for example, the beliefs and cultural codes on which Aymara traditions are based have become more fragile and are obliged to demonstrate their "truth", whereas in the past it was enough just to state them.

## THE PERSISTENCE OF AYMARA CULTURE IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR

We know that the family usually plays a decisive role in the maintenance and reproduction of the social order, because cultural codes pervade the entire family structure. In the case of our research it is important to differentiate families in El Alto from the prescriptions and impositions made by state officials and NGOs, which are linked more to the prototype of the western bourgeois family.

Families in El Alto are not just made up of the father, mother and children but also other blood relatives and in-laws such as uncles and aunts, cousins or brothers- and sisters-in-law, who also share the same family space.

"Although most urban families live in nuclear units, the extended family still plays a central role. There are different forms of economic collaboration (not just working in the same enterprise but also giving recommendations and information about available work, lending money or other inputs, providing help when needed in times of greater demand, etc.) and participation in social festivities and events (there are folkloric dance fraternities and football teams that include groups of relatives). Members of the extended family are also involved in socialising younger members" (Spedding, 2000).

Given that kinship relations can be observed in everyday life, people know what type of relatives one lives with, who helps to obtain work, who to go to when one needs money or who might be good godparents.

People also seek help from their relatives. For



example, a husband or wife can ask blood relatives for help to solve relationship problems when a young wife is beaten by her husband. The young couple can also go to their parents or uncles and aunts to ask for suggestions when their baby is ill. Family members are consulted about buying medicines or curing ailments with traditional remedies. Another important aspect is when a mother has problems with her sons because they refuse to obey her and are getting drunk and coming home very late at night. In this case the mother will try to persuade them to stop these behaviours and will ask brothers, sisters or godparents to make them see sense. Therefore, having relatives and interacting with them often brings benefits, although in other cases they tend to be used as cheap labour in small workshops.

Following Spedding's argument, we can state that kinship is the most stable form of social capital and therefore the easiest to accumulate (Spedding, 1999). But it is also an important aspect of Aymara culture that enables it to maintain its traditional features.

In this section we aim to show how young people develop links with the extended family and ritual kinship through their parents. Based on our case studies, we find that they have not lost kinship ties because they have maintained and reproduced them in the city, as have their parents, adapting them to their own age and needs. Certain folkloric dance groups and football leagues are clear examples of the reproduction and also the adaptation of the parents' habitus.

Young people's participation in occasions that bring the nuclear and extended family together takes place gradually. Young people participate together with their parents in folkloric events, parties, birthdays, first haircut ceremonies and weddings. They consider these to be suitable times for getting to know the rest of the family and reproducing certain cultural codes essential to the

continuity of social practices, such as living with others, respect for one's elders and the work ethic. All this social and symbolic capital is obviously transmitted by parents so that their children will manage to conduct their social relations properly, but also to ensure that continuities are thereby structured.

So parents teach their children to go to their relatives in cases of illness, if they need to borrow money or obtain a recommendation to get a job, to solve legal or police problems, or to ask for someone's hand in marriage. In short, it is not possible to explain the different kinship relations in migrant Aymara families on the basis of a nuclear family model.

Another of the most important continuities has to do with the farming family model, an essential feature of which is introducing children to work at a very young age. When a family has a lot of children and they are all working and also studying, this can be a major source of pride and satisfaction. This is because parents believe that in this way their children will be prepared to deal with life's onerous demands. Within this view, idleness and laziness are seen as serious threats that will prevent their children having a good future.

Still with reference to cultural continuities, though these are adapted to a certain extent, we can mention young people's desire to form groups to dance in a folkloric parade and thereby participate in the yearly festivals that take place in El Alto, following the organisational patterns of their elders.

In these events it is necessary to reproduce the same model used by their parents. When the time comes to pass on the responsibility for hosting parties, for example, they need to know how to do the traditional *aro-aros*, put the garland of flowers with the national flag on the new sponsors, etc. The adaptation of these rituals

would be expressed in the way young people adopt the clothes, music and choreography, but add their own variations (jeans with *tinku* helmets, for example).

## DIFFERENT LOVES

As they belong to a different generation to their children, parents have another way of looking at love relationships. They experienced this stage of life differently, because they chose a partner on the basis of other criteria and in other places.

The spaces for falling in love available to parents were basically village festivities (parties and weddings). In urban contexts, the spaces were city-wide or neighbourhood festivities, a wedding or a weekend “dance”. The length of the relationship before marriage tended to be quite short, because attraction had immediate consequences. Moreover, parents did not behave in accordance with urban love relationship codes such as embracing, holding hands, kissing or giving presents (cards, roses or soft toys).

The marriage arrangements made for the parents in rural communities or urban settings structure their view of the qualities their future sons- and daughters-in-law are required to have: men should be hard-working and responsible, while women should be respectful, attentive and affectionate. The choice of partner should not just benefit sons and daughters but also parents, in the sense that it should help them to strengthen their economic and social networks.

Young people’s reaction to all these demands and impositions is to carry on relationships in secret, without their parents’ consent and evading the imposition of time limits. In Aymara culture it is not acceptable for relationships to go on for a long time before marriage, because parents see relationships of this sort as a dishonour, especially for daughters.

As far as the “approach” to establishing love relationships is concerned, we have found that the gender habitus is continued, as young men and women still have the cultural belief that men should take the initiative and “declare themselves”. Likewise, when they are going out with someone, both consider it normal for the man to cover the costs of joint activities (paying for the bus fare, dinner, lunch or the entrance charge at the disco). With regard to changes that make them different to their parents, young people accept as “normal” that a boy should give his girlfriend certain presents (soft toys, flowers or cards) as a sign of affection.

After the falling in love stage, the young couple goes on to live together. This practice forms part of the habitus of parents and El Alto society in general. Living together means that the couple has been accepted as such by the families of both, a fact that legitimises the union. When the new boyfriend or girlfriend is not known very well, relatives are distrustful and suspicious: “That lot from Achacachi are bad news”. Knowledge of the kinship of regional identities in La Paz provinces means that this information is taken into account seriously, either to accept or to reject potential marital alliances for young people in El Alto.

After this stage comes the *irpaqa* (asking for the girl’s hand in marriage). This is also organised in accordance with the parents’ habitus. It starts with the preparation of food and drink and continues with tense negotiations with the young woman’s family. In fact this occasion serves to weigh up the structure and volume of the economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital of both family groups. The future groom and bride adopt their parents’ social practices fully. During the *irpaqa* they are not allowed to argue and have to listen quietly to the flood of recommendations made by both families.

Depending on the situation, the new couple has to put themselves to work as hard as they can: "life is hard"; "that's just how things are"; "you have to work hard; my wife and I suffered, we started with nothing". The elders impose their precepts in an authoritarian way, and at the same time they refer to the cultural codes they themselves experienced.

In urban Aymara culture work is understood as something that is not limited to a specific amount of time. The number of days or hours a week one works does not matter if the necessary income is being earned for the family.

Doing two or three jobs at the same time will be looked on favourably by those involved with the couple through family ties or friendship. The precarious material situation common to city residents despite all their efforts is seen as something normal and part of an inevitable fate: "that's the way things are – what can we do?"; "that's what life is like".

Women get up at dawn and complete domestic chores first. Then they have to go out and sell something in the street rather than waiting for the husband's wages. They will be viewed positively by neighbours, relatives and friends, because their economic activity enables them to be financially independent: "I work, I don't wait for my husband to give me money". This model of the "working woman" is inculcated into daughters so that they will be better able to manage economically and socially in the midst of insecure conditions.

### GIVING AYMARA CULTURAL CODES NEW MEANING

The authors of *Chukiyawu* (1987) suggest that many cultural features can persist even after a person has abandoned their own language, despite the common saying that language is the soul of a

people. We referred before to the cultural elements that are still transmitted by parents to children in El Alto, but we have also looked at the ruptures between the two generations. The first of these involves the language, which is undoubtedly still important to first generation migrants from rural areas who have settled in cities like El Alto.

It is clear that parents prefer to speak Spanish with their children, even though they may not speak it correctly. Fluency in Spanish is the prerequisite for social ascent, and it is for this reason that parents do not want their children to speak Aymara. For parents, the use of Aymara is limited to the family and the circle of friends. Migrants' children born in the city choose to speak Spanish almost everywhere: in communication between relatives in their own home, with school friends and neighbours, in the market, the university, community organisations, the workplace – in short, in every public space. This does not cause any conflict between the generations. On the contrary, parents are pleased and even encourage their children to learn other foreign languages such as English or French.

To sum up, there is a rupture between Aymara and Spanish, but this is done deliberately and accepted as something normal, because it is thought that in this way people will be able to combat constant discrimination.

### ON CHOTAS, BIRLOCHAS AND POTENTIAL YOUNG LADIES

Another rupture is related to changes in clothing. Young women no longer dress the same as their mothers. Wearing the traditional Andean skirts (*pollera*) means behaving in a certain way. The *pollera* is part of the woman's body, the bodily hexis, meaning the body's movements, the way of sitting or wearing clothes (Bourdieu, 1991). These women's long experience of work and trade has

enabled them to accumulate knowledge of the market, devote themselves to trade and control this space in better conditions than women using western dress. It may be for this reason that there are few women using western dress involved in this work. They are known as “chotas”, women who wear a skirt and pinafore and do their hair in one plait. Others no longer do this work because they have had access to education.

The women known as “birlochas”, who wear a skirt or trousers with modern blouses and wear their hair loose or in a fashionable style, are not involved in trade. The media have made them “aspire” to other spaces which are not those of women wearing the *pollera*.

Young women in El Alto, the daughters of migrants, may be situated in the “urban Andean” category, meaning that they were born in the city but their parents or grandparents were migrants (Rivera, 1996). However, they might also belong to the category of “chotas” and “birlochas”, bearing in mind that between these two categories there is a range of subtle differences that determine whether a woman is closer to one or the other. So, for example, we see women wearing western dress, or “chotas”, carrying their children on their backs in the Andean *aguayo*,<sup>5</sup> as women wearing the *pollera* do, while others have broken with this habitus.

During our field work in a school in El Alto, we watched a mother wearing the *pollera*, who was used to carrying her baby in an *aguayo*, ask her daughter to do the same with her small son, arguing that it is easier and “less tiring”. But the daughter refused to do so and ignored her mother’s suggestion.

In El Alto it is very uncommon for the daughters of migrants who were born in the city to seek employment as domestic workers,

especially if they have had access to education. For their mothers’ generation, in contrast, this was seen as a “civilising” space that enabled them to gain access to the city.

Likewise, it is uncommon to see these young women involved in trading activities in the market. Parents do everything they can to ensure that their daughters get an education, and perhaps later a profession. They therefore try to imitate the clothing, attitudes and aspirations of middle class women. This explains why the generational mandate from mother to daughter is the one mentioned by Mendoza (1995): “Don’t be like me”.

Furthermore, Salazar (1999) states that mothers are aware of the need to renounce certain aspects of their identity in order to belong to a different social stratum, and they plan an “identity suicide” so that their daughters will be “better”. This is why they dress them in western skirts or trousers. This means that if these young women no longer wear the *pollera* like their mothers, it is a result of the mothers’ own decision. When their daughters are small they take the decision not to dress them in the *pollera*, because they themselves are subjected to exclusion and discrimination for dressing in that way, and “they don’t want their daughters to suffer the same”.

Nevertheless, the fact that mothers want their daughters to be different goes further than the generational mandate. This rupture with the habitus brings with it a high level of discrimination against the *pollera*. It is not just a form of dress; it is an emblem that brings with it a strong identity and at the same time discrimination.

When we asked young women why they don’t use the *pollera* like their mothers, they mentioned several reasons that we have grouped in three categories:

- They don't use it because it is very heavy, and it is more comfortable to wear a dress or trousers (these young women prefer to wear jeans and they seldom put on a dress or a skirt).
- They can't afford to, because the *pollera* is very expensive in comparison with trousers or skirts.
- They avoid wearing it because there is discrimination against the *pollera*.

These young women wear the *pollera* when they are dancing in a school festival or in one of the yearly festivities in their neighbourhood or their parents' village. In the dance parades, these young women are usually organised in the "butterflies" or "doves" sections which have recently become fashionable. They are young women who wear western clothing dressed up in the *pollera* in order to dance, but with certain peculiarities. They occupy a privileged position in the parade, always dancing in front of the band, they look slimmer than their mothers, and under the *pollera* they wear white petticoats that get shown off by their energetic movements. On top of the traditional shawl they wear smaller crimson, green or blue mantillas, which pick out the colours in their costume. They use quite a lot of make-up, lipstick and nail varnish. Although these sections of the parade wear the *pollera*, they stand out in contrast to other *pollera*-dressed women because of the bodily hexis (the way they wear it and make their movements). Their mothers' habitus of the *pollera* is therefore adopted bodily in a different way.

These young women want to differentiate themselves from their mothers, following the generational mandate "don't be like me", and they try to be like "middle class young ladies". This differentiation process gives rise to several conflicts. There is a particular gender and ethnic relationship between mothers and daughters, in

contrast to fathers and sons who do not experience this dilemma. So, for example, mothers are against their daughters wearing very short skirts, blouses that show the belly button or trousers that are too wide. Neither do they like them to use make-up or lipstick, or even perfume. If a daughter does so, her mother can often be heard to say: "you make yourself look so ugly, and you stink". The mother has neither the knowledge nor the skills for this, and therefore does not understand the daughter. At the same time, however, and in an apparently contradictory manner, she prefers her daughter to be "a young lady", different to herself, who dresses fashionably in jeans, tight tops and shoes with square high heels, gets a modern haircut or wears her hair loose, and, of course, is able to get a formal education, whereas the mother either had no access to education at all, or went to school only for a short time and got no further than primary education. To this end, many parents make an enormous effort and work as hard as they can to enable their children to have access to these things, so that they will be less discriminated against than their parents.

## VISITING THE RURAL COMMUNITY

City residents frequently return to their rural community to visit relatives and participate in community festivities in order to show off the status they have acquired in the city (Albó *et al.*, 1987). Undoubtedly, parents maintain their ties to their communities of origin especially when they have not yet completely established themselves in the city. They therefore travel quite regularly to visit their parents or to bring some agricultural produce back with them. Young people born in the city do not do this, although they sometimes go to their parents' community during school holidays, for community festivities or for Easter.

When they visit their parents' community young people generally go to relax, get to know the place and to have fun when they are feeling bored in the city. They do not usually do any specific work such as planting or harvesting, although they may help their grandparents or uncles and aunts a little with their day-to-day tasks.

For Easter first generation migrants prepare their football teams in the city to compete in different championships organised by the rural communities. It is important to set up a good team to compete successfully in these events. They therefore get their sons to join the team, together with friends who are good players.

The organisation of these football championships has certain peculiarities. For example, participants have to be relatives (in-laws or blood relations) of the community, whether they be "city residents" or "community members". Participation is therefore controlled, although reinforcements of up to a maximum of four "foreigners" can be drafted in. Young city residents are not always skilled players, and therefore many city friends who are not necessarily from the community are asked to join the team. In these cases the names of the players are often substituted or even falsified.

Through their sons, city residents often try to take advantage of this situation to achieve the desired first place. Not only does this mean winning the prize, which generally takes the form of animals such as bulls or sheep. It also implies an increase in their prestige and symbolic capital. Often, however, they come up against those in the community who control the famous quota system, trying to remember whether a player is someone's son or possibly his son-in-law.

At the end of the championship the winner celebrates noisily, sharing the triumph by buying everyone drinks. In common with the other

teams, young men from the city drink beer and celebrate with their relatives who live in the city and those in the community. These championships are spaces for several generations to get together, bringing grandfathers, fathers and young sons into contact.

Relationships with kin are part of the social capital consolidated by parents that guides young people's behaviour. These relationships facilitate participation in many labour, recreational and festive activities (parties, asking for someone's hand in marriage, graduation ceremonies and yearly festivals). Blood relatives and in-laws are scattered around the city but they are always in contact by (mobile) phone so that they can participate in the different events organised by kin. The custom is to help each other, attend festivities or ask for help to get a job or borrow money.

The younger generation takes part in this social and cultural network when they dance in a fraternity where an uncle or godfather is the sponsor. Generational differences mean that young people make an effort to dance well or show that they "know how to play". This will consolidate their symbolic capital and help to overcome the constraints in their economic capital. Participation is determined by age. The younger someone is, the more limited their participation. As time goes by (after military service in the case of young men) there is the possibility of becoming involved in the family, either by sharing or by participating actively.

## CONCLUSIONS

We can state that the fundamental differences between the two generations manifest themselves in the fact that parents seek access to material assets through a complex network of in-laws and blood relatives that structures social ties, in order to increase their economic and symbolic capital

(owning their own workshop, car or home), while young people tend to be more concerned with obtaining symbolic assets (having their own key to the house, which would imply independence, or buying brand-name clothes and walkmans), which would enable them to differentiate themselves from their peers. Likewise in contrast to parents, young people make excessive use of violence and the doors to places of entertainment, emotional and social relationships are open to them.

Despite the fact that the objective of the media, essentially television, is to standardise tastes and trends, we have seen that young people do not stay within these homogenising limits. This does not mean that the consumerist bombardment they are exposed to does not cause tension and conflict. There is clearly a conflict between the strong desire to have access to the things they see in advertisements and not having any real possibility of acquiring them. So, for example, many young people desperately long to acquire a pair of brand-name (or imitation) shoes not just because of the function they perform but above all because of the symbolic value attributed to them.

Young people between the ages of 15 and 19 are seduced by advertising. Whenever they can afford to, they go shopping and consume frenetically. Others can only afford to consume symbolically by imitating their music or sports idols' haircuts or calling themselves by the names of famous sportspeople. But whether they have money or not, they are all basically seeking entertainment. They try to live in accordance with the new times and spend as much time as possible with friends. Groups of friends go out to seek immediate pleasure in visible spaces such as discos, where they express their achievements (dancing well, for example). This implies that they feel important and visible to others, thereby increasing their symbolic capital.

If on the one hand children are criticised by their parents, on the other it is the parents who encourage them to adopt certain behaviour patterns that go against tradition with the clear objective of gaining access to a better standard of living, even though this means breaking with the parents' habitus. So, for example, young women are encouraged not to wear the *pollera* because of the discrimination it implies, but also because renouncing the *pollera* will enable them to gain access to other educational or employment activities. The same thing happens with the language, as there is a partial rupture with their parents' mother tongue. Many of those interviewed said that they understand Aymara, but they cannot use the language well enough to answer or express themselves as they do in Spanish.

As well as the ruptures, we found a continuity of the habitus in several areas of these young peoples' lives, as for example in their reproduction of their parents' work ethic. They conceive of work as a socially useful asset, and they therefore reject young people who do not work, considering them lazy, idle and fond of hanging about in the street.

Another observed continuity involves the relationships they build with relatives through festivities (weddings, parties, baptisms or birthdays) in order to establish social networks. When the time comes, these networks will provide them with support to obtain a good job or enable them to feel accompanied when they ask for someone's hand in marriage (*irpaqa*). These kinship networks are even given new roles in accordance with young people's spaces and activities. In short, having numerous relatives is not only a material benefit; it also implies great social prestige.

To sum up, although parents try to transmit to their children their own ways of seeing and

acting in the world, which refer back to tradition and the cultural habitus, they also encourage their children to adopt other attitudes that will enable them to gain access to social situations seen as superior to the parents' own. This might then be described as a double discourse.

In response to this dual attitude, children have the possibility of recoding and re-functionalising the double message, as they do with the information they receive from the media. However, it may be stated tacitly that the parents' habitus is closely linked to socio-cultural continuities (the work ethic, relationships with kin) and is maintained almost unchanged.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albó, Xavier; Greaves, Tomás and Sandoval, Godofredo  
1987 *Chukiyawu. La cara aymara de La Paz. Nuevos lazos con el campo*. Vol. IV. *Cuadernos de Investigación* 29. La Paz: CIPCA.

Beck, Ulrich  
1998 *¿Qué es la globalización? Falacias del globalismo, respuestas a la globalización*. Barcelona: Paidós.

Bourdieu, Pierre  
1991 *El sentido práctico*. Madrid: Taurus Humanidades.

Fuller, Norma  
1997 *Identidades masculinas. Varones de la clase media en el Perú*. Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

García Canclini, Néstor  
1989 *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*. Mexico: Grijalbo.  
1995 *Consumidores y ciudadanos*. Mexico: Grijalbo.

Giddens, Anthony  
1997 "Vivir en una sociedad postradicional". In: Beck, Giddens and Lash, *Modernización reflexiva. Política, tradición y estética en el orden social moderno*. Madrid: Alianza Universidad.

Mardones, José María  
1998 *Desafíos para recrear la escuela*. Madrid: PPC.

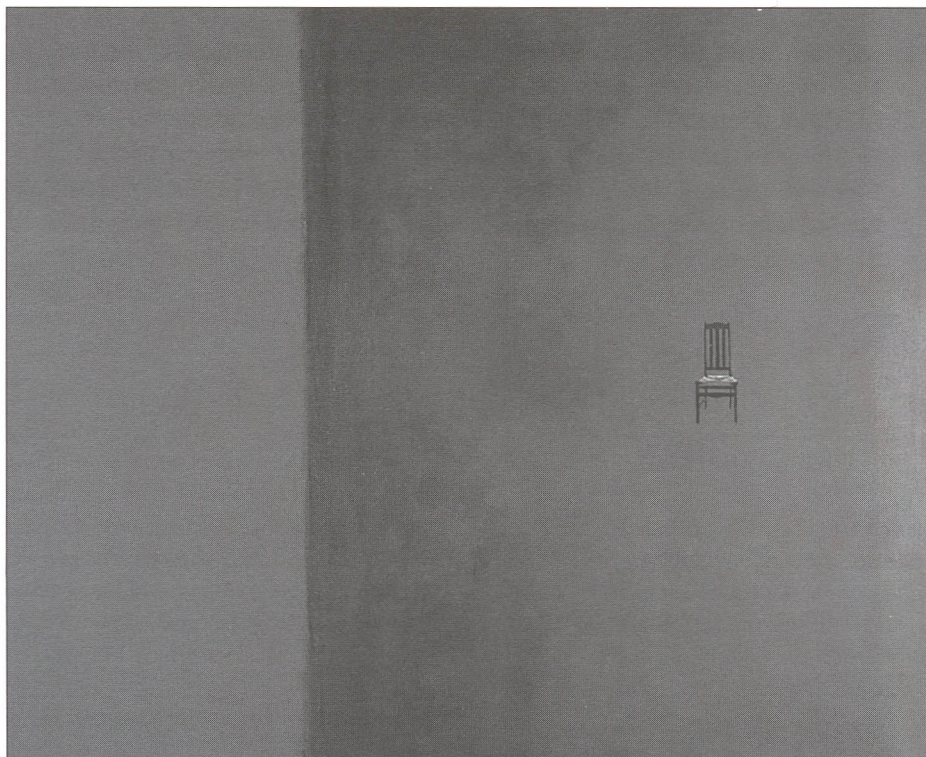
Mendoza, Rosa  
1995 "Siempre me lo dicen. Mandato generacional y movilidad social en hijos de migrantes". In: Facultad de Ciencias Sociales de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. *Ciudad de jóvenes imágenes y cultura*. Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

Rivera, Silvia  
1996 "Trabajo de mujeres. Explotación capitalista y opresión colonial entre las migrantes aymaras de La Paz y El Alto". In: Rivera, Silvia (comp.). *Ser mujer indígena, chola o birlocha en la Bolivia postcolonial de los años 90*. La Paz: SAG.

Salazar, Cecilia  
1999 *Mujeres alteñas: Espejismo y simulación en la modernidad*. La Paz: Centro de Promoción de la Mujer Gregoria Apaza.

Spedding, Alison  
1999 *Una introducción a la obra de Pierre Bourdieu*. La Paz: IDIS, Carrera de Sociología, UMSA.  
2000 *Breve curso de parentesco*. Cuadernos de Investigación. La Paz: IDIS - UMSA.





*Fernando Rodríguez Casas*



## Being Young in El Alto: Between Rock and *Sikuris*<sup>1</sup>

Rafael Archondo<sup>2</sup>

**These boys and girls are made of amazing flexibilities. In the morning they rehearse traditional Andean music, in the afternoon they're on the computer and in the evening they're kissing on a street corner, minutes before running to the disco, where they dance techno like high-wire acrobats. Between one beat and the next they ask where you can hire the best costumes for dancing the *morenada*, while buying Luis Miguel's latest album. What is going on with the new generations in El Alto?**

Adrián Ticona is a typical “rockalla”.<sup>3</sup> His parents came to the city ten years ago, when he was only seven and all he wanted to do was forget about Pacajes province, a place where he sometimes goes to visit his grandparents, who look at him as though he was an extraterrestrial. Because Adrián goes around with silver chains hanging from his belt. They don't make as much noise as you might imagine, because his trousers are too big for him... much too big. When his “old lady” saw him wearing them, all frayed at the feet from so much dragging along the ground, she thought the boy had bought the wrong size trousers and was too timid to take them back and change them. She was mistaken: this is what Adrián wants to

look like, as evidenced by his two earrings, the tattoo on his shoulder and the latest “rip-off” Reebok “kits” he bought yesterday in the market along the railway tracks.

In his enormous pockets there's also room for the can of spray paint he shakes at night when he wants to write his and his mates' names on the walls. “La gran BU” in the middle, and everyone's tags around it like the rays of a rather odd sun. Adrián is in the best gang ever. Oh, and before I forget, yesterday he managed to play Azul Azul's latest hit on the panpipes. When they hear this in his *khantus* group, they're bound to congratulate him. In a week's time they have to go and play at their parents' *preste*. There they'll

---

1 This article was published in *T'inkazos* 6, May 2000.

2 Journalist who was the director of *T'inkazos* until the year 2000. He is currently working for a doctorate in political sciences at FLACSO (Mexico).

3 If you don't understand any of the words, do not fret: look it up in the “concise dictionary for the older reader” at the end of the article.

have just as good a time as they do in the heaviest disco in the 16 July district. Because there's nowhere you can't find a good *ñata*, who can be persuaded to *relajear*.

This is how young people seem to live their lives in El Alto. This new and unknown city is a sort of giant backyard to La Paz, and a huge landing strip for migrants from provinces on the high plateau and the south of the country.

And perhaps "rockalla" is the ideal word, a combination of rock and *llockalla*, a life pulled in different directions by two equally seductive forces: the world of the parents, composed of *polleras* (Andean skirts), hats, Aymara, beer, confetti and the community embrace, and the world of globalisation, full of expensive things to consume, jeans, imitation brands, fast food, outlandish clothes, free sex, music in English and discourses like skyscrapers.

Young people in El Alto are caught in the crossfire, and from both sides they take the heat that forges their uniqueness. Are these young people the vanguard of the final extinction of their parents' culture? Or might this perhaps be the only realistic way to keep their Aymara cultural inheritance alive in increasingly internationalised urban settings?

The social sciences are already observing this complex world and have a few answers to such questions. The conversation that follows is part of this. We were paid a visit by Germán Guaygua, Máximo Quisbert, Alfredo Balboa and Mario Rodríguez. They all have one thing in common: their academic and existential interest in the creative lives of these new generations. Germán and Máximo both worked on a research project funded by the Strategic Research Programme in Bolivia (PIEB), Alfredo has written about the concept of being "cho'jcho", and Mario works with the youth movement in El Alto, the so-called rockers' underground that congregates around the

Wayna Tambo, a cultural venue in this high-altitude city.

The four of them led us by the hand through the houses, hallways, streets, discos and public spaces that belong to Adrián Ticona and many others like him.

## THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Máximo Quisbert is good at describing those everyday situations that are lived with such intensity inside the adobe and brick houses with nylon curtains, tin sheet doors and inside patios smelling of fresh laundry.

All parents are very similar in the migrant homes of El Alto. There is a touched up portrait of them in the living room: she wearing her best light blue shawl, her gold brooch, her hat tilted to one side, and her sad gaze; he smiling discreetly, wearing his grey suit with its inner waistcoat and the tricolour badge on the lapel. They got married very young and worked from dawn to dusk to be able to afford the prestige conferred by organising the district's most talked-of parties; they carried the Virgin Mary around the streets, and now not a single neighbour fails to greet them with respect. But Máximo is more interested in their children. He imagines them in the street or the square, together with their friends and peers, taking refuge in places the arms of authority do not reach. In these places they can talk with a freedom always denied them at home. "There they express what they think, they talk about their girlfriends or someone they fancy. You can't do that when you're with the family, because parents have the cultural belief that sons and daughters must be obedient and disciplined. That's why families don't talk about sexuality, for example," Máximo explains. That's the way

things are. Among the migrant families who have settled in El Alto, and of course those they came from who stayed in the rural community, young people are there to obey orders without talking back. It is understandable, then, that at the first opportunity they go out in search of some fresh air in the street.

Máximo continues with his description. If parents see their daughter talking frequently with a boy of the same age, they immediately assume not only that he is her steady boyfriend, but that he is the man who will be her partner for the rest of her life. "That happens because they didn't have several relationships, they got married to their first or second partner. But their children's generation start having relationships at 12 or 14, and they may have several before marriage," Máximo adds.

It is undoubtedly a fundamental shift. The way of understanding love has changed radically from parents to children. For the parents the emphasis was on marriage as a pragmatic alliance enabling them to confront the challenges of material existence, while for their children it is more important that it should be based on love and the ingredients of romance.

This failure to connect results in a deluge of beatings, tears and heartbreak. The generation gap gives rise to pain and resentment. Máximo tells us, for example, that "parents can't conceive of the idea of their daughters going to discos". They understand that in these places their heirs may deviate from the straight and narrow, find friends who are a bad influence, get so drunk that they lose their judgement, and mislay the values of work and study in the process. How could they understand what goes on on those badly lit dance floors if they never went to a disco when they were that age? These are forms of consumption that parents do not share, and involve difficult negotiations between them and their children. When these negotiations fail, the most

conventional lies often do the trick. "Dad, I'm going to mass", "Mum, I have to go and do my homework at Julia's".... this is how they "try it on" with the "old man/lady", or, to say it the hard way, the freedom strategies they employ against an excessive and suspicious strictness.

Mario Rodríguez finds this a good moment to intervene. He has a solid idea in mind about these inter-generational negotiations, and he puts it forward without delay. He agrees that there is constant conflict between parents and children, but he does not think the scene is complete if we leave it at that. Because Mario also detects silent negotiations between parties, spaces of complicity that are never confessed.

For example, in the rural families of origin, those who stayed behind after the migration to the city, boys and girls fall in love in secret under a similar blanket of pretence. Most couples in rural communities come together on the sly under the cover of the night. The curious thing is that parents know this, but they prefer to feign ignorance in order to maintain the shine on their authority.

According to Mario, this "looking the other way" by adults when faced with the discreet waywardness of young people is a very deep-rooted custom in the Andean world, and all that has happened is it has moved to the city. The important thing is that kisses are given and received in secret, because if more people than necessary find out, the reputation of the adult world will have been soiled. "While it's not public and doesn't take away their authority, parents act like they don't know. It only becomes a problem when it becomes known. That's when you've failed to respect them," Mario adds. Similar examples could be found in El Alto, where Mario is sure parents know where their children are, but prefer to keep their repressive weapons in reserve for more pressing occasions. These are the negotiations backed by assumptions and

suspicious, the ones that can carry on unless they come to the surface.

There is a clear reason for using this mechanism. Given that in El Alto the gap between parents and children is so wide, these silent negotiations enable it to be reduced and make family life more bearable.

### WE DON'T CONSUME THE SAME THINGS

Like many other young people around the world, those in El Alto are determined to be different. The more they are compared to their parents and others in their own age group, the more they struggle to distinguish themselves from them. Alfredo Balboa informs us that different clothes, strident music and outlandish accessories are the precise recipe to ensure that these young people are not confused either with their parents or with other young people in different parts of the city, in different social classes, or with different tastes. The most cherished goal here is symbolic social ascent, to climb as high as possible in order to look down on others from above.

To satisfy this craving, in which young peoples' thirst to acquire the trappings that establish difference gets increasingly stronger, the media are the best water source. Balboa reminds us that it is from the media that young people draw codes, fashion, poses and ways of expressing themselves in public. This is when they are most open to influences from the world outside the family. In this context, standards such as sensuality among women or drinking and fighting among men are valued very highly.

Here an interesting detail comes to light. Mario Rodríguez points out that young people come together or are separated by what they buy

and exhibit. Consumption is the emblem that unites or distances young people everywhere. And so it comes about that young people from different social classes suddenly appear to be consuming the same products in the midst of a stagnant pool of identical tastes and youth subcultures. The thickness of your wallet or the smartness of the district you live in doesn't matter very much. Boys and girls with the same interests and predilections come together with less hesitation than their class-obsessed adult counterparts.

Mario mentions several examples of these inter-class displacements. It so happens that if you want to get properly into the techno scene, you have to visit a certain disco in the 16 de Julio district of El Alto. Here it doesn't matter if you've taken the minibus from snobby Calacoto or scrupulously clean La Florida.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, young people from the west of La Paz have a particular weakness for the dance venues in the Ceja area of El Alto, while the members of the powerful "la gran BU" and "Cartel Central" gangs fight for control of the territory that includes the flashing lights of the "Espaguetti" disco above the cemetery. And as if these nomadic activities were not enough, the sons of ambassadors and wealthy scions of La Paz go up to play rock in the most underground dives of high-altitude El Alto. "The social stratification is still there, but similar patterns of consumption have led to the city being repositioned and reconstituted, bringing together different social classes," Mario theorises.

But why do young people knock holes in the wall that divides rich and poor? The answer is simply fascinating. Mario asks us not to forget that one of the emblems of youth is that mad desire to shatter the sacred glassware. The more rebellious their gestures are, the more solid is their

---

4. La Florida and Calacoto: neighbourhoods in a residential area of La Paz.

age-group affiliation. Transgress, destroy, irritate and subvert are the favourite verbs of young people everywhere. If we look at things in this way, the value of the suburban disco, the shabby dive or the flight to the slums becomes crystal clear. Young people feel more loyal to their age group when they transgress the norms and journey into the realms of trouble and risk. "The higher up you go in the city, the more inferior it is always seen to be. So transgression becomes a very strong way of bringing young people together," Mario asserts. You can now see the magnetic power of a rock concert played in a warehouse in El Alto, while a similar event held under adult control in the centre of La Paz seems conventional and inoffensive. In this sense, anything that represents the outcast, the marginal, the enigmatic or cruel becomes a genuine magnet to this generation. In this stratified colonial society, perhaps only young people are capable of breaking down the barriers of skin colour and banknotes, even if only briefly, and setting what is socially inferior as a desirable target, as it offers the prospect of irritating adult society accustomed to segregation.

But things are not so simple in this case either. If we think that this bridging between social classes is all that's happening, we would be looking at everything with just one eye. Mario himself points out that, although weakened, social differences between young people are still maintained. To see this all you have to do is watch those concerts played in El Alto by young people from the wealthy districts. Mario reports that although the "high" boys and girls are well received up in El Alto, the plebeian audience does not get fully involved in their show. It's not that they don't like the music, it's that the social walls never collapse altogether, no matter how much young people dig away at their foundations.

An illustration of this is what goes on in the

rap scene in El Alto. Most of the young people involved in this subculture of acrobatic agility live in Ciudad Satélite, the most prosperous area of the city on the high plateau. This can be explained, says Mario, because the consumption demanded by rap requires a lot of money. An original pair of trousers for this scene costs about a hundred dollars, thereby immediately excluding young people from the other districts of El Alto. This is why rappers from Satélite identify more with La Paz than with their nearest neighbours. Here we can see the other side of the coin from a moment ago, a shift of identity outside the territory but, this time, within the same social class.

## DON'T BE LIKE ME

The strange thing is that those who most encourage symbolic social ascent by young people are those who later come to regret it: we are talking about the parents, no less. The fact is that adult migrants do not want their children to follow in their footsteps, but when they see them become excessively different and distanced from family traditions, they then change their minds and put the brakes on their children's desire to ascend as ordered.

Máximo Quisbert calls this the "parental double discourse". The recommendation on adult lips is "don't be like me, because otherwise you'll suffer and be marginalized". It is a pragmatic and prospective way of evading an inheritance they consider to be damaging. Parents are thus the first to deny their own values and encourage their children to be different, to forget the Aymara language, to attend the most expensive schools, learn English and acquire a taste for western consumer cults. But parental enthusiasm is dampened when their children devote themselves entirely to dancing, lazing around, fleeting and

intense love affairs, subversive fashion and even the Chicano aesthetic. That is when misunderstandings, controls and quarrels redouble in intensity.

Germán Guaygua adds that behind the oft-repeated “don’t be like me” lies the desire for children to have the greatest possible access to more educational capital than the parents had. However, when the fulfilment of this goal places their heirs in “danger” of becoming eternal students and potential “layabouts”, then the time has come to put a stop to so much freedom with books. Guaygua tells us that parents know how to detect very clearly when an academic qualification has become devalued to the point where it is useless in the search for employment. Instead of seeing their son become one of hundreds of high school graduates in El Alto, many parents prefer to find him a job as a mechanic’s apprentice or assistant in a factory, so that he will learn skills that are much more practical and lucrative than formal education, which holds no certainty of finding a job in the suburban context. In such cases, the phrase “I want my son to learn how to work” can triumph over the negative starting point of “don’t be like me”. In this way, the work ethic, a very deep-rooted value in the Andean world, is capable of moderating irrational yearnings for social ascent.

## THE RETURN TO THE CRADLE

So far we have described the conflicts and struggles between parents and children in El Alto. We have also looked at young people’s urge to be different, encouraged and later lamented by their elders. Germán Guaygua is not prepared to leave things there. He therefore launches into the first conclusion of the research project he is working on with Máximo Quisbert and a support team. He reveals that despite the irrefutable signs of

cultural “alienation” prevailing among young Aymara people in El Alto, their attitudes, from A to Z, continue to be ordered and structured by the family tradition of their elders. He assures us that all these youth identities, even the most rebellious, maintain their links with the urban Aymara culture that gave birth to them. In his words, the hypothesis sounds like this: “To start with we too were seeing that the gaps between parents and children seemed to be very dichotomous, but later we realised that the core that orders these young people’s lives is precisely their parents’ tradition. We aren’t saying that nothing changes, there are transformations, but always based on that order-giving core.”

In other words, the chains, tattoos, big trousers, long hair and earrings are all part of a stage in life, from age 13 to 17, during which the new generation needs to draw the boundaries that separate them from their parents. Once the line is carved out, the distinction ceases to be so crucial, and young people gradually return to the family networks they had broken away from.

Alfredo Balboa seconds this conjecture. It is not that young people bury their original identity, they merely file it away for future reference, because the inter-generational battle obliges them to arm themselves with these foreign weapons. But once they get married, for example, and they do it young (at 18 or 20), they dust off their previous skills and return to the fold.

“When they take on new roles, that transitory stage ends and they reintegrate themselves into urban Aymara culture. The exile is a passing phase,” Alfredo explains.

In this and other cases the concept of the *habitus* popularised by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is very pertinent. It has something to do with tradition, though Bourdieu’s idea goes deeper. The *habitus* is much of what we learn in infancy and that becomes so natural we no longer



think about it. It is there and nobody questions it, because it is hidden within the common sense, bodily attitudes and mentality of individuals. We have entered the realm of predispositions.

Returning to El Alto, we find that despite their innumerable transgressions, young people do not manage to escape from the habitus dictated by their parents. Germán Guaygua illustrates this with some examples. One of them is the value of masculinity that reigns among boys. For young men, one of the most highly prized medals is knowing how to fight, and in that they are not very different from their fathers, who are prone to throwing punches when anger heats the blood.

Something similar happens with regard to the work ethic. Parents and children value the ability to earn one's daily bread in any way and at any age. This dominant idea becomes even more evident when young people find themselves obliged to feed a family. This is the moment when inter-generational reconciliation takes place.

Máximo Quisbert points out that the pressure exerted by older members of the family to crystallise the return to the culture of origin is very strong, and is accompanied by a variety of rewards and punishments. Nevertheless, it is obvious that young people do not return to the home the same as they were when they left. They come back with their knapsacks full of lived experiences, which they later reinsert in the family cultural mould. Máximo says, for example, that they bring back a wider view of the city, the world and its protagonists.

For Mario, the analysis of the return can even be corroborated in the current generation of parents. It turns out that they also had their temporary escape in the 1960s and 70s. That was when they invaded the Gran Poder<sup>5</sup> dance parade as the "strange long-haired rebels", a group that

was quite "new wave", composed exclusively of young people, who distinguished themselves by having the Argentinean singer Sandro embroidered on their backs.

That same generation that combined folklore with their youth culture also daringly introduced drums, electronic instruments and flashing lights in local parties. Since then, suburban dance floors have been taken over by cumbia, keyboards, loudspeakers and, of course, "the Celia tinku", subjected to metallic chords. According to Mario, these are the legacies of this generation that modified folklore but not the cultural mould that shaped it.

So the return of El Alto's young people to the order-giving core of their mother culture means that the winds of change blow over it, but seems not to damage the "hard disk". Taking advantage of the eternal amnesty granted by their elders, young people take refuge in the cultural world of origin but enrich it with the new marks of distinction they have acquired during their brief escape from home.

Mario agrees with Germán, although instead of the habitus he prefers to speak of the cultural mould. This is what continues to govern and give order to new contributions. It is an urban Aymara logic that makes new elements fit into the normal pattern, digests them and restructures them under new rules.

How does it manage this? Mario Rodríguez pulls out another example from his arsenal of experiences. He tells us that dancing to techno is by definition something you do individually. Anyone who gets into the scene knows that partners count for nothing, and the focus of attention is the DJ, who is always busy making increasingly mind-blowing musical mixes. However, when techno took hold in El Alto,

---

5. Gran Poder dance parade. Patron saint festivities celebrated in honour of Our Lord of Gran Poder in La Paz.

young people immediately organised themselves in parallel lines. They all rehearse the same steps and movements, and agree on what clothes to wear. If you want to laugh at them you could say they turn techno into a *tinku* or a *morenada*. “If you watch a group rehearsing *tinku*, techno or cumbia, you see elements in common, despite the huge differences in the music. Sometimes it’s even the same group that’s involved in all three types of music and participates in all the dance contests for each,” says Mario. These are the secret paths of the *habitus* that connect innovation to tradition, making the new merge into what has lain there for centuries.

But there is still more to add. If you ask young people survey-style if they like Bolivian music, most will assure you that they prefer international beats. Nevertheless, there are *khantus* groups in almost every school in El Alto. Máximo Quisbert tells us that in the yearly festivities you can see increasing participation by young people organised in dance troupes. Young people in El Alto are swelling the ranks of the folkloric dance scene and they do so in groups clearly differentiated by age, at a prudent distance from their parents’ groups. This flexibility reaches such extremes that in the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations at the “La Paz” school in Villa Adela there was music coming from loudspeakers, a procession carrying the Virgin Mary on her throne, and several fraternities dancing the *caporales*. This is everyday life shot through with miscellaneous cultural influences, which nobody finds it difficult to take on board simultaneously.

Mario Rodríguez says that not even the underground rock scene in El Alto is free from these entanglements. He describes “a boy who dresses in black, likes Iron Maiden and plays drums in a band called ‘The Worst’, but at the same time plays the bass drum in a folk group and also enjoys dancing cumbia.” It happens,

but these are surely the most unlikely combinations.

Germán Guaygua reports that in many groups of young people the ruling culture is Chicano, also developed by migrants, but this time Hispanics in the United States. This is the case with the largest gangs, “Cartel Central” and “la Gran BU”. This subculture bases itself on the film “Blood in, blood out”, and expresses itself locally on a large scale among the techno contestants on the TV programme “Sábados Populares”. When you see a “B” together with a “U” or two “C”s back to back on a wall, you now know what they refer to. But why would people feel Chicano in El Alto?

Maybe those who pay homage to “the race” are the best identity available to young people who feel like foreigners in their own land on the high plateau, who are likewise equally badly shaken up by discrimination from the dominant group and family reprimands. Maybe....

## BEING CHO’JCHO

Alfredo Balboa has studied the *chojcho* identity, and it seems relevant to mention it here. When you first hear it, the word sounds like it means something mediocre, coarse or ugly. The expert on it says that *chojcho* is a person who, coming from Aymara culture, has decided to become “refined”, meaning that the person is attempting symbolic social ascent or social climbing. In a clearly pejorative sense, the term is often applied to young people, to their shabby and questioning look, their desire to annoy with a rebel aesthetic. Despite having a negative sense charged with the reproach of betraying their roots, being *chojcho* attracts young people more than politics or religion do. For that very reason, it is part of a stigmatised identity, but an identity nevertheless. Alfredo reiterates that *chojcho* fever is temporary and dissolves or is assimilated when one becomes an adult.

Germán Guaygua also wants to talk about the term. He asserts that *chojcho* is clearly a stigma rather than an identity that can be exhibited with pride. "Someone from San Pedro<sup>6</sup> calls someone from up near the cemetery *chojcho*, people from there use the same term about those from the Ceja area, and they in turn use it to describe people from 16 de Julio. So you have chains of segmentation closely linked to discrimination," he comments. It is a classic mechanism used by colonial Bolivian society, where escaping from the contempt defined by skin colour always seems to be an illusion.

### VIVA EL ALTO

But let us return to the questions that started this conversation. To repeat: Are these young people the vanguard of the final extinction of their parents' culture? Or might this perhaps be the only realistic way to keep their Aymara cultural inheritance alive in increasingly internationalised urban settings? By now, Máximo, Mario, Alfredo and Germán seem to have resolved the dilemma. Because they cannot escape from the dominant habitus of their parents or the urban Aymara cultural mould, young people in El Alto are a long way from extinguishing family tradition. They come back to it bringing new elements picked up during their experiences with techno, rock, rap, cumbia or salsa. In this sense, the generational shift would transform the mother culture decade after decade, but without questioning its most intimate logic. These are the answers we have so far.

Mario wants to add something else. "Although not wearing Andean skirts, changing your surname, using names in English, perming your hair or wearing Raybans are all part of a widespread trend, it is not the only one."

He thinks that self-affirming behaviour is gaining more ground every day; meaning pride in what you are: "I'm from El Alto". It used to be very common to say "I'm going to the city", referring to La Paz, as though El Alto wasn't a city. Now, little by little, more young people are making the high-altitude city of their birth their centre.

Germán agrees. He reminds us that the number of young people playing the panpipes, wearing a poncho, dancing in a folkloric parade or providing the entertainment at a *preste* has grown a lot in the last few years. It has even become fashionable to play cumbia with Andean instruments, as a way of reinserting foreign cultural accessories into Andean patterns and another path for young people to continue the social journey made by their parents.

Girls do wear Andean skirts when they dance in the 'butterfly' groups, a young women's section every fraternity must have. "They are participating in the same cultural expressions as their parents and taking the same paths," Germán points out. Although young women use make-up and wear shorter and more sensual skirts, they are showing in their own way that they share their parents' background.

Are they aware of the process they are leading? Our interviewees agree that the answer is no. Instead, it is something spontaneous and not much thought about, something born of the habitus. Curiously, in Bourdieu the habitus often has harmful connotations, being the platform for reproducing domination and capitalism. In El Alto, the habitus seems to act in favour of the oppressed culture, the culture besieged day and night by bombardments from the media, the music industry, the howls of religious and political clans and the iron-willed march of globalisation.

6. San Pedro, Cemetery, Ceja, 16 de Julio. Neighbourhoods and districts of La Paz and El Alto.

## YOU DO STOP MESSING AROUND WHEN YOU GET OLDER

Young people's stories are what we want to tell in this box. Mario Rodríguez provides us with some. One year on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, All Saints Day, he and a gang of friends were going round a village on the shores of Lake Titicaca. The idea was to accompany the mourners and the devout with a good blast of *sikuriada*. They went house to house, blowing their instruments as hard as they could so that the music would cheer everyone up in its own natural environment. What Mario witnessed that day was group irreverence. The 'guys' couldn't stop laughing, because when they weren't ridiculing the people silently praying they were telling macabre jokes about death. All in all, these young people didn't seem to give a damn about their culture. Does this mean they wanted to turn their backs on everything venerated by their parents? Mario thinks not. The fact that they went to mess around and have fun on All Saints Day is not the important thing. The essential fact is that by going around like that in a gang, "they were socialising themselves in their cultural sphere".

Of course, now they've grown up, somebody important to them has died, and others have taken their place in the messing around, they have become reconciled to these rituals. Nowadays they attend them, probably pray and now and again remember how annoying they used to be.

### Young people's *sikuris*

Another story. Mario tells us that for the last twenty years or so the *preste* has been dominated almost exclusively by electronic music. The loudspeakers pump out cumbia and the favourite folkloric beats. Even so, in the last few years no self-respecting party, baptism or wedding will fail to include a *khantus* or *sikuriada* group. And who is behind this renovation of such old-fashioned music? Young people, the same ones who get reproached for being "culturally alienated", have restored Andean music to its rightful place.

### Rock on Aymara

The main rock venue in El Alto is called Wayna Tambo. Bands from the two adjacent cities play there. You get punk or hardcore versions of songs in Aymara. If you have a look at their fanzines, you'll find they use more words in Aymara than any magazine produced by the cultural movement or the political groups. As Mario Rodríguez explains, they use Andean parameters to transform and give new meaning to other cultural expressions, thereby contributing to the construction of a new symbolism or aesthetic of their own.

An amateur psychiatrist might accuse them of being schizophrenic, because they wildly combine things that have no relation to each other. Germán Guaygua rejects this idea. Young people in El Alto are quite happy going from rock to rap to techno, and ending up in a *preste*. But to make all these ingredients come together they can use their parents' order-giving cultural core. Mario adds: "You can go from one place to another very naturally, because you have a mould that's influencing all those spaces. Hybrids don't always get rid of their component species." In the end it's quite simple: the tree has the same roots and draws nourishment from a common soil, but its leaves and fruit are inexhaustibly diverse.

### It's all a rip-off

Germán Guaygua mentions another detail. When young people in El Alto can't afford to look like their counterparts in Los Angeles or New York, they buy imitation products instead. There is an abundance of these in the street market in the 16 de Julio area. If you can't have the real thing imported from Miami, "rip-off" Nike or Reebok shoes are just as good. This is the term used to describe the imposture, which is helpful at times when it is urgent to belong to the world, even when you're short of *quivo*.

## CONCISE DICTIONARY FOR THE OLDER READER

Here is a brief list of the words you need to understand this article. They are some of the mainstays of the jargon used by young people in La Paz and El Alto that are likely to be less than well known to the older or foreign reader.

**Azul Azul:** Group from Santa Cruz that plays cumbia music.

**Cho'jcho:** Ugly or mediocre. Refers to someone of indigenous origin who is trying to emphasise their sudden attachment to western culture.

**The Celia tinku:** "The vow I made, Celia, to love you forever, Celia..." Fashionable song using the *tinku* rhythm. The version played on electronic instruments is very popular.

**To be high:** To be rich, with a lot of *quivo*.

**Khantus:** Group that plays traditional Andean music using wind instruments and percussion.

**Kits:** Sports shoes.

**La gran BU and Cartel Central:** Two of the most powerful gangs in La Paz.  
BU means Brown Union.

**New wave:** Old-fashioned way of describing something young or modern.

**Ñata:** Girl or girlfriend.

**Old man / old lady:** Father / mother.

**Preste:** Party organised according to the norms of Andean reciprocity.

**Quivo:** Money.

**Relajear:** To have bodily intimacy with someone. Indulged in by those in love and "catches" (transient couples).

**Rip-offs:** Copies of industrial goods or products. They are imitations of their expensive brand-name counterparts.

**Rockalla:** A word invented by some mischievous sociologist. A combination of *llockalla* (boy or young man in Aymara) and rock. Refers to an Aymara boy who worships the culture of the north (of America).

**Sikuris - Sikuriada:** Traditional Andean music.

**To try it on:** To tell a lie.

**Wayna Tambo:** Cultural venue in El Alto. The city's rockers meet here.



#### **IV. Popular Participation and Municipalities**



*Ejti Stih*





# Indigenous People and/or Mayors in Urubichá, Gutiérrez and Villa Montes<sup>1</sup>

Ana María Lema<sup>2</sup>

**Three municipalities are analysed in terms of their new ethnic dynamics in the context of a Bolivian state that decided to decentralise some of its money. But what it also seems to have decentralised is the symbolic violence of its norms and regulations that oblige indigenous peoples to modernise in a perverse way.**

Centuries tend to end with upheavals. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the contradictions inherent in an old political, economic and social order were partially and symbolically resolved in the Federal War.<sup>3</sup> Amongst the most relevant events at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are perhaps the wave of reforms to the Bolivian state, on the one hand, and, on the other, the recognition of diversity in national society expressed in the “pluri multi” formula. In the first case, the state thought about,

studied and developed measures aimed at modernising itself and bringing itself closer to civil society. In the second, using social mobilisation (marches) and political positioning (parties), traditionally marginalized and little known sectors of society such as the indigenous/ original peoples (the ‘indians’) managed to open up a space for themselves that was finally recognised in articles 1 and 171 of the Bolivian Constitution. These are gifts and conquests.

- 
- 1 This article was published in *T'inkazos* 7, September 2000. The research project was directed by Ana María Lema, and Gisel Caballero, Roberto Ibargüen and Hebert Ayreyu also participated in it. The results were published as *De la huella al impacto. La Participación Popular en municipios con población indígena: Urubichá, Gutiérrez y Villa Montes* (From Trace to Impact. Popular Participation in Municipalities with an Indigenous Population: Urubichá, Gutiérrez and Villa Montes. PIEB, 2001).
- 2 Historian with a doctorate from EHESS (Paris). She currently teaches at NUR University (Santa Cruz), and is the coordinator of the Research Grants Fund for Masters Theses on Gender and Natural Resources Management Project for the MINGA Programme, CDRI IDRC-Canada.
- 3 The federal war was fought in 1899 between conservative forces representing the mining elites in the south of the country (Chuquisaca and Potosí) and those of the liberals representing newly-powerful sectors in the north, especially La Paz. Following the liberal victory, the seat of government was transferred to La Paz.

Although the reforms affect the Bolivian population as a whole, the reactions of the indigenous sector are perhaps more perceptible than those of others, such as urban groups for example, as the reforms lead indigenous peoples to undertake an adaptation or readjustment to enable them to be applied. The Popular Participation Law (PPL)<sup>4</sup> is an example of this. By changing forms of participation, organisational structures in their political, social and territorial forms, and the living conditions of the municipalities' indigenous populations, the PPL is bringing about a new scenario in the way local power is exercised by awarding a (real / virtual / insignificant / important) role to the indigenous population. Seeing that they are now obliged to act in spaces different to their traditional ones, indigenous peoples in turn are developing new practices that, depending on their characteristics, their past and their experience, enable them to develop (or not) in the municipal context.

To demonstrate this hypothesis, we carried out case studies in three municipalities in the Chaco and Eastern regions of the country characterised by the presence of different indigenous peoples.<sup>5</sup> For various reasons we selected the municipalities of Urubichá, in Guarayos province in the department of Santa

Cruz; Gutiérrez, in Gutiérrez province in the department of Santa Cruz; and Villa Montes, in Gran Chaco province in the department of Tarija. These municipalities share similar conditions: numerically important and culturally strong indigenous populations, with their own dynamic organisations, and different ecosystems and histories. With the introduction of popular participation, they would have municipal districts and an indigenous presence in local government.

This article presents a partial synthesis of the research. In the first section, we will set the scene in terms of time and space, looking firstly at a brief history of the relationship established by the Bolivian state with the indigenous peoples in the lowlands,<sup>6</sup> and secondly at certain features of municipal geography. After this, and mixing up the numbers in the article's title, we will rapidly describe the municipalities studied and the indigenous peoples who live there. The second section will show the effects of the PPL in these areas in terms of indigenous people's presence in municipal governments, and how they came to be there, as well as the experience of the Indigenous Municipal Districts (IMD). Finally, after weighing up the process, we will see who is responsible for taking up the challenges of the new millennium.

4 The Popular Participation Law (PPL) was one of the most important reforms implemented in Bolivia at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This law, which was enacted in April 1994, provides for funds from the National Treasury (20 per cent of national tax revenue) to be allocated to the municipalities on a per capita basis, thereby bringing about a rupture between rural and urban areas. It also recognises the existence of grassroots territorial organisations, which would henceforth play an important role in overseeing the expenditure made by municipal governments.

5 The research project "From trace to impact. The application of the Popular Participation Law in municipalities with an indigenous population (Urubichá, Gutiérrez and Villa Montes)" was one of the winners in PIEB's Fifth National Contest for research projects.

6 Bolivia has traditionally been thought of as an Andean, and therefore mountainous, country. However, more than half of the country's territory is at an altitude of less than 1,500 metres. This vast area is known as "the lowlands", while the rest is referred to as "the highlands".

## TIME: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE LOWLANDS

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, national statistics included the categories “neophytes”, “barbarians” and “savages” to describe the indigenous inhabitants of the lowlands, who were not yet integrated into the national territory. In fact, despite its size, Bolivia was built on the basis of the Andean axis and its hinterland. The rest of the country continued to be peripheral, a “no man’s land” where the state was late in placing its stamp and leaving its mark. Nevertheless, some legislation did express the state’s desire to include all indigenous groups in the nation, even though they were not considered to be citizens.

The state was not interested in either the population of the lowlands nor the lands they occupied, as it considered these to be unused, unoccupied, free, vacant or available. For example, shortly after the republic was founded, land in the Chaco region was distributed as a reward to veterans of the war of independence, who thus became the first official occupants of the region at the cost of the Chiriguano indigenous population (Saignes, 1990). Since the land was there, it needed to be used, for the benefit and progress of the country! For this to happen, its inhabitants had to be settled in one place and then pay taxes. Although in some cases the existence of indigenous communities was recognised, the measures implemented by the 1866-70 Melgarejo government put an end to this. It thus obliged the lowland indigenous peoples, as well as those in the highlands, to present themselves before the state as individuals rather than communities, breaking up traditional structures and cohesion in the process. Another new expression of progress was the settlement of lands that were unknown but potentially

interesting because of their natural resources, both for extracting rubber (rubber concessions) and for cattle farming and agriculture, for example. Although the settlement policy was launched and promoted by the state, implementation of it was in private hands. Private individuals, obliged now and again to be accountable to the state by paying taxes, presenting papers and justifying their occupation of land with a few economic activities, were in reality the owners and lords of the territories they were “awarded” by means of concessions.

For its part, the Catholic church concerned itself with the meticulous work of reaching indigenous peoples to conquer their souls. Although the experience of the Jesuits is the best known, it was also the shortest. Another order left its mark until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century: the Franciscans. Established in Bolivia since colonial times and reinforced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this order used its five *Propaganda Fide* colleges (in Potosí, Sucre, Tarija, Tarata and La Paz) to weave a very fine net of missions and settlements in which to “trap” the different indigenous peoples, such as the Guarayo, Yuracaré, Guaraní and Tacana, for example. What was the justification for the missionary presence in these isolated areas, as far as the Bolivian state was concerned? Precisely that of filling an empty institutional space. Public officials were not yet able to do this, while the interlocutors, meaning the indigenous peoples, were not ready for it. Therefore, the function of the mission settlement was to inculcate notions of education, health and morality in indigenous people, in order to transform them into citizens (Article 1 of the Missions Regulations, 1905).

As the years went by, with the growing incursion by settlers and agents of civil society into areas that previously had few links with the rest of the country, and the growing interest in gaining access to natural resources and indigenous

labour, the presence of the missionaries came to be seen as an obstacle to “development”. The state started the gradual secularisation of the missions at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the process was completed after the Chaco War.<sup>7</sup> Secularisation did not mean that the Franciscan missionaries were withdrawn, but they were gradually replaced by secular members of the Catholic church. The presence of the church in the former Chiquitano Jesuit missions, for example, is still very strong today, and the Nuflo de Chávez Apostolic Vicariate is an important economic power. In other cases, the Catholic church has been replaced or “complemented” by evangelical churches.

Meanwhile, the state developed another strategy to deal with the indigenous issue. It did so indirectly at first with the establishment of the Delegations<sup>8</sup> and later the Governorships.<sup>9</sup> Afterwards it did so directly, by setting up an official body specifically devoted to the issue, the Bolivian Indigenist Institute (BII), in 1949. After the national revolution of 1952 the BII found its place in the Ministry of Rural and Agricultural Affairs, where it would remain until 1993. Here it kept a fairly low profile, taking discreet actions to support the activities of evangelical missionaries such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Finally, at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, the BII underwent a breakthrough in its awareness of the contemporary indigenous problem. In 1993 the Under-Secretariat of Ethnic Affairs was set up as part of the National Secretariat of Ethnic, Gender and Generational Affairs (SNAEGG) in

the Ministry of Human Development. According to Luz María Calvo, former under-secretary of ethnic affairs, one of the most important aspects of the policy implemented at the time was the new awareness of the need to revive the concept of indigenous participation. In 1997 the under-secretariat became the Vice-Ministry of Indigenous and Original Peoples’ Affairs (VAIPO),<sup>10</sup> part of the Ministry of Sustainable Development.

### SPACE: AN APPROACH TO THE INDIGENOUS PRESENCE ON THE MUNICIPAL MAP

Until relatively recently, the indigenous presence in the national imagination and on the national map was quite sketchy: blurred and shifting smudges. Today, in the light of the reforms, it is no longer possible to look at the country except through the lens of the political administrative divisions that include not just departments and provinces, but sections of provinces, better known as municipalities.

Of the 314 municipalities that make up Bolivia today, indigenous peoples are present in 82 in what are considered the “lowlands”, meaning the departments of Pando, Beni, Santa Cruz and certain provinces in La Paz (Iturralde, Franz Tamayo, Larecaja and Sur Yungas), Cochabamba (Chapare and Carrasco), Chuquisaca (Hernando Siles and Luis Calvo) and Tarija (O’Connor and Gran Chaco). However, the indigenous presence is not the same

7 War fought between Bolivia and Paraguay from 1932 to 1935, due to each country’s determination to gain control over part of the Chaco region.

8 Territorial jurisdictions created by the Ministry of Colonisation at the beginning of the 20th century in the country’s border regions, with the aim of strengthening the presence of the state in these areas.

9 Territorial jurisdictions smaller than the delegations, created in the mid-20th century.

10 It is now the Ministry of Small Farmers, Indigenous and Original Peoples (MACPIO).

throughout this vast area. Some municipalities are “more indigenous” than others, and there are municipalities with a large indigenous population that is not native to the area but of Quechua or Aymara origin. This is the case in the Amazon region, for example, where 10% of the total population of about 700,000 is “native” indigenous while 20% are indigenous migrants not native to the area (Lema, 1996). The migrants of *q'olla* (Quechua and Aymara) origin are concentrated in the traditional settlement regions: Alto Beni (Palos Blancos), Bajo Beni (Rurrenabaque), Chapare and the Cochabamba-Santa Cruz road (Villa Tunari, Puerto Villarroel and Yapacaní), the area around Santa Cruz (El Torno) and the so-called “integrated region” (San Julián and El Puente).

Furthermore, the “native” indigenous population is generally a minority in these municipalities, with very few exceptions. Finally, only 24 provincial sections, or about 30% of the municipalities covered by the Rural Indigenous Census of 1994-95 and just 8% of all municipalities in the country, have populations with a high percentage of indigenous people.<sup>11</sup> In many cases, their geographical location corresponds to the old Jesuit or Franciscan mission settlements. This could indicate that the state-backed religious policy of building settlements to confine indigenous peoples was successful, because it managed to concentrate the population in certain places.

This means we can include new elements in the country's municipal map. On the one hand, the indigenous presence is a fact, but it is

manifested in varying ways: some municipalities are multi-ethnic, while others are “mono-ethnic”. There is also clearly a growing presence of non-native indigenous populations, as a result of the waves of migration from the west of the country. There are several that could be considered “indigenous municipalities” due to the high percentage of indigenous people in their populations. On the other hand, in several municipalities the overlapping of complex categories such as protected areas and demands for Indigenous Community Territories (TCO) is creating confused situations. This leads to a question about the extent to which the municipal governments in these sections will be prepared to address this situation.

### THREE MUNICIPALITIES

The municipalities selected for the research offer three different scenarios. They differ in terms of their current characteristics and also because their past has left its indelible stamp. Urubichá is the mission, the border<sup>12</sup> is represented by Villa Montes and the traditional Guaraní territory is found in Gutiérrez. As far as natural resources are concerned, the least privileged municipality is Gutiérrez. It suffers from poor soils and a scarcity of water, which has an impact on its economic development. Villa Montes, in contrast, is fortunate to have the Pilcomayo river and underground wealth. Finally, Urubichá has significant forestry potential which gives the municipality its colour: green.

This is reflected in the municipalities' main economic activity. Urubichá is characterised by

11 Most of these municipalities are in the department of Beni, which is the most “indigenous” department in the country. They also include several sections of Cordillera province, where there is a large Guaraní population, and Guarayos province, with an indigenous population of the same name, some provincial sections with a Chiquitano population, all in the department of Santa Cruz, and finally municipalities in the north of the department of La Paz, between the Beni and Madre de Dios rivers.

12 Not in the sense of a political border but a cultural and mental border, the site of rupture between the known and the unknown.

forestry, although this is not given the necessary attention. In addition, although they do not appear as significant in the Municipal Development Plan, artistic activities (the choir and orchestra) and handicrafts (hammock weaving) are important for the population of this municipality. Two products could characterise the municipality of Gutiérrez: cattle and corn. These in turn indicate the activities of the two sectors of society living in the municipality: the 'white' cattle ranchers and the Guaraní farmers. Agricultural production in the municipality is, however, geared to the subsistence of its population in the first instance. Finally, in Villa Montes the livestock farming and agriculture sector predominates, but the importance of the region's hydrocarbons cannot be ignored. These resources have brought about significant economic and social changes in the town of Villa Montes. In contrast to the other municipalities, there is a marked imbalance between urban development and rural under-development. In addition, the municipality's main town is

strategically located on the road and railway line connecting Argentina to Santa Cruz.

Each municipality's population history involves different processes. Urubichá lived under the protection of the Franciscan mission regime until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and Guaymas province, where it is located, was only recently created (1990). Gutiérrez has never been characterised by being a particularly attractive area, while Villa Montes has received a larger influx of people at different times. Consequently, the population structure in terms of the native indigenous, non-native indigenous and *criollo* (non-indigenous) population is different in all three cases.

In two of the municipalities studied (Gutiérrez and Urubichá) the indigenous population is numerically in the majority. The social history of these municipalities is therefore directly related to indigenous history. In Villa Montes, as well as the Weenhayek population (in the majority from the indigenous point of view) and the *criollo* population (originally from the Chaco or *q'olla*<sup>13</sup>), there are the Tapiete

### Ethnic Structure of the Population of the Municipalities Studied and General Municipal Data

MUNICIPALITY	TOTAL POPULATION	INDIGENOUS POPULATION (%)	NON-INDIGENOUS POPULATION (%)	AREA (KM <sup>2</sup> )	DENSITY OF COMMUNITIES	Nº OF COMMUNITIES	CATEGORY ***
Urubichá	4,731	93.4	0.6	11,801	0.4	5	A
Gutiérrez	11,363*	91.1	No data	4,022	2.7	42	B
Villa Montes	22,563	28 (approx.)	7.5	11,116	2.01	50**	C

Source: Own data based on Municipal Development Plans, 1997, and Murillo, 1997.

\* Figure obtained from the community survey carried out in 1994, which includes communities that the 1992 Census did not take into account.

\*\* This figure includes the 10 neighbourhoods in the town of Villa Montes.

\*\*\* These categories were established by the National Popular Participation Secretariat (SNPP).

A = less than 5,000 inhabitants; B = 5,000-15,000 inhabitants; C = 15,000-50,000 inhabitants; D = more than 50,000 inhabitants. It is very likely that Urubichá will move to category B in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

13 Originally a member of the pre-hispanic Aymara nobility on the shores of Lake Titicaca. Later, an inhabitant of Kollasuyo, part of the Inca empire. By extension, someone with highland origins.

people, concentrated in just one community, and the Guaraní in several settlements. Despite this, the social configuration of the municipality places indigenous people in a position of inferiority, and therefore other social sectors, such as the *criollos* or *chaqueños* and the *q'ollas*, must be taken into account. Villa Montes is thus a multi-ethnic municipality. Furthermore, there are clearly major differences between Urubichá and Gutiérrez with regard to the number of inhabitants. In Urubichá, which has almost the same area as Villa Montes, there are large uninhabited spaces, while Gutiérrez, with a smaller area, is densely populated, with a higher density than that of Cordillera province. The pressure on the land that this implies is even more serious when the concentration of large areas of private land in few hands is taken into account.

#### FOUR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THEIR ORGANISATIONS

In Bolivia the Guarayo population currently resides in the province of the same name in the department of Santa Cruz, as well as in a few communities in Beni, in Cercado and Marbán provinces. The province is divided into three municipal sections: Ascensión de Guarayos, Urubichá and El Puente. Urubichá is known as the cultural capital of the Guarayo people, and its name may be better known abroad than in Bolivia due to its involvement in the world of music. This section is considered an "indigenous municipality" because its population and settlements are wholly Guarayo. The Guarayo have maintained their language with great vitality,

as well as some of their customs and cultural traditions. This is undoubtedly thanks to the fact that they are relatively isolated, at some distance from the main road from Santa Cruz to Trinidad. Having been established as part of the Franciscan missionary regime, the communities in this section (Urubichá, Yaguarú and Misión Salvatierra) have a strong missionary inheritance which manifests itself in ancient organisational structures such as chapters, and in the important role played by the Catholic church as a mediator of indigenous needs. Cururú, the most recent settlement, was established as a result of a so-called "agrarian zone" or rural trade union after the Agrarian Reform.

After the Quechua and Aymara, the Guaraní people are the most important indigenous population in Bolivia, both numerically and in the national imagination. Although some Guaraní have found themselves forced to migrate from the Chaco to the integrated Santa Cruz region in search of better fortunes, the population as a whole is spread over three departments (Chuquisaca, Tarija and Santa Cruz).<sup>14</sup> According to data from the Guaraní People's Assembly (APG), about 55,000 Guaraní people live in Bolivia in about 360 communities. This figure does not include the population living in virtual slavery on agricultural estates in the so-called "captive communities", or the population living in urban centres such as Camiri and Santa Cruz. The vast majority of communities in the 5<sup>th</sup> municipal section of Cordillera province are Guaraní. In Gutiérrez the Guaraní language is still very much alive, as are cultural practices, especially at the organisational level, due to the presence of two Guaraní captaincies: that of

<sup>14</sup> In Santa Cruz, in Cordillera, Andrés Ibáñez and Warnes provinces, in the municipalities of Lagunillas, Cabezas, Charagua, Gutiérrez, Camiri, Boyuibe, Cuevo, La Guardia and Warnes. In Chuquisaca, in Hernando Siles and Luis Calvo provinces, in the municipalities of Monteagudo, Huacareta, Muyupampa, Huacaya and Machareti. In Tarija, in Entre Ríos and Gran Chaco provinces, in the municipalities of Entre Ríos, Yacuiba, Caraparí and Villa Montes.

Kaaguasu, recently reconstituted, and that of Kaipependi Karobaicho, one of the most traditional in the Guaraní world. These are located in the cantons of Eiti, in the case of the first, and Ipitá and Gutiérrez in the case of the second.<sup>15</sup>

In Bolivia the Weenhayek indigenous people, traditionally known as the Mataco, live in Gran Chaco province in the department of Tarija, specifically in the Villa Montes and Yacuíba section. In addition, about 12,000 Weenhayek live in Argentina. In the last few years, the Weenhayek have emerged from silence and anonymity to achieve recognition, at least in Villa Montes. In this, they have been accompanied since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century by an evangelical church: the Free Swedish Mission. They are known as fishers and for their weaving and woodwork.

The Tapiete may be a sub-group of the Guaraní, as they speak the Guaraní language. In Bolivia they all live in the municipality of Villa Montes, in the community of Samaihuate (Samuwate), on the left bank of the Pilcomayo river, and in scattered settlements towards the border with Argentina. There are also Tapiete in neighbouring countries: in Argentina and especially in Paraguay.

These three peoples are characterised by a strong indigenous identity expressed in the use of their language, their cultural manifestations, their economic activities and their forms of representation.

The need to organise responds to an internal demand to have representatives, defenders or spokespeople, and to the external demand by civil society and/or the state, which requires interlocutors. The latter has been more evident in recent years as the presence of governmental

and non-governmental institutions in indigenous areas has increased. This need has to a certain extent obliged several peoples to speed up their organisation process, and it has sometimes become artificial as a result. In certain cases, indigenous organisations have a very “trade-union style” structure, with a list of official posts, a committee, and plenary sessions. This paraphernalia may not be very indigenous, but it is functional. In other cases, the structures are copied from one people to another, as in the case of the Guaraní captaincies, which have been taken up by the Weenhayek, for example. In other cases again, relationships were forced by conglomerating neighbouring peoples in a regional umbrella organisation. This seems logical, but the peoples do not necessarily see eye to eye. More serious still, communities belonging to the same people have been brought together in a supra-community organisation that never existed in the past, in a context where clan loyalties prevail over loyalty to the people as a whole. The result of this speeded-up process of organising indigenous society is that the country has a new map, the map of indigenous and original peoples’ organisations. This can be looked at in two dimensions: firstly an overview of all the community organisations, and secondly a stratified view that shows the different levels of representation: community, supra-community, sub-central and central organisations. In the case of the peoples living in the municipalities studied, the organisational structures are as follows:

In the case of the Guarayo, the organisations are at the community level, whereas in Gutiérrez they are at the supra-community level with the captaincies. A combination of both is found among the Weenhayek people, where there are community captaincies and a chief captaincy. In

---

<sup>15</sup> In this research project we worked exclusively on the captaincy of Kaipependi Karobaicho.



## Indigenous Organisations in the Municipalities Studied

PEOPLE	MUNICIPALITY	COMMUNITY ORGANISATION	SUPRA-COMMUNITY ORGANISATION	SUB-CENTRAL OR EQUIVALENT ORGANISATION	CENTRAL ORGANISATION
Guarayo	Urubichá	4 community organisations	None	COPNAG	CPESC
Guaraní	Gutiérrez	Communities	Captaincy of Kaipependi Karobaicho Captaincy of Kaaguasu		APG
Guaraní	Villa Montes	Communities	Captaincy of Villa Montes		APG
Weenhayek	Villa Montes	Communities	Chief captaincy		
Tapiete	Villa Montes	Captaincy	None		APG

Source: own data

Urubichá, the jurisdiction of the community organisations is limited because each corresponds to one community and its agricultural areas. As the communities are entirely Guarayo, the community organisations cover the whole population and serve as an umbrella for all the functional organisations.

For the Guaraní, a captaincy is at once a space and the organisation that represents it. In Guaraní, *tëta guasu* means the “set of communities that have an organisation and also a common space, and can refer to the centre or capital of each area as well as to the area as a whole” (Van Dijkhoorn, 1997: 42). The captaincy of Kaipependi Karobaicho has official legal status and its jurisdiction currently covers the 18 communities in the Eiti canton of the 5th municipal section of Cordillera province. In the past, the captaincy was headed by the chief captain or *mburuvisha guasu*, whose authority was unquestionable. Because the “raw material” of the captaincy is the territory it occupies, amongst the

chief captain's responsibilities was to obtain the titles to indigenous land and keep custody of them. To do this and other activities for which he was responsible, he had to be able to move between two worlds: the world of the ‘whites’ and the world of the Guaraní. In the last few years, the leadership of the captaincy has been expanded and, despite appearances, the office of captain is not hereditary. The assembly of communities decides who should be appointed to this and other posts within the organisation. Although the captain represents and leads the community members, decision-making power rests with the area assembly, which is “the decision-making body that brings together the opinions, development strategies and actions of the set of communities that make up the captaincy. No decision that involves two or more communities is taken unilaterally. Instead, communities reach a decision together, thereby involving their forms of organisation” (Kaipependi Indigenous District Development Plan, 1998: 107).

The history of the organisation of the Weenhayek and Tapiete captaincies is complex, because the structuring of the organisation was the result of a process in which the intervention of non-indigenous agents caused a series of conflicts. In addition to this artificial structure<sup>16</sup> there are internal disputes, which have divided the fragile Weenhayek captaincy in two, with one “internal affairs” captain, who has a real knowledge of his people’s problems, and one “external affairs” captain, who is endorsed by the CIDOB<sup>17</sup> and in contact with institutions, but is not recognised in the communities. The fact that the Weenhayek are divided prevents them from progressing as a people, consolidating their territory and developing new projects. The situation is exacerbated by the interference of political parties, which take advantage of the split to obtain votes. Finally, the Tapiete have set up a Guaraní-style captaincy, whose jurisdiction corresponds to their territory, and it is affiliated to the Guaraní People’s Assembly (APG). Under these conditions and in the midst of a number of other adverse conditions, how could the Weenhayek and Tapiete Captaincies Organisation (ORCAWETA) address the challenge of managing the municipality?

Except in the case of Kaipependi, the indigenous organisations were established only recently in response to the state’s need to have organised indigenous interlocutors. In the Guaraní case, the organisation is “natural” and

traditional: leadership awareness has always existed. In the case of the Weenhayek, in contrast, it seems totally artificial: in the past the horizon went no further than the edge of the community (hence our doubt whether consciousness of being a people exists in this case). In the case of the Guarayo, the Urubichá community organisation has seen its influence go beyond its own jurisdiction, to the point of competing with COPNAG<sup>18</sup> itself. The Urubichá Central Community Organisation (CECU) has managed to become a sort of Guarayo civic committee, to which both ethnic and occupational organisations are attached. It is also functional and tries to oversee the municipal government. Meanwhile, the ORCAWETA is hampered by internal disputes fostered by outside interests alien to the indigenous people themselves. This weakens its ability to act on the stage of local power.

After this rapid contextualisation of the municipalities studied and their indigenous populations, we will now look at how indigenous people have responded to the application of the Popular Participation Law and their attempts to achieve a place for themselves in the municipal governments of their provincial sections.

## TWO MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS: 1995 AND 1999

In the 1990s, the socio-political context in Bolivia changed: the time of the “pluri multi” nation had

<sup>16</sup> With his profound knowledge of internal indigenous structures, the pastor of the Free Swedish Mission insists that they never had anyone to represent them, and therefore one person cannot be representative of the whole people: “... it is a mistake to think that for this people to take a decision it is enough to address just one person and that this person will take a decision quickly. You have to take the proposal to them and the people have to talk as a group. These are lengthy conversations where they analyse the situation and only after some time do you receive an answer.” This is a problem for relations and dialogue, because those outside the indigenous group such as authorities and institutions do not know who to talk to.

<sup>17</sup> Acronym of the organisation founded in 1982 with the name Central Organisation of Indigenous Peoples of Eastern Bolivia. The organisation has now changed its name to Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia, but keeps the same acronym.

<sup>18</sup> Native Guarayo Peoples’ Council.

arrived and the demands of the indigenous organisations appeared to be clearer. From 1994 onwards, with the PPL, election processes would take on new meaning as municipal government underwent a significant turnaround by “really” involving citizens. Now that the municipal government’s powers were subject to monitoring by the Oversight Committee, the OTBs (Grassroots Territorial Organisations) were participating in planning processes, and the population was expressing an interest in how the funds allocated to their municipality were spent, the election of councillors and mayors acquired a new dimension: participation. The sectors formerly marginalized from decision-making processes now had the opportunity to enter the municipal government space, bringing into the electoral arena candidates who did not come from political parties but from their own groups. The indigenous leaders made pronouncements on the subject. The minutes of the Captains Assembly held in Camiri in September 1995 record the words of APG president Guido Chumiray: “I call for all the communities in each municipality to unite so we can win these municipal elections. We want to ensure that our candidates occupy the posts that most interest us in the municipal governments. That is the only way to make sure that the tax revenue funds that belong to the communities are allocated in the best possible way.” It was with this aim that hundreds of new candidates stood for election around the country. In this sense the municipal elections of 1995 were a “founding moment”, as they represented the turning of a new page in the exercise of citizenship, or at least that was the intention (Ayo, 1997: 29).

However, participation came at a price: the independence of the indigenous movement and organisations. In fact, the legislation currently in force (the Elections Law and the Constitution) states: “The people are represented by means of the political parties or the fronts or coalitions they form. Civic groups that represent the country’s main forces may, if they have official legal status, form part of these political party fronts or coalitions and present their candidates for President and Vice-President of the Republic, Senators, Deputies and Councillors” (Constitution, article 223). This implies that it is impossible for indigenous peoples to participate by putting forward independent or apolitical candidates.

Becoming involved in a political party was an old fear and something that the organisations had tried to avoid for years, as the Chiquitano leader José Bailaba recalls, for fear of divisions and betrayals, and following the advice of Bonifacio Barrientos Iyambae, founder of the indigenous movement, who recommended keeping a distance from the dangers of politics (Chávez, 1996: 52). To have their own political mechanism, a sort of “indigenous party” that would prioritise indigenous demands, could have been an interesting alternative. But in the end the only possible option at the time was to resort to the existing political parties. With regard to this, Albó (1997: 14) identified the options available to indigenous people and to the political parties on the subject of alliances in the 1995 municipal elections. The parties could put forward their own activists as candidates in municipalities with an indigenous population (as the MNR<sup>19</sup> did), or they could offer their

---

19 Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement). Founded in 1941, this party came to power in 1952 following the National Revolution and left its mark on Bolivian history until 1964. Its historic leader, Víctor Paz Estenssoro, was president of Bolivia four times, and its current leader, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, is now in office for the second time.

mediation to politically unaffiliated candidates in order to ensure that the party would have a presence in the area (as the MBL<sup>20</sup> did). For their part, the indigenous organisations could elect their candidates and seek the party or parties that would guarantee them victory in the municipality. Otherwise, they could form their own party. This did not happen in the case of the indigenous peoples in the lowlands, but it did in the case of small farmers in the highlands and the Cochabamba tropics. On 5 December 1995, of the 1,624 councillors elected, 464, or 28.6%, were small farmers or indigenous people. It was a very significant step forward, especially in comparison with the past (Albó, 1997: 7-8).

In Urubichá, the preference was for the traditional political parties such as the MNR. A relatively young party, the MBL, also managed to attract many votes thanks to the intensive campaigning it did in the municipality and the choice of charismatic and symbolic candidates. It should be stressed that in these elections very few people were registered to vote (less than 10% of the total population). In Gutiérrez, and specifically in Kaipependi, the captaincy was eager to place a Guaraní mayor at the head of the municipal government, as this would make it possible to manage the section's funds. In Villa Montes, the municipality's indigenous population voted for an indigenous candidate, but their votes were not enough to ensure him a place on the municipal council. Furthermore, many indigenous people did not have the identity documents needed to vote, or their papers were out of date. Consequently, the possibilities for participation, either as candidates or as voters, were quite limited.

By the time of the 1999 municipal elections, political participation by the indigenous

population was unchallengeable and practically accepted by society as a whole, though undoubtedly with local variations. From the indigenous point of view, the expectations raised by these elections and the possibility of gaining access to local power in the form of the municipal government, in some cases for a second time and in other cases at last, were more realistic than in the past, as some indigenous leaders had now had an experience of municipal government. The uneasiness caused by the obligation to stand as part of a political party ticket persisted, but the idea of setting up a party of their own had been ruled out. The CIDOB gave no instructions for indigenous candidates to run with a particular political party: each organisation was free to decide how it would participate and the political alliances it would make.

Indigenous people used two strategies to make alliances with political parties that would bring them onto the municipal stage. The first involved holding assemblies in which potential voters appointed the candidates they judged to be representative and capable of taking on the challenge of municipal management. Once these candidates were chosen, the indigenous organisation started to negotiate with the political parties. The parties selected might be those whose convictions were most in keeping with the defence of indigenous interests or, more pragmatically, those who offered the indigenous candidates the most interesting positions on the electoral slate: at the top of the list of councillors, the office of full rather than substitute councillor, or even the whole slate. The second, more personal, strategy was to wait for offers to be made by the political parties. In this case, more than with the organisation, a personal relationship was

---

20 Movimiento Bolivia Libre (Free Bolivia Movement). Founded in 1985 by dissidents from the MIR, this is a left-wing party whose grassroots support has fluctuated but is currently in decline.

established between a supposedly representative indigenous candidate and a political party.

As far as the strategies used by the political parties are concerned, in the case of the MNR and the MIR<sup>21</sup> the party's first consideration was the political activism of their representatives. The candidate had to be a member of the party, and if he/she was also indigenous that was a plus point. In the MNR, for example, the candidates who stood in all the country's municipalities were selected first in internal party elections (July 1999). The MBL and the MAS<sup>22</sup>, on the other hand, operated under the system of lending their names to the indigenous movement. But whereas the MBL representative believed that in the long term indigenous people should have their own political organisation, in the MAS they were convinced of being the indigenous peoples' party.

In Urubichá many parties presented candidates in these elections. Although they all had Guarayo candidates, in the opinion of representatives of some non-governmental organisations working in the area this led to the Guarayo vote being splintered. This happened even though people did not vote for the parties but for the individual candidates because, apparently, there was no difference in interests between Guarayo social sectors that would be reflected in political positions. All the candidates for full and substitute councillors were Guarayo. Of the councillors finishing their term in office, three stood for re-election: one was MNR and 2

were MBL. This municipality was the scene of a struggle between two important leaders. One was José Urañavi, MIR candidate for mayor, former leader of COPNAG and CIDOB, MBL candidate for the Guarayos constituency in the 1997 national election, and employee in the VAIPO office in Santa Cruz. The other was Jaime Yubanore, former president of the CECU and ADN<sup>23</sup> candidate for mayor. When Jaime Yubanore was asked why he had chosen that party, he replied that although he had been a MIR activist in Guarayos, it was logical for him to be an ADN candidate because it was a good idea to run with a party currently in government and which the sub-prefect of the province belonged to. Therefore, the choice of party followed a strategy of allying with the strongest.

In Gutiérrez the Guaraní population of the captaincy of Kaipependi Karobaicho was decidedly hoping for a better municipal government for the 1999-2004 term. As the municipality of Gutiérrez is practically all indigenous, they were confident that all the councillors would be Guaraní (not just the majority achieved in 1995). With a Guaraní mayor, they would at last gain access to direct management of resources. Disappointed by the previous municipal government term, the communities had learned a lesson: they now wanted their councillors and the municipal government as a whole to build more public works, and to be more participatory and respectful. Guaraní participation was significant, but some

---

21 Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (Movement of the Revolutionary Left). This party was founded with left-wing ideals in 1971, as a reaction to Bánzer's military coup. It has changed over the years to become the most "pragmatic" party on the Bolivian political scene. Its leader is Jaime Paz Zamora, who was president from 1989 to 1993.

22 Movimiento Al Socialismo (Movement to Socialism), headed by coca-growers leader Evo Morales. In the last presidential election in Bolivia it obtained a large percentage of the vote, enabling it to become the main opposition to the current MNR-MIR coalition.

23 Acción Democrática Nacionalista (Nationalist Democratic Action), a right-wing party founded in 1978 by Hugo Bánzer Suárez, who was the de facto president of Bolivia from 1971 to 1978. With this party, Bánzer was able to return to the presidency by the democratic route, and held office from 1997 to 2001, when he resigned.

parties did not include indigenous candidates in interesting positions on their lists. Despite the attempts made by the captaincies in mid-1999 to present Guaraní candidates together, by December several tendencies were evident. First, the MBL candidate was from the Kaaguasu captaincy. Second, the UCS<sup>24</sup> candidate was the former captain of Kaipependi Karobaicho who resigned from his office with the idea of launching a political career with a party with a greater presence in the area such as the MNR or possibly the MIR. Finally, top APG leaders from Kaipependi stood in Gutiérrez as MAS candidates.

In Villa Montes, precisely because they had not obtained a single councillor in the previous elections, the indigenous population, Guaraní, Tapiete and Weenhayek, had new expectations for the 1999 elections. They were now convinced of the need to have representatives on the municipal council as the only way to obtain real influence on municipal policies. As expected, in the case of the Weenhayek there was no single position, nor an organisational line. Although several leaders appeared on the lists, in some cases they did not participate in their party's campaign or feel involved in it. They were placed at the bottom of the list or as substitute councillors. This was because the parties had put them on the list arbitrarily, without reaching a clear agreement with the individuals concerned. Others were constantly required by their respective parties to attend rallies in the communities, as they served as a "hook" to attract the indigenous vote. But none of their proposals took indigenous issues into account seriously.<sup>25</sup>

In the elections of 5 December 1999 the MIR won by a large margin in Urubichá, followed by three parties treading on each other's heels: MNR, UCS and ADN. The other parties received hardly any votes, except for the MBL, clearly in decline despite the candidacy of its outgoing councillor, and the NFR.<sup>26</sup> The "large" parties (MNR, ADN and MIR) increased their number of votes. All the elected councillors are Guaraní, and the section's two most famous leaders managed to gain seats on the municipal council. José Urañavi (MIR) is the mayor and Antonio Chávez (MNR) is president of the council. Jaime Yubanore (ADN) is an opposition councillor.

In Gutiérrez the MNR had a resounding victory, followed at a distance by MIR, ADN and MBL. The parties with significant numbers of indigenous candidates like UCS (with the former captain of Kaipependi) or MAS (with APG leaders) did not gain seats on the council and received few votes, as though they had been punished by the section's Guaraní population! Only the captaincy of Kaaguasu managed to get one of its leaders on the council, through the MBL. Although in terms of the number of votes the difference between the MBL (Kaaguasu) and the UCS (Kaipependi) was not significant, the NFR obtained more votes than the UCS with the former mayor and a Guaraní councillor. In comparison with the past, parties such as the MNR and especially MBL and MIR had a significant increase in votes. The mayor turned out to be Herminio Robles of the MNR once again.

In Villa Montes, as in Gutiérrez, the MNR won on the banks of the Pilcomayo, but was

24 Unión Cívica Solidaridad (Civic Solidarity Union). A populist party founded in 1989 by the businessman Max Fernández. Without any specific ideology, the party has been involved in several government coalitions.

25 There was a glaring absence of systematic political programmes specialising in indigenous issues, except in the case of the MIR candidate in Urubichá.

26 Nueva Fuerza Republicana (New Republican Force). Set up around its figurehead, army captain Manfred Reyes Villa, this party emerged forcefully as an alternative to the traditional parties, but its performance has been rather insignificant.



followed closely by ADN and then by the FRI,<sup>27</sup> whose candidates were in reality from the MIR. After them came UCS and MBL, the latter thanks to the Guaraní vote. There was a remarkable increase in votes for the ADN (although its candidate used the MNR ticket in 1995), while the MNR and MIR/FRI received less votes than in the past. As in 1995, there are no indigenous councillors on this new municipal council. The office of mayor fell to the MNR and the vice-presidency of the council to the FRI, meaning the MIR.

### ONE LAW: THE POPULAR PARTICIPATION LAW IN INDIGENOUS HANDS

The PPL is particularly relevant as it lays the foundations for developing new forms of

relationships between the state apparatus and civil society and by touching on the indigenous problem more explicitly. It is an interesting proposal for indigenous peoples to acquire higher levels of participation and action. The PPL:

- Recognises indigenous peoples.
- Recognises their organisations and specific forms of authority, present within the borders of a municipality and territorially continuous, as subjects of popular participation, and awards them official legal status as OTBs, thereby turning them into legal entities.
- Recognises the rights and obligations of the indigenous organisations established as OTBs. This strengthens them as organisations and reinforces their role in the definition of their own development. It also gives them the

#### Councillors in the Three Municipalities

1995-1999				2000-2004			
INDIGENOUS				INDIGENOUS			
URUBICHÁ	Antonio Chávez	MBL	X	José Urañavi	MIR		X
	Pascual Oreyai	MNR	X	Antonio Chávez	MNR		X
	Hidelberto Tobar	MBL	X	Victoriano Oreyai	UCS		X
	Lucila Urañavi	MIR	X	Jorge Papu	MIR		X
	Tarcisio Vaca	MNR	X	Jaime Yubanore	ADN		X
GUTIÉRREZ	Jaime Ayreyu	MNR	X	Herminio Robles	MNR		
	Socimo C. Rivero	MBL	X	Sabino Ordóñez	MNR		
	Erwin Cuellar	?	X	Hipólito Mani	MIR		X
	Gerardo Pinto	ADN		Nicolas Carmelo	ADN		
	Herminio Robles	MNR		Gabriel Ovando	MBL		X
VILLA MONTES	Oscar Antezana	MIR		Clover Bulacia	MNR		
	Guillermo Salazar	MNR		Guillermo Salazar	ADN		
	Ruben Vaca	MNR		José Bleischner	FRI		
	Alberto Vedia (*)	MNR		Ruben Vaca	MNR		
	Miguel Lea Plaza	MIR		Rolando Calvimontes	ADN		

Source: Santa Cruz and Tarija Departmental Electoral Courts; SNPP, 1997.

(\*) Later changed to the MIR

27 Frente Revolucionario de Izquierda (Revolutionary Left Front).

power to oversee the performance of their respective municipal governments and the provision of public works and services.

- Establishes mechanisms to link indigenous peoples recognised as OTBs with their respective municipal governments, by means of the oversight committees.
- Establishes the possibility for indigenous authorities or other indigenous people to participate in public management as deputy mayors of the IMDs appointed by the mayors.
- Establishes mechanisms to improve redistribution of public resources to people at the grassroots in general and the indigenous population in particular, to improve administration of these resources by municipal governments, and to improve public services provided by the state in traditionally marginalized areas.

Apart from the new development of awarding more resources to municipal governments, the PPL opens the doors of local power to civil society by creating new spaces and especially new mechanisms for participation, which may or may not have been taken advantage of by the indigenous population. Firstly, by establishing that they have the right to official legal status as peoples and/or communities or, otherwise, as small farming communities,<sup>28</sup> indigenous peoples are recognised as subjects of popular participation. Secondly, indigenous peoples can participate in the oversight committees by appointing a representative. Another form of participation is participatory municipal planning. However, at the end of the day, it is still the municipal government that determines what will happen in the municipality. To enter the municipal

government, the most traditional access route was and still is to stand for election, as we saw above. In the next section we will look at the performance of those indigenous representatives who gained access to the municipal governments in Urubichá and Gutiérrez. Furthermore, the PPL “dusted off” a form of devolved municipal unit that would be widely taken advantage of by indigenous peoples in the highlands and lowlands: the municipal district. In the three municipalities studied several IMDs were set up, and we will look at how they have functioned later on.

## THE INDIGENOUS MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

The new indigenous councillors who entered the municipal governments of Urubichá and Gutiérrez after the 1995 municipal elections did so as a result of a triple (s)election process: by their indigenous organisations who encouraged them to stand for election, by the political parties who lent them their names, and finally by indigenous voters. They were “elected” in every sense of the word, because once they entered the municipal government they were burdened with the responsibility of not betraying the trust of the three stakeholders just mentioned. It was a triply difficult task: “Candidates who gain power must work on behalf of their people and for their people. Also, the people themselves, through their Oversight Committee, must make sure that their representative is taking the necessary steps to benefit the people” (Minutes of the Captains Assembly, Camiri, 2.09.1995).

The national indigenous leadership’s immediate reaction to the results of the 1995 election was one of delight at the success achieved

---

<sup>28</sup> In terms of the dissemination of the Law, the idea used with regard to this is that indigenous peoples are like illegitimate children: once they obtain official legal status, their ‘birth’ is registered and they therefore have the right to an identity document.



in some municipalities in Santa Cruz, for example. But their joy was quickly tempered by the realisation that the politicisation of indigenous participation was dangerous. It was clear that ways of working in politics were still very traditional (authoritarianism, paternalism), which meant that the candidates who were now indigenous councillors were left with limited opportunities for action. Furthermore, the indigenous leaders were well aware of the volatile nature of politicians, who forget today what they promised yesterday, which clashed with the apparently inviolable commitments taken on by the indigenous representatives. All that remained then was the expectation that those elected would manage the municipality well and as transparently as possible. Meanwhile, political analysts also expressed fears: although the entry of indigenous people and small farmers was an important step on the road to political participation, it was going to be a rocky road because the traditional elites were not going to do anything to make their journey along it easier.

At the end of the 1995-1999 municipal government term, the opinion expressed by Marcial Fabricano (then vice-president of CIDOB) confirms those initial fears: the performance of the indigenous councillors was patchy, because they had to struggle with political and administrative problems. According to Fabricano, several of the parties with which the indigenous representatives reached office disregarded the agreements established. This was because the indigenous representatives' interlocutors were not national political party leaders but regional or local leaders who distorted the sense of indigenous participation. The result was that in the municipal governments the indigenous representatives were either manipulated or marginalized.

From the point of view of the political parties,

two complementary positions can be distinguished overall. On the one hand, the representatives of the parties which had had indigenous candidates participating in the 1995 municipal elections expressed satisfaction with the new space for political participation that had been opened up for this sector of society, which they endorsed. This was the opinion expressed by the MBL, MNR and to a lesser extent the MIR. On the other hand, however, they also acknowledged that indigenous municipal management had been bad due to the mistakes and blunders made by the new councillors. Even so, the MIR clarified that these mistakes were attributable to the PPL and were not made just by the indigenous councillors but by all councillors. According to the MBL representative, they lacked the technical and political training needed to be able to address the challenge of municipal management. In addition, the persistence of the tendency to defect to other parties, bribery and corruption were serious obstacles to good performance by the indigenous representatives. Does what happened in the municipalities we studied confirm these sad tendencies?

In the opinion of many observers, indigenous municipal management between 1996 and 1999 was "disastrous" in Urubichá. All that could be seen were internal squabbles, councillors competing with each other for offers of support based on their personal interests, choosing the most convenient, the simplest and the most "palpable". This was so much the case that the indigenous councillors wanted to be mayor one by one, not for the benefit of the people but to profit personally from the office. Once inside the local government office, the personal interests of the Guarayo candidates prevailed over their indigenous identity and ethnic awareness. All they did was enjoy the benefits of office, forgetting about those who had placed them there. They

gradually evaded their people's control and enriched themselves without leaving any benefits in the communities. The communities, for their part, do not recognise municipal authority. The Urubichá central community organisation maintained its authority, not just in its own jurisdiction but also in the rest of the communities, and even in relations with the institutions working in the municipality. However, as it was not entitled to sign agreements related to municipal development (only the municipal government can do this), its power was limited.

In general terms, indigenous municipal management in Gutiérrez did not meet the population's expectations. With two Guaraní representatives on the municipal council and one as mayor, it seemed to be the ideal opportunity for a turnaround in the management of a municipality recently enriched by an important Guaraní captaincy.<sup>29</sup> However, this did not come about. From the start the work of the mayor Jaime Ayreyu was made difficult by the hostility of the 'whites' (especially those in his own party, the MNR) and inherited problems caused by previous bad municipal management. In the captaincy itself, community members were not at all happy with the attitude of the Ayreyu "clan", to which all the captains belonged, in placing yet another of its members in a leadership role. For its part, the Under-Secretariat of Ethnic Affairs tried to provide support by contracting advisers, but despite this there was no consensus within the municipal council. Following a series of internal problems, the mayor was not re-elected at the end of the first year of his term in office. With this the leadership of the Gutiérrez municipal government by a

Guaraní was brought to an end. From then on, indigenous people would only be councillors. According to one of them, the municipal government worked extremely hard, visiting communities, holding local meetings, issuing resolutions and orders, etc. The councillors received training from the Rural Communities Development Programme and support from the Indigenous Planning and Management Office. But the population was not satisfied with the performance of their representatives: in Kaipependi the communities felt that what was planned had not been fulfilled, because many public works were not finished. At least this indicates a higher level of knowledge of what was planned, in comparison with other municipalities.

In the municipality of Villa Montes the municipal government was not in indigenous hands during the 1996-1999 term. Indigenous people, and the Weenhayek in particular, are viewed very negatively by civil society and those holding local power, not just because they are an ethnic minority, but because of their bad reputation ("lazy, conflict-ridden and divided"). Addressing indigenous issues was not a priority for the municipal government, although it did not fail to take them into account, as reflected in the allocation of resources in the Annual Operational Plans for 1997, 1998 and 1999. Even so, the Weenhayek complain that the municipal government is not aware of their needs nor the situation in the communities. In fact, the way in which indigenous people are treated in the local government office is evidence of the distance between the two sides. With a certain irony, a Tapiete asked how you should paint yourself to get into the local government office! In the local

---

<sup>29</sup> The captaincy of Kaipependi Karobaicho, which corresponds to the Eiti canton, used to be part of the 6th section of Cordillera province (Camiri). The PPL made it evident that there was a need to change this situation, as it was not at all favourable to the indigenous population. The result was the inclusion of the captaincy/canton in the 5th section: Gutiérrez.

government office in Yacuiba the situation seems to be even worse. According to people from the Crevaux community, no-one is allowed in, not even the deputy mayor or the president of the OTB, let alone the captain. "With or without popular participation, they take no notice of us."

## THE INDIGENOUS MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS

It is now a well-known fact that the way in which Bolivia's territory was administratively organised did not take into account or respect indigenous peoples. Because the political-administrative division of the country does not coincide with indigenous or original socio-cultural units, these suffered from a lack of attention by municipal governments. The PPL attempted to rectify this situation by dividing municipalities into districts. It defines municipal districts as follows: "... (where) there is a geographical, socio-cultural, productive or economic unit smaller or larger than a canton, the Municipal Government shall approve the creation of a municipal district and the appointment of a deputy mayor" (PPL, article 17/III). Later, in Supreme Decree 23858, a more extensive explanation was made of the objective, functions and way of appointing deputy mayors: "Municipal districts are devolved administration and implementation units of the municipal government, territorially integrated, headed by a deputy mayor, and created by the municipal government, whose purpose is to:

- Promote efficiency in the inter-institutional work of managing resources and sectoral public policies.
- Promote effective administrative management of the municipality in its territorial area, in terms of the use of technical, human and financial resources.
- Promote and structure participation by the

OTBs in the processes of definition and management of the actions established by the PPL in the administration and planning of territorial development.

- Maintain the socio-cultural unity of social organisations of a territorial nature within the jurisdiction of the district." (Supreme Decree 23858, article 26)

By setting up districts the aim was therefore to:

- Facilitate participation by all civil society bodies in municipal management; meaning participation by urban or rural community organisations and/or associations in a certain territorial space defined on the basis of cantons or municipal districts.
- Define municipal government territorial management units.
- Enable municipal government functions and responsibilities for health and education to be devolved and/or decentralised to deputy mayors' offices or cantonal agencies, in order to improve administrative management.
- Facilitate relationships and coordination between the municipal government, public health and education services and the community organisation, marking them out in a single territorial area and thereby optimising the provision of services.
- Promote the hierarchical organisation of service provision at different levels, establishing service networks in the municipality's jurisdiction.
- Strengthen socio-cultural, socio-economic and environmental units within the municipality.

Although no article in the PPL referred to the possibility of creating IMDs, the first indigenous municipal district was created at the

end of July 1994 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> section of Cordillera province in Santa Cruz (Charagua), in the Guaraní region of Isoso. After this other districts were created in the east and west of the country. The indigenous district was therefore erected on the experimental stage of indigenous participation, by permitting recognition of indigenous jurisdiction within a municipality. It would also have a representative, the deputy mayor, who could establish a specific link with the municipal government.

The need to divide the municipality of Urubichá into districts basically arose from the request made by the community of Yaguarú. But when Prefecture and SNPP staff visited the section, they took advantage of the occasion to establish Salvatierra and Urubichá as districts too. They also created an ecological district in the northeast of the municipality. This was not given a deputy mayor's office because it was totally unpopulated, even by the Guayaro. The dividing lines between the former Franciscan missions were taken to be the borders of the districts. It may be for this reason that the borders are still undefined, especially between Yaguarú and Urubichá. We found that the division of the municipality into districts was merely a formality, as most of the population is not familiar even with the term, let alone the fact. People do not know how many districts exist in the municipality, or which they are. Therefore the benefits or harmful effects of the process have not come to light. The lack of knowledge of the issue has led community members in Salvatierra to refuse to recognise the authority of their district's deputy mayor, because they are not clear about the role this official should be performing. Furthermore, the person currently holding this office has provoked distrust among the population because he was not elected by the community and because he is

the only person receiving a salary. This is an exemplary case of a district failing to function. It should also be pointed out that these districts were set up without the adjective "indigenous".

In Yaguarú the situation was not riddled with conflict in this way, because the district was requested by the community. Therefore the inhabitants recognise the need and importance of having a deputy mayor, who provides a real service to the community. For example, a vehicle has been obtained to transport people and their produce from Yaguarú to Ascensión de Guarayos and Urubichá. This has meant that the population is less dependent on private transport.

The setting up of the district of Kaipependi Karobaicho within the municipality of Gutiérrez was due less to the express wishes of its inhabitants and more the result of the pressure put on the captaincy's authorities by different government agencies (SNAEGG and SNPP) involved with indigenous issues. Despite this, conditions favourable to the process were in place, such as the captaincy being an organisation with strong links and high-level relationships with the state, a very clear identity and a high level of organisation and management of its society and its territorial space.

The leadership of the captaincy eventually agreed to become a Municipal District. The relevant municipal order was issued on 30 April 1995, establishing it as a district shared between Gutiérrez and Charagua, as it had three communities in the municipality of Charagua. One of the first decisions was that the post of deputy mayor (elected in an assembly) should be included in the hierarchical structure of the captaincy as a lower-level office, and this continues to be the case today. None of the four deputy mayors the captaincy has had so far has been an important member of the main "clan". However, the figure of the deputy mayor is still a

source of concern to the population. Although the difference between the captaincy and the district is clear to the leadership, it is not clear to people in communities. They view with concern the fact that complaints and the defence of community interests continue to be taken on by the captaincy, despite being the deputy mayor's responsibility.

Amongst the opinions expressed about the district of Kaipependi, Balslev (1997) judges the consolidation of the district to be a positive step for the captaincy, because it enabled it to become strong enough to take over the local government and because it led to the training of human resources within the organisation. Semo and Laura (1998) draw attention to the captaincy's lack of participation in the participatory planning stage. According to these authors, it is mainly the leaders and not the grassroots of the captaincy who are involved in this process. Those who decide what will be included in the Annual Operational Plans and Municipal Development Plan are the experts and leaders of these indigenous groups, because they have accumulated sufficient knowledge of how to use the mechanisms that will enable them to enter knowledge-based power structures. On the other hand, these authors are positive about the fact that this is a district that is essentially strengthening demand in terms of agricultural production, which is not happening in other districts.

From the point of view of the captaincy itself, we found that the creation of the district has brought new worries for the organisation. This is because it has obliged the organisation to increase its contacts with local state bodies and adapt to a series of new practices. These include participating in negotiations with political parties, setting down all its proposals in writing, and deciding upon activities or projects for the communities more on the basis of dates and

budgets than their importance. As a result, the plans of the captaincies have been set out in documents, and they have also had to be included in more general plans such as those of a municipality. For people in the communities, the district robes worn by the captaincy since 1995 have not brought about significant changes in everyday life, because funds are not allocated or managed directly. For two years, the municipal government did not invest in Kaipependi so that it could save up to buy agricultural machinery that would provide services throughout the municipality but would be the property of the district (i.e. the captaincy) of Kaipependi. But the sacrifice was greater for the affected communities than for the municipal government. Projects are slow in coming, and people are tired of waiting; as Demesio Aquino, a teacher in Eiti, puts it, people are losing hope.

The captaincy of Kaaguasu has also been established as an indigenous municipal district. The existence of the two IMDs strengthens the municipality of Gutiérrez, but only if they function properly, as Eduardo Mendoza of the NGO CIPCA points out. They are not very useful if they are not operational but merely "decorative". Mendoza also feels that the lack of clear roles and responsibilities is the root of the problem. In this context, there is no sense in local governments giving ground to bodies whose definitions are not established. The best option would be for Gutiérrez to become an indigenous municipality, as it meets the conditions for it: a majority indigenous population, representative organisations and territorial continuity. This would be possible if the two captaincies were to unite.

In Villa Montes, the Weenhayek indigenous municipal district was also one of the first to be created in the Chaco region after the Isoso IMD. The district therefore quickly became a point of reference, perhaps because it was an example of how

not to do things. The Weenhayek IMD was created firstly as a result of the municipal government's need to divide the municipality into districts in order to have representatives on the oversight committee. Secondly, for the indigenous people, setting up a district represented an opportunity to strengthen the process of consolidating their territory,<sup>30</sup> which runs alongside the Pilcomayo river. The result was a multi-ethnic district, with a Weenhayek, Guaraní and non-indigenous cattle ranching population. Initially the cattle ranchers were against the creation of the district, but they eventually decided to give their support to the chief captain. Consequently, Municipal Resolution 041/95 was issued on 25 July 1995, establishing the creation of 11 districts: 4 urban and 11 rural. Just one would have a deputy mayor's office: district 5, which was the indigenous district.

The deputy mayor felt that his office should take charge of the collection of taxes on fishing, agriculture and logging in the district's jurisdiction. But little by little, several problems started to hamper the functioning of the district and the deputy mayor's work. The constant attacks by the Weenhayek on the "other side" weakened the deputy mayor, because the internal crisis in the ORCAWETA prevented him from working in peace, as he was deputy mayor and chief captain at the same time. Eventually he was removed from office due to administrative accountability problems and his successor was appointed directly by the prefect of Tarija. This appointment immediately aroused serious fears, because the new deputy mayor was not nominated by the communities and lacked managerial capacity as he was unable to read or write, and could only sign his name.

Neither did the municipal government give the district much scope for action, as it refused

to provide it with any funds. The deputy mayor was just another employee, limited to bringing in the communities' requirements and making community members participate. Or at least that was the intention. But in the municipal government the situation was clear: the district was there, but it was not capable of functioning. They had therefore complied with the PPL by providing a space for indigenous people, but they did not provide them with the means to be able to take advantage of that space, especially bearing in mind the internal divisions in the organisation and the fact that the indigenous people were vulnerable to being deceived. Yet another argument that confirmed why they could not possibly be given funds! Afterwards, the rivalry between the deputy mayor's office and the captaincy persisted as it was now the deputy mayor rather than the ORCAWETA who was the municipal government's official interlocutor.

In this case the district did not function, nor will it in future unless it is given proper advice and the Weenhayek receive training. We could add: unless those who are trained have the backing of their people. The failure of the IMD can be explained by the sum of internal and external factors: the weakness of the organisation, its instability which gives rise to a lack of trust on the part of the municipal government, the municipal government's unwillingness, the failure to allocate funds, and the fiction of the joint district between Villa Montes and Yacuiba (Balslev, 1997: 79-81). Now in the year 2000 it seems that a new era is about to start for the Weenhayek district, because the change of municipal government has led to the replacement of the deputy mayor. The current deputy mayor is a young leader educated and trained inside the

---

30 The Weenhayek indigenous territory was created by Supreme Decree in 1992 with an initial area of 190,000 hectares.

ORCAWETA. He has the backing of several councillors, is receiving advice from institutions and enjoys the indigenous organisation's trust.

To sum up, although there are districts in each of the municipalities studied, most of the time they have not performed their function. The creation and above all the functioning of the IMDs has caused a great deal of problems, and no solutions have yet been found.<sup>31</sup>

## STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Strengthening of the indigenous organisation (captaincy of Kaipependi).
- A point of reference for the municipal government to address indigenous issues.
- Building of the community's self-esteem (Yaguarú).
- Existence of 2 indigenous district development plans (IDDP) in Gutiérrez.
- Trust on the part of the institutions supporting the district (Kaipependi).
- In the case of large municipalities like Urubichá and Villa Montes, the districts make territorial management easier.

## WEAKNESSES AND THREATS

- No IDDP (Urubichá and Villa Montes).
- Frequent changes of deputy mayor (Kaipependi).
- The scope of the office is not known and the deputy mayor is not recognised (Urubichá, Villa Montes).
- The deputy mayor is simply a local government employee, and is sometimes appointed by the 'whites' (Villa Montes).
- The deputy mayor and the captain have

parallel roles and responsibilities (Villa Montes).

- No work has been done on the relationship between the IMD and the Indigenous Community Territory (TCO).
- Lack of experience in municipal management (Urubichá, Gutiérrez and Villa Montes).
- Institutional interest in the creation of IMDs.
- Lack of institutional support once the IMDs are created.
- Lack of clarity with regard to the participation of indigenous authorities.
- The deputy mayor has limited powers.
- District planning and management is subordinated to municipal planning and management.
- The municipal government does not allocate resources to the districts (Villa Montes).
- The municipal government distrusts the indigenous organisation (Villa Montes).
- The municipal government has a political interest in controlling the IMDs (Villa Montes).
- The IMDs do not benefit directly from the resources allocated from national tax revenue, and neither have they obtained other resources (Villa Montes, Urubichá).
- The deputy mayor is subordinate to the mayor and subject to the correlation of forces within political parties.

## BARRIERS TO INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION

If we weigh up the occupation of the popular participation stage by indigenous actors, we find that many remained offstage completely and those that managed to enter it were often left playing secondary

<sup>31</sup> In fact, some proposed solutions were formulated to be included in the new Constitutional Municipalities Law, but they were not taken into account. In the opinion of many, the indigenous municipality would be the most appropriate structure.

roles. At the end of this first municipal government term, it is clear that although indigenous people have managed to gain access to local power as personified in the municipal government, this power is not exercised, as it does not translate into anything: the results of the indigenous presence in the local government, deputy mayor's office, oversight committee or OTB are not visible.

Furthermore, the sight of an indigenous person reaching local government and taking part in council meetings has provoked reactions varying from incredulity to contempt, scorn and anger. When the council was shared between 'whites' and indigenous people and the latter were in the minority, their presence was often "decorative" or little used, as they were only required to run errands. In other cases, where an indigenous district exists such as in Villa Montes, the argument used to refuse to give funds to the deputy mayor was the internal division among the people and the Weenhayek's own organisational problems. In addition to these factors, we have identified a series of barriers to the exercise of local power which represent a combination of features both legal and cultural in origin.

On the one hand, there are problems inherent to the law itself and the relationship the state has established with civil society, in this case the indigenous population. For example, the application of any piece of legislation implies that new and hitherto unknown "rules" must be adopted. These rules have to be applied in full and down to the last detail, because otherwise they are not valid. In this case, one of the first rules of the PPL game was to set up OTBs and go through the procedures to obtain official legal status for them. This gave rise to innumerable problems linked to the confusion created amongst the population about the concept of the OTB itself and the fact that recognition of OTB status (small farming community or indigenous people) lent itself to a great deal of manipulation by

intermediate levels such as municipal governments, sub-prefectures and prefectures. The result was that many genuinely indigenous OTBs do not have the proper legal status.

The Law did not arrive on its own. It was accompanied by several regulatory decrees that appeared between 1994 and 1997 and finally by the new Constitutional Municipalities Law in 1999. However, despite (or because of) the proliferation of legal norms, many operational aspects remained unresolved. These included the role of the deputy mayors in municipal districts or joint districts in different municipalities. From the indigenous point of view, these issues are crucial, as the deputy mayor has to establish a link between the indigenous organisation and the municipal government. Moreover, joint districts could help to re-establish the cohesion of indigenous territory broken up by the political-administrative divisions established for the organisation of the state.

Another important aspect involved in the well-intentioned but somewhat coarse relationship between the state and indigenous peoples is the issue of the jargon used by the state apparatus and its agents. And perhaps more than the jargon, the language itself! The fact is that all norms, laws, regulations and policy documents are conceived, written and disseminated in Spanish, with very few exceptions, while the everyday life of many indigenous peoples (at least those included in our research) is conducted in their own language. Beyond this, something that affects the majority of the population, indigenous or not, is that the state's language is complex: the vocabulary and concepts it uses are unclear and no-one has thought of putting together and disseminating a glossary to explain them. To speak of planning, vocation, objectives, operationalisation, evaluation or monitoring is an involuntary attack on the indigenous population. Furthermore, for peoples with an oral tradition, being forced to develop a



culture of writing, of documents, of short, medium and long-term planning, contradicts their worldview in which only the present is real...

Finally, another crucial factor when it comes to managing a municipal government is the issue of resources. Several aspects come together here:

- The fact that one person as deputy mayor receives a salary from the local government, while the rest of the community and its authorities do not, can give rise to internal conflicts.
- Furthermore, people expect to observe the physical handling of the money, to see it and count it. It is difficult to accept that the money is kept at a distance in invisible bank accounts. People expect the mayor to use the funds to carry out public works directly, and nobody is accustomed to municipal bureaucracy (bidding rounds and contracting processes).
- The handling of resources is a double-edged sword, because if indigenous participation means having access to municipal government resources, they need to know how to manage them correctly and that is not a simple matter.

Finally, access to local power is dependent on participation in politics. The PPL opens up spaces for political parties to enter, and creates the conditions for a potential break-up of indigenous organisations. This was something that indigenous peoples greatly feared, because of the impact it could have within their organisations. In fact there is evidence of growing political activism (forced? voluntary? or circumstantial?) by indigenous people, and the increasingly heavy weight of personal political interests against the interests of the people as a whole.

On the other hand, indigenous peoples did

not seem to be sufficiently mature to address the municipal challenge. For example, municipal borders do not correspond to the indigenous vision of space and territory, as in the case of the Guarayo. For them, the points of reference are either the demand for a TCO or the jurisdiction inherited from the missions. In the case of the Weenhayek, the territory occupied by the people is located in two municipalities, in which the provision of municipal services is very variable.<sup>32</sup> Municipal geography is not important. At another level, it is not customary to ask the municipal government to address local problems while the indigenous organisations play a leading role, when they are consolidated as in Gutiérrez or Urubichá. Indigenous people see their organisations as holding "integrated" answers to the problems faced by the population.

Other elements contributed to the difficulty indigenous people found in dealing with municipal issues, such as the "distraction" factor. As far as priorities were concerned, from 1994-1997 at least, the indigenous movement concentrated its efforts and energies on demands for territory. The TCO concept was included in the constitution (article 171) and finally in the Agrarian Reform Law (Law N° 1715 of 18 October 1996) and its regulations. These are the legal instruments obliging the state to address the demands for territory presented by the country's indigenous and original peoples. Consequently, the issue of territory overshadowed municipal questions because it was considered a higher priority by indigenous peoples.

Finally, the fact that the PPL is little or not at all known has prevented it from being properly understood and therefore applied. Training processes on the subject have generally been aimed at the indigenous leadership. The leaders have not

---

32 For example, the Weenhayek communities in Yacuiba municipality form part of the educational district of Villa Montes.

concerned themselves with transmitting their knowledge to the grassroots or, when they did so, have mainly worked on trying to convince people of the good (or bad) things about the Law. By now, practically the whole population has an idea that the PPL exists, that resources exist, and that indigenous people as the inhabitants of municipalities have the right to benefit from these resources, meaning benefits in the form of public works and/or services, but no more. Participatory planning has not been very participatory and the final version of the Annual Operational Plans, which must abide by pre-established formats, does not correspond to what indigenous people planned when they did so.

So, does the PPL act as a homogenising reform despite its willingness to respect the country's "pluri-multi" nature, imposing rules alien to indigenous peoples' own ways of working? Indigenous peoples have not only had to create organisational structures to be able to enter into dialogue and exchange (goods or services) with the state and Bolivian society. They have also had to reorganise themselves in order to be able to play the "game" of popular participation. Therefore, forms of organisation duplicate (a captain and an OTB president in Villa Montes) instead of merging. Indigenous people do not find a suitable place in the institutional spaces created by the Law (the oversight committee, the district), but in some cases they find ways to appropriate these spaces. For example, the supra-community organisations are not taken into account by the Law, but in practice they act as the real oversight committees because those officially established do not function as such. In the IMDs, the role of the deputy mayor is ambiguous: is s/he a local government employee or a lower-ranking member of the organisation, or even an indigenous authority? Furthermore, indigenous ways of working in politics are different to those known in the "westernised" world. Especially at election time, when it is necessary to perform a series

of rituals that characterise political campaigns, such as statements, debates and rallies. These practices are alien to indigenous people, who resist performing them, as in Urubichá, where there was no debate between the candidates because it is not customary to act in this way.

Is all this the price of modernity? The PPL appears to be a sort of instrument of symbolic violence in the sense that its rules of the game continue to be those of the dominant group that imposes an arbitrary culture (a statement that can be generalised to every attempt to relate to the Bolivian state) and establishes forms of participation. One of its manifestations is the obligation to acquire and use a complex, mysterious and fearsome set of jargon (that of municipal management) in a language that is not the mother tongue. As well as being alien, it is a written language. It is like returning to the time when to be a citizen one had to be able to read and write.... To be understood, accepted, applied and appropriated, the PPL demands the acquisition of cultural and linguistic capital and forms of participation alien to the indigenous world.

## A CHALLENGE FOR INDIGENOUS ORGANISATIONS

The indigenous movement's main achievement at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was its recognition by national society, which developed simultaneously with knowledge of the indigenous peoples of the lowlands. At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the new challenge is for this recognition to take the form of effective indigenous participation in local development. At this level the municipal governments' best interlocutors are the indigenous organisations.

In the municipalities of Urubichá, Gutiérrez and Villa Montes there are certain similarities between these organisations, such as the

personality of their leaders, for example. This characteristic (excessive personalisation or the organisation's dependence on one leader in particular) is common to several organisations. In itself it can turn out to be counterproductive in the sense that, if the "key" person is no longer the head of the organisation or has "betrayed" the organisation's interests, the legitimacy built up by the organisation collapses. Major differences between the indigenous organisations in the three municipalities have also been identified: their jurisdiction and the history of the organisations which has left an indelible stamp on the performance of the leaders. Being the latest captain in an almost hereditary line that probably dates back a couple of centuries (Kaipependi) is not the same as being at the head of an organisation created as a result of external pressure and whose organisational structure was copied from the Guaraní model (the Weenhayek case).

This wide range of situations also has repercussions on the level of relations between the organisation and its interlocutors, particularly the municipal government of the section or sections in which it is located. While the ORCAWETA comes up against a wall of silence or rejection, the CECU is trying to control the municipal government and even now to penetrate it, and the captaincy of Kaipependi's strongest wish is to take over the local government (though its most recent attempt to do so seems to have failed).

What tools (solidity, maturity, capacity to negotiate, social, political and cultural capital) do the organisations have at their disposal in their relations with municipal governments? Both external and internal factors come together to determine the quality of these relations. While the willingness of the municipal government must be considered as one of the external factors, the internal ones must include the indigenous organisations' management capacity. Here the issue of trained human resources

is crucial, as they are really useful to the organisation. This aspect leads us to the issue of the growing distance between the indigenous leadership and the grassroots, as well as the internal conflicts faced by the leaders, who are caught between the interests of their people and their own personal and political interests. It is here that we may find one of the keys to improving the current situation: strengthening social oversight. In fact many agree that, more than political representation inside the municipal government, which at the end of the day is not an indicator of participation as councillors may be silent or "traitors to the cause", what is important is to strengthen social oversight as the real platform for the exercise of democracy. This not a simple matter because, both in the case of Urubichá and that of Gutiérrez, where the indigenous organisations are relatively solid, it is difficult to question the authority of the leaders. If the oversight committee is not functioning and its place is being taken by the indigenous organisation, whether it be a captaincy or a central community organisation, who exercises control over the indigenous leadership, and how? This leads to other delicate questions, such as: to what extent are the leaders representative of the grassroots? and on what do they build their legitimacy? Furthermore, Oxhorn (2000) believes that the PPL represents a danger to indigenous organisations not so much because it obliges them to modernise, but because it does so in a "perverse" way, introducing forms of patronage and rent-seeking (the democratisation of corruption).

A review of the indigenous peoples' agenda for the new municipal government term (2000-2004) finds that, contrary to what happened in the past, the councillors elected in December 1999 in Urubichá are experienced leaders, well prepared to take forward a more productive term than the previous one. For its part, the population has become more aware and demanding, and is determined to exercise stricter social oversight of

municipal government officials. In Gutiérrez the situation is more complicated. The elections were used as an opportunity for the population to reject the traditional leaders of the captaincy and the APG. But the Guaraní also want to exercise greater social oversight of the municipal government and the deputy mayors, who are faced with an increasing challenge. There are no real prospects for improving the situation of indigenous people in Villa Montes in the near future, except with regard to the Weenhayek and Guaraní municipal districts. The organisations are providing themselves with new mechanisms (kinship, for example, in the case of the Weenhayek) in order to follow up on and improve the situation in the only space that has been opened up for participation in this municipality.<sup>33</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The relations established between the state and indigenous peoples throughout history, and the perceptions they have of each other, have travelled a long road of misunderstandings and conflicts that have never been resolved. Although the measures implemented with the aim of overcoming these problems were taken forward with valid intentions, their limits were set by the ideological concepts on which the national state was founded, the particular interests of the groups managing the state apparatus and Bolivian society's lack of knowledge of itself. The current reform process is not exempt from this failure to coincide: its limits are set by the modernised interests of the dominant groups and also those of the indigenous peoples, by the ideological basis of the development model the

country is attempting to introduce, and by the dominant groups' insufficient knowledge of the ethnic problem. It should also be recognised that indigenous peoples lack knowledge of the state and its policies.

Despite all its good intentions, it is evident that the PPL and complementary decrees and regulations were insufficient and/or unclear about aspects that are crucial for indigenous peoples, as Luz María Calvo acknowledges: "Despite everything that the Law does well and gets right, there are two major problems with regard to the indigenous question and the inclusion of ethnic policies. First is the matter of links between the municipality and indigenous peoples, both from the point of view of jurisdictions and in terms of management structures. Second is the question of dealing with interculturalism and valuing each people's cultural capacities as the basis for its development."

In the participation scenarios built by the PPL for Bolivian society, the tools and mechanisms that could have been used by indigenous peoples (participatory planning, IMDs, political participation) are becoming bureaucratic requirements that constrain social participation in public spaces. As these are not fulfilled, participation is denied or distorted. The failure to recognise indigenous peoples' forms of participation and interaction has meant that traditional authorities and institutional bureaucratic authorities are operating in parallel. Among indigenous peoples, this has implied the establishment of new forms of election (or selection) of leaders alien to their culture and hierarchical structures, and not recognised by society.

Since the established forms of participation require a certain level of knowledge and ability

---

33 In many cases the indigenous organisations and now the municipal governments have the active support of non-governmental organisations which are providing training in municipal management. The figure of the mediator persists, still preventing direct relations between indigenous peoples and the state, even at the local level. However, the aim of these mediators seems to be to build indigenous capacities in order to achieve greater autonomy.

to manage administrative codes, indigenous participation in social oversight of municipal management and investment has turned out to be deficient. On many occasions this has led to disillusion, not just among those directly involved in the process, but also in the communities where expectations were raised with regard to the participation of their leaders in the public sphere of local government. These illusions were shattered as time went by and few changes were noticeable in everyday life.

Access to power in PPL spaces requires that indigenous peoples try to decode the ethos of state bureaucracy that establishes the forms of political participation in public spaces (where representativeness is interfered with by the law). The law does not recognise these communities' culture and forms of participation, and instead establishes participatory processes framed within regulatory contexts that limit individuals' political actions to party politics, and break the structure of traditional indigenous ways of organising. Therefore the entry of indigenous people into these processes established by the law implies that individual and collective indigenous bodies must be "disciplined" around forms of participation established by the political power determined by the state, in which indigenous people continue to be alien and strange to a 'western' world whose sole desire is to legitimise an arbitrary culture.

At the same time, this 'western' world cannot recognise that these cultures are different, that their interests do not necessarily prioritise the accumulation of economic capital. Instead, the

satisfaction of their needs involves a symbolic arena where efficiency and effectiveness in the control and management of resources does not have the same social impact as in urban spaces. The PPL and its ways of organising power are therefore out of context in indigenous spaces, because of the differences that exist in the ways power is distributed.

Some (Patzi, n.d.) consider the PPL to be an heir of the national revolution, as it shares its civilising and "citizenising" characteristics and likewise contradicts its initial purpose. In practice, its desire to reverse the homogenisation characteristic of the post-1952 revolution dispensations has in fact been overtaken by reality: "... the PPL is frequently viewed with scepticism, as a formula for homogenisation by making everyone act in conformity with a set of rules, whether it is a matter of setting up oversight committees, meeting deadlines often imposed for reasons of efficiency, adjusting budgets to take into account funding priorities or the requirements of external organisations, and so on and so forth..." (Oxhorn, 2000). The indigenous response to this may take one of two routes or a symbiosis of both. They can either adopt the new "codes of modernity" or they can develop an identity and mechanisms of "resistance", demanding separate treatment that respects their specificities and differences. The demands recently presented by CIDOB (June, 2000) reflect this spirit by demanding different treatment from the Bolivian state,<sup>34</sup> thereby laying the foundations for positive discrimination for indigenous peoples. Is this what Popular Participation wished to achieve?

---

<sup>34</sup> As one of the "six basic conditions for giving sustainability to indigenous development with dignity", CIDOB demands the "Declaration of the TCOs as municipalities under a special regime, backed by the Constitution. We demand that the TCOs be recognised as indigenous municipalities under a special regime, whose authorities are elected in accordance with the usages and customs of each people. This measure is essential to achieve equal conditions and opportunities for indigenous peoples to gain access to resources from popular participation and the National Treasury to fund health and education in the TCOs." Quoted in an article on CIDOB in the press, 5.07.2000.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albó, Xavier

1997 "Alcaldes y concejales campesinos / indígenas: lógica tras las cifras". In: SNPP. *Indígenas en el poder local*. La Paz: MDH - SNPP.

1999 *Ojotas en el poder local. 4 años después*. La Paz: CIPCA - Pader Cósude - Hisbol.

Anasagasti, Pedro

1992 *Los Franciscanos en Bolivia*. La Paz: Don Bosco.

Ayo, Diego

1997 "Análisis de las 464 autoridades indígenas y campesinas elegidas". In: SNPP. *Indígenas en el poder local*. La Paz: MDH - SNPP.

Balslev, Anne

1997 *DMI en Bolivia. Las primeras experiencias en el Chaco*. La Paz: SAE.

Calderón, Fernando (coord.)

2000 *Informe de Desarrollo Humano en Bolivia, 2000*. La Paz: UNDP.

Cardús, José

1866 *Las misiones franciscanas entre los infieles de Bolivia*. Barcelona.

Chávez, Rafael

1996 *Municipios, participación popular y pueblos indígenas*. Interviews with indigenous leaders. In: Artículo Primero, 1. Santa Cruz: CEJIS.

CIDOB

2000 *Plataforma de propuesta de los pueblos indígenas - Bolivia pluriétnica*. Santa Cruz (ms).

INE-SAE-CIDOB

1996 *Primer Censo Indígena Rural de Tierras Bajas (1994)*. La Paz: SAE-UNDP.

Lema, Ana María (coord.)

1996 *Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonia Boliviana*. La Paz: TCA - UNDP - FIDA/CAF.

Molina Monasterios, Fernando

1997 *Historia de la Participación Popular*. La Paz: SNPP.

Municipal Government of Gutiérrez - PDCR

1997 *Plan de Desarrollo Municipal de Gutiérrez* (ms).

Municipal Government of Urubichá - CEASE

1997 *Plan Participativo de Desarrollo Municipal Sostenible* (ms).

Municipal Government of Villa Montes - Royal Netherlands Embassy

1997 *Plan de Desarrollo Municipal 1998-2002* (ms).

Murillo, David

1997 *Población indígena y sección municipal*. La Paz: Programa Indígena / UNDP (ms).

Oxhorn, Philip

2000 *La construcción del Estado por la sociedad civil. La Ley boliviana de Participación Popular y el desafío de la democracia local*. Montreal: McGill University (ms).

Patzi, Felix

n.d. *Etnofagia estatal. Vaciamiento ideológico comunal y nuevos modos de dominación estatal: análisis de la Ley de Participación Popular* (ms).

1999 *Insurgencia y sumisión. Movimientos indígena-campesinos (1983-1998)*. La Paz: Comuna.

Saignes, Thierry

1990 *Ava y Karai. Ensayos sobre la frontera chiriguano (siglos XVI-XX)*. La Paz: Hisbol.

Semo, Plácido and Laura, Mateo

1998 *Análisis de los servicios de apoyo a la inversión en la gestión de distritos municipales indígenas*. La Paz: MDSP/VAIPO - VPPFM - Proyecto de Inversión Rural Participativa (ms).

UAGRM

1997 *Plan Distrital de Desarrollo Indígena Kaipependi Karobaicho*. Santa Cruz.

Van Dixhoorn, Nico

1997 *Manejo de agua en el Chaco guaraní*. Santa Cruz: CIPCA - SNV.

---

## V. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND RIGHTS

---



*Agnès*





# David Fights Goliath in Cochabamba: Water Rights, Neoliberalism and the Renovation of Social Protest in Bolivia<sup>1</sup>

Willem Assies<sup>2</sup>

**This article analyzes the Cochabamba “water war” in context, enabling the emergence of a movement that diverged from the established patterns of protest in Bolivia to be understood: the neoliberal legislation on water, compared with the community-oriented counter-proposals presented by the peasant movement; the war of the wells from 1976 to 1998 and the Misicuni project; and the water wars that were channeled through the now internationally famous Coordinadora del Agua.**

“Ours is a small country and it hardly owns anything anymore. Our mines were privatized, the electricity company was privatized, and the airlines, the telecommunications, the railways, our oil and gas. The things we still own are the water and air and we struggled to make sure that the water continues to be ours,” said Oscar Olivera, a charismatic shoe-factory worker and trade-

union leader from Cochabamba, Bolivia, addressing one of the A16 assemblies protesting the IMF/World Bank annual spring meeting in Washington DC which started on 16 April 2000. Olivera had freshly been flown in from a city which had been the scene of violent protests that forced the transnational consortium *Aguas del Tunari* out of the Cochabamba Department and

---

1 This article was published in *Tinkazos* 8, February 2001. It is largely based on research in the CEDIB archives in Cochabamba and brief visits to the city in April and July 2000, in the wake of the “war,” during which I participated in meetings and had the opportunity to meet and talk to various participants in the events. Special thanks go to the CEDIB personnel for their patient help in finding documentation, to Fernando Salazar who provided me with basic material on the earlier conflicts over water in the region, to René Orellana who over a longer period kept me updated on the water issue and the debate over new legislation, and Tom Kruse for his comments and for sending additional information.

2 El Colegio de Michoacán, Centro de Estudios Rurales, Zamora, Mich., Mexico. E-mail: [assies@colmich.edu.mx](mailto:assies@colmich.edu.mx). Willem Assies is the author and editor, together with Gemma van der Haar and André Hoekema, of a major book entitled *The Challenge of Diversity: Indigenous Peoples and Reform of the State in Latin America* (2000).

the Bolivian government to substantially modify Law 2029 on Potable Water and Sanitary Drainage, proclaimed only five months earlier. The assembly that protested the power of transnational capitalism and neoliberal policies cheered him as a hero. "David had defeated Goliath," claimed Olivera, and "thus set an example for the rest of the world."

From the early days of April Bolivia had been the scene of a wave of protests as it had not seen for several decades and which prompted the Banzer government, elected in 1997, to declare a state of siege.<sup>3</sup> That, however, only made things worse as it inspired new protests against the measure. On 3 April peasants started blocking roads as they had announced a month earlier, as a protest measure in support of their demands. They initiated the largest wave of peasant protests of the past two decades.<sup>4</sup> When the state of siege was declared on April 8, it was ridiculed with graffiti saying "State of siege...that's a good joke" (*Estado de sitio...qué buen chiste*) partly because that same day 800 police mutinied to press wage demands and thus impeded real application of a state of siege. Meanwhile a meeting of students and teachers at *Universidad Mayor de San Andrés* (UMSA) in La Paz was attacked with teargas

which provoked further student protests and demands for a budget rise for the UMSA. Then, on April 14, by the time most of the conflicts had more or less been negotiated, coca-growers in the Yungas region of the La Paz Department set up roadblocks to protest against forced eradication. On April 20, on the eve of the Easter weekend, the state of siege was lifted. By then the confrontations had claimed five lives of which four were civilians. The government announced that it would dedicate itself again to the economic reactivation plan that should bolster the faltering economy and help in the struggle against poverty. National Dialogue II upon which the multilateral debt relief plan is conditioned also would be put on track again. A cabinet crisis was in the air. On April 25 a reshuffled cabinet took charge.

This paper focuses on the "war over water" in Cochabamba which, beside the nationwide peasant protests, was a main reason for declaring a state of siege. One of the most interesting aspects of the conflict in Cochabamba is that it diverged from the established patterns of protest in Bolivia. The trade-union structures that until then had been a major vehicle of protest only played a marginal role and the *Comité Cívico*,<sup>5</sup> which claimed to be the legitimate representative of the

3 The Bolivian "state of siege" differs from that in other countries and comes closer to what usually is called a "state of exception." Since the return to democracy in 1982 a state of siege has been declared in Bolivia six times: in 1985 and 1986 under the Paz Estenssoro government, in 1989-90 under the administration of Jaime Paz Zamora and on two occasions in 1995 under the Sánchez de Lozada government. With a total of five dead and 42 wounded, according to the official count (*La Prensa (Especial)*, 21-04-2000:9a), the state of siege declared by the Banzer government has been the most violent one.

4 The *Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB) had filed a *pliego peticionario* with the government in October 1998. The *pliego*, or list of demands, centered around four main themes: lands and territories, political, economic and social demands. Meanwhile, the CSUTCB is going through a series of leadership shifts. The controversial Felipe Quispe, an Aymara from the Achacachi region of La Paz who is also known as *el Mallku* (title of an Aymara authority), was elected as executive secretary at the *Congreso de Unidad Campesina* in La Paz in November 1998 (*Pulso*, 21-27 April 2000: 21; *Pulso*, 21 April - 4 May: 8; Patzi, 1999). In June 2000 the CSUTCB leadership split into two factions.

5 Civic Committees, often departmental, first arose in Bolivia's major cities in the course of the 1970s. They expressed regionalist demands confronting the country's centralism and were a vehicle of opposition against the authoritarian regimes. Though formally broad-based and including a range of organizations the Civic Committees were mostly hegemonized by the local business sector.

Cochabamba population, proved to represent only a small sector of the population. A new form of organization, a *Coordinadora*, arose as a leading force. Although, referring themselves to the Bolivian Constitution,<sup>6</sup> Ministers MacLean (Information) and Guiteras (Government), just like the Civic Committee, at first denied the legitimacy of the *Coordinadora*, they eventually had to face the facts and accept it as an interlocutor.

These developments suggest a shift in the mode of movement organization and social representation in Bolivia. They revealed the obsolescence of accustomed forms inherited from the 1952 Revolution in the context of a societal reorganization under the impact of structural reform policies as well as the lack of representativeness of the civic organizations that first arose in the 1960s as vehicles of protest against the decadence of post-revolutionary forms of government.<sup>7</sup>

In the first part of this paper I will outline the stakes in the conflict over water through a review of the debate over neoliberal legislation on water resources in Bolivia. I also analyze the community-oriented counterproposal made by the peasant and indigenous organizations, which places emphasis on *usos y costumbres*. The second section will show that it was no coincidence that Cochabamba became the focus of the protests. In this region with a long tradition of battles over water, the new legislation made itself felt most concretely through the actions of the transnational consortium *Agua del Tunari*. The third section is dedicated to the conflicts over

water in the Cochabamba region that arose in the course of the 1970s when the expansion of the city and its increasing need for water triggered rural-urban conflict. In section four I turn to the "war over water" of 1999-2000. Finally, I will discuss some aspects, outcomes and implications of the episode of conflict.

## COMMODIFICATION VS. COMMUNITARIANISM

From the early 1970s onward the Bolivian State has been working on a new legal framework regarding water resources. None of the proposals that have been elaborated, however, passed the National Congress and by late 1999 proposal number 32 was under discussion. The more recent proposals for a general law are largely inspired by the recommendations initially elaborated by the FAO and CEPAL, and later taken up by other multilateral agencies. To a greater or lesser extent, they are market-oriented. Another source of inspiration was Chile's 1981 water legislation (Hendriks, 1998). On the other hand, the Bolivian proposals are aligned to the new institutional set-up that started to be put into place under the Sánchez de Lozada administration (1993-97). These "second generation reforms" aimed to carry further the structural adjustment policies initiated in 1985 through Supreme Decree 21060 which had introduced a New Economic Policy, at dramatic social costs (Gamarra, 1993; Morales, 1993).

The recommendations of multilateral agencies regarding a modernization of water

6 Articles 2, 4 and 223 define the "appropriate" modes of political participation. Article 4 states that the people governs through its representatives and legally established authorities and that any armed force or assembly of people who attribute themselves popular sovereignty commit the crime of sedition. Article 223 defines the legitimate channels of participation as the political parties and civic groups that represent the *fuerzas vivas del país* and have "recognized personality."

7 For an overview of the 1952-1982 period see Lavaud (1991). The introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1985 marked the end of the "nationalist-revolutionary cycle" (Yaksic Feraudy and Tapia Mealla, 1997).

legislation propose the elaboration of a general law to provide the framework for further legislation. Such a general law should therefore deal with the substantive issues and leave out technical questions and details. As far as its content is concerned new legislation should aim for integral resource management and take catchment areas as the basic management unit. Secondly, it should consider citizen participation either through users organizations or through the private sector. In the third place, the role of the State should be restricted to supervision, regulation and planning while its role in direct resource administration should be reduced. This should go together with decentralization of management to the level of catchment areas and the creation of a financially and institutionally independent public or semi-public sectoral agency to take charge of overall management. In the fourth place, the economic value of water resources should be taken into consideration which means that the State should be paid for the right of use (patent) and for the use of the resource (tariff) and that the resource or concessions can be freely sold, mortgaged, rented, etc. so as to promote market driven resource distribution.<sup>8</sup> Finally, environmental protection measures such as impact studies and other control and management instruments should be contemplated in such a general law. These basic guidelines have become part of the policy repertory of multilateral and bilateral agencies, though in some cases with a more economic orientation (IMF/World Bank) and in others with a more social-ecological tenor (ECLA) (Bustamente, 2000; Dourojeanni and Jouravlev, 1999).

While incorporating these guidelines the

Bolivian proposals also align with the local outcomes of structural adjustment and State reform policies and particularly with the System for Sectoral Regulation (SIRESE) and the System for Regulation of Renewable Natural Resources (SIRENARE) which were created in 1994 as part of the "second generation" reforms. The SIRESE law introduced a system of Superintendencies to regulate sectors likely to constitute natural monopolies (telecommunications, electricity, transport, water, etc.). In this framework the State loses its role as producer and provider of services as well as that of regulating agency to adopt a normative role. Previous economic functions are transferred to the private sector and the regulative role is taken over by autarchic agencies such as the Superintendencies. The top of the hierarchy is constituted by a General Superintendency (SIRESE). The next level is constituted, on the one hand, by sectoral Superintendencies that directly respond to SIRESE (hydrocarbons, mining) and, on the other hand, by the System for Regulation of Renewable Natural Resources (SIRENARE) which, in turn, has its own Superintendencies such as the Agrarian Superintendency and the Forestry Superintendency. To assure independence the superintendents are appointed by the President on the basis of a shortlist proposed by a two-thirds majority of the Senate. They are appointed for fixed periods that do not coincide with the duration of the government and they can not be removed, unless through legal process. The economic independence of the Superintendencies is assured through the payment of tariffs and patents by the enterprises subjected to their regulation and their organization as autarchies should shield them from political influences

---

8 The draft law that was submitted to the Bolivian Chamber of Deputies in August 1998 stated in its Article 2 that the objective of the law was to "Establish norms for and to regulate the market of concessions of water rights."

(Baldivia, 1998: 93-96, 117; Marinissen, 1998: 107, 168).<sup>9</sup>

After the Executive submitted its draft *Ley del Recurso Agua* to the Chamber of Deputies in August 1998, the Bolivian organizations of peasants, indigenous peoples and colonists,<sup>10</sup> with the support of non-governmental organizations,<sup>11</sup> were quick to react and, as by now has become a custom, started elaborating a counterproposal. This proposal is inspired by Article 171 of the Bolivian Constitution<sup>12</sup> and ILO Convention 169 on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. It rejects the mercantilist and privatization oriented conceptions of the governmental project. Whereas the government project stated as a matter of principle that water is a "social and ecological good with economic value," the counterproposal speaks of a "social and ecological good which guarantees the wellbeing of the family and the collectivity and (their) social and economic development." The counterproposal furthermore stresses that the cultural and ritual value of water for indigenous and original communities must be respected.<sup>13</sup>

A key aspect of the counterproposal is its defense of communitarian water rights which should be exempted from the payment of patents

and taxes. Where mining, oil and industry are concerned, it rejects the system of 50 year concessions and proposes 20 year authorizations conditioned on a management plan and an agreement with communities and groups/settlements (*poblaciones*) that might be affected. Such authorizations may not be sold or transferred. Instead of according priority to public utility enterprises (including industrial, mining and oil companies) over other users, the counterproposal defines water as a public utility and accords priority to the communities, indigenous peoples and the population in general. It utterly rejects the idea of a Superintendency and contemplates the formation of a National Water Council composed of representatives of the State and of water users (peasant, colonist and indigenous organizations and neighborhood associations), in order to guarantee that water policies are socially oriented. Instead of according the resolution of conflicts over water to the ordinary justice system the counterproposal states that conflicts within communities, indigenous peoples or neighborhood cooperatives should be resolved internally according to their *usos y costumbres* and by their own authorities and that

9 Baldivia (1998: 94) comments that some, erroneously, viewed the task of the SIRESE system as that of defender of the "popular economy" whilst its real task was to preserve the efficiency of the enterprises and to avoid their decapitalization, which often implied tariff raises. More critical approaches point out that the Superintendencies mostly serve the interests of private enterprises and transnationals while privatization policies have failed to live up to the promises of capitalization and employment generation and in the end have been a sell-out of the national patrimony if not an outright fraud (Lohman, 1997; Molina, 1998; Monroy and Ruiz, 1997).

10 The *Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB), the *Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas de Bolivia 'Bartolina Sisa'* (FNMCB-BS), the *Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia* (CIDOB) and the *Confederación Sindical de Colonizadores de Bolivia* (CSCB).

11 See Orellana (1999). In 1998 NGOs and peasant-indigenous organizations came together in a *Mesa Técnica Nacional del Agua* to accompany the elaboration of new legislation.

12 In its first paragraph Article 171 recognizes the social, economic and cultural rights of the indigenous peoples in the national territory. It recognizes *tierras comunitarias de origen* and grants the indigenous peoples the use and sustainable exploitation of natural resources, their identity, values, languages, customs and institutions.

13 Proposal made by CIDOB, CSUTCB, CSCB and FNMCB-BS on the Water Law, Discussion and Consultation Document, 27 April 1999.

conflicts with third parties should be resolved through conciliation or arbitration.

While the debate over a General Water Law which should provide the framework for secondary legislation was ongoing, in November 1999 the government piloted a secondary law on Potable Water and Sanitary Drainage through parliament.

## LAW ON POTABLE WATER AND SANITARY DRAINAGE

Despite the opposition of indigenous and coca-growers representatives, Law No. 2029 on Potable Water and Sanitary Drainage was approved by parliament in November 1999, and was enacted on 29 November by president Banzer. The new law legalized the contract with *Aguas del Tunari*, signed on 3 September.

Law No. 2029 covered the supply of potable water, sanitary drainage, the disposition of excreta and solid residues, and rainwater drainage. A basic feature was the introduction of a regime of concessions and licenses for the supply of potable water. Concessions would apply to *zonas concesibles* and licenses to *zonas no concesibles*. The *zonas concesibles* were defined as centers of population concentration with more than 10,000 inhabitants where the provision of services is financially self-sustaining. Concessions could also be granted for settlements with less than 10,000 inhabitants where the provision of services proves to be financially "self-sustainable." These concessions are for a period of forty years. In the *zonas no concesibles*, by contrast, service provision was not expected to be financially self-sustainable. In these zones licenses might be granted for the duration of five years.

Concessions and licenses could be granted to *Entidades Prestadoras de Servicios de Agua Potable*

y *Alcantarillado Sanitario* (EPSAs) which could be any institution that has official legal status: municipal public enterprises, private enterprises, corporations, cooperatives, civil organizations such as NGOs or peasant and indigenous communities. However, through its conditions for granting concessions (guarantees, investment plans and profitability criteria) the law clearly favored the formation of large enterprises that function according to market criteria. The law furthermore stipulated that concessionaires would have exclusive rights over the concession area, in contrast to license-holders. In other words, concessionaires were given a monopoly in the concession area although they might subcontract third parties. This implied that existing local organizations such as cooperatives or neighborhood associations were faced with the alternative of accepting a contract with the concessionaire or to disappear. These features of Law No. 2029 did not fail to be perceived as a menace to the arrangements for water supply which, in the absence of public services, have been created by the population in the form of cooperatives and other local associations which they refer to as their *usos y costumbres*.<sup>14</sup>

For the concession areas Law No. 2029 established a tariff system that should be based on criteria of neutrality, solidarity, redistribution, simplicity, transparency, economic efficiency and financial sufficiency. However, in cases of conflict among these principles the criteria of efficiency and financial sufficiency should be given priority and in case of contradiction among these last two principles the latter should prevail. The criteria of economic efficiency should communicate the scarcity of the resource to its users through the tariff structure, whereas the criteria of financial sufficiency should guarantee the recuperation of

<sup>14</sup> For a critical review and comments on Law No. 2029 see *TUNUPA*, no. 3, November 1999.

costs and operational expenses, and the remuneration of shareholders' patrimony "in the same way as any efficient enterprise in a sector of comparable risk (would remunerate them)." To guarantee financial sufficiency defined in such terms Law No. 2029 introduced tariff indexation that opened the way for a dollarization of water tariffs. As we will see, the criteria of "expansion" and "solidarity" were used to argument a tariff hike that was one of the direct motives for the revolt.

Finally, in its transitory articles the new law established that "concessions and authorizations for the use and exploitation of water resources will be granted and revoked by the competent Superintendency that forms part of the SIRENARE system. Until this Superintendency is created through the Law on Water Resources, the Superintendency for Basic Sanitation will perform these functions."

In this way the law granted enormous powers to the Superintendency for Basic Sanitation which absorbed the functions of the Water Superintendency that had been created in 1997 as part of the SIRESE system. The Superintendency for Basic Sanitation now was charged with granting concessions for the use and exploitation of water resources for any purpose, including hydroelectric, mining or agrarian purposes, human consumption, etc. Moreover, as the EPSAs would directly be contracted by the Superintendency, local governments and users would hardly have any recourse against this closed system in which the Superintendency would be judge and party. And finally, in its "transitory

article" the law foresaw the future creation of a Water Superintendency. It thus "smuggled in" the creation of an agency which was strongly contested by peasant and indigenous organizations.<sup>15</sup>

One outcome of the "water war" in Cochabamba and the countrywide peasant protests would be the substantial modification of Law No. 2029 which had been approved behind the backs of the most affected sectors. But the 1999-2000 protests and the form they eventually took did not fall from the sky. They had their roots in a history of expectations that the water problem in Cochabamba would be resolved and in previous conflicts caused by provisional measures.

## COCHABAMBA, THE THIRSTY CITY

Cochabamba was, as it were, overdetermined to become the scene of the "water war." Over the past decades the city and its surroundings, constituting what is known as the "Central Valley",<sup>16</sup> have gone through a process of socio-economic transformation and rapid population growth. Once known for its "agrarian vocation" as a supplier of the mining centers and other highland regions, the basic economic activities in the region now are commerce, services and small-scale industry.

The closing of the tin mines in 1985 triggered a flow of migrants towards the department, including the city of Cochabamba, and simultaneously transformed the traditional outlets for agrarian produce from the Central Valley.

15 The experience with existing Superintendencies, such as the Forestry Superintendency which on the basis of tortuous arguments has granted highly contested logging concessions in areas claimed by indigenous peoples (Assies, 2000; Hoekema and Assies, 2000), is an important argument for creating more socially responsive agencies.

16 This comprises the Cercado province where the departmental capital Cochabamba is located and the province of Quillacollo. Quillacollo is, in turn, divided into five sections or municipalities: Quillacollo, Sipe Sipe, Tiquipaya, Vinto and Colcapirhua.

Between 1950 and 1976 the population of Cochabamba city grew from 75,000 to 205,000 and reached the number of 414,000 in 1992. This urban growth was not accompanied by an adequate expansion of urban services. Potable water coverage was reported to be 57% and drainage 48% in 1999 (*Presencia*, 06-01-2000). The remainder of the population get their water from tanker trucks, privately constructed wells or self-help organizations such as cooperatives, associations and water committees. Estimates of the number of small wells in the Central Valley, whether in urban or rural areas, range from 5,000 to 7,000. In many cases such wells have been drilled with financial support from State agencies, NGOs, etc.

Meanwhile the rural areas also have undergone important changes. Traditionally the Central Valley was a producer of corn, alfalfa and vegetables but over the past decades a diversification has taken place with the growth of fruit, milk, poultry and, recently, flower production. This development has gone together with an increase of entrepreneurial farming in a region that was characterized by small family farms and peasant enterprises. It is a region of intensive farming which is highly dependent on irrigation. About 70% of agricultural land is permanently or temporarily irrigated (Vargas, 2000).

The rapid expansion of the urban population in a context of relative scarcity of water in the Central Valley set the stage for conflicts and for promises of a solution to the problem which would pay off handsomely in political terms. The case in point is the MISICUNI Megaproject which in the course of the years acquired a magic aura in the minds of most Cochabambinos. It was first conceived some fifty years ago and started to take further shape during the Barrientos government (1966-69). As a "multipurpose

project" it would supply the city with water, the agricultural areas with irrigation and, in passing, provide hydroelectric energy. As such the MISICUNI project is much more than a project to supply the city with water; it is regarded as a regional development project. In 1987 MISICUNI was institutionalized as a state enterprise which produced many a costly feasibility study.

Meanwhile, the water problems of Cochabamba city were solved through stopgap measures carried out by the *Servicio Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado* (SEMAPA). The easiest short term solution was to drill wells in the neighboring province of Quillacollo, first semi-deep and then increasingly deeper. This set the stage for rural-urban conflicts that initiated in the late 1970s and became acute in the second half of the 1990s.

### COCHABAMBA VS. QUILLACOLLO: THE WARS OF THE WELLS (1976-1998)

While some efforts had been made in the 1960s it was in 1976-77, under the *de facto* government of Colonel Banzer, that Cochabamba's municipal water supply company SEMAPA drilled a battery of ten semi-deep (120 meter) wells in the Vinto district of the Quillacollo Province. The project gave rise to some questioning by the local population but went ahead after SEMAPA had promised to provide the population of Vinto with water and gave assurances that the wells in no way would affect water levels in the region nor the existing wells constructed by the local population which had a depth of some twenty meters.

When in early December 1977 General Banzer inaugurated the Vinto project, SEMAPA's promises had already turned out to be a hoax. On 22 November the *Comité Pro Vinto* protested:



“as soon as the drilling had been concluded it became clear that there are filtrations and intercommunications between the different tables. This fact has resulted in the total drying of the wells that supply the population with water and, moreover, this implies the severe risk that in the near future the most important agrarian supply region in the country will be lost.”

Under the slogan “Water is the patrimony of the locality”<sup>17</sup> the Committee demanded a formal statement confirming SEMAPA’s promises before pumping to the city would start and threatened to take the “necessary measures” in the absence of such a statement. SEMAPA produced a statement on 1 December 1977, but promises were soon forgotten (Crespo, 1999: 45-47).<sup>18</sup>

The 1977 experience and the environmental deterioration caused by water extraction was not forgotten when in 1992 it became known that SEMAPA intended to drill some new wells in the region. A Committee for the Defense of the Water Resources emerged in Vinto. It had the support of municipal authorities and local organizations from Quillacollo, Tiquipaya, Sipe Sipe and Colcapirhua. It rejected any further well-drilling and for the time being SEMAPA desisted.

In 1994, however, in a context of renewed acute water scarcity SEMAPA presented a Master Plan elaborated in cooperation with a consortium of three French enterprises without in any way consulting the local population. It proposed the drilling of deep wells as a short term solution.

Opposition soon gathered pace. The Quillacollo municipal authorities issued a statement calling for the execution of the MISICUNI project and declared that they were weary of sacrificing their interests to benefit Cochabamba. On 7 October a March for Life and Water starting out from Vinto united some 10,000 people from different communities in the Lower Central Valley. By the end of November, when SEMAPA announced it would start drilling in the locality of Mallko Ch’api, some hundred communities declared themselves “in a state of emergency” and threatened to block the road to Oruro. In early 1995 the peasant organization *Federación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba* (FSUTCC) made it known that they were willing to contribute “financially and with their labor” to the execution of the MISICUNI project and organized a march to demand its execution.

SEMAPA, however, had its mind set on well-drilling and had the support of, among others, the Departmental Development Corporation, the local chapter of the Bolivian Society of Engineers and Cochabamba’s *Federación de Juntas de Vecinos* (Federation of Neighborhood Associations, FEJUVE).<sup>19</sup> SEMAPA argued that it was protected by the Constitution, according to which natural resources fall under the original domain of the State. Furthermore, it had received a French loan to execute the drilling and would incur substantial financial losses if it failed to carry out the project on schedule.

After some more attempts at mediation and negotiation the drilling of a 600 meter well started

17 Whereas the Constitution states that natural resources fall under the original domain of the State, the 1906 Water Law states that subterranean waters belong to the owner of the land where it is obtained. This view, and later also Constitutional Article 171 of 1994, provide the legal reference for a subaltern discourse of local communitarian ownership.

18 A chronology of the events as well as reproductions of relevant documents can be found in PEIRAY (1998).

19 On the occasion of the March for Life and Water in October 1994 FEJUVE president Eloy Lujan declared that he would mobilize his grassroots members to prevent the entry of the marchers into Cochabamba.

on 5 April 1995 in the locality of El Paso on land belonging to the army and under protection of a police force. Meanwhile, in response to a general strike declared by the *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB) and a hunger strike by teachers, the Sánchez de Lozada government declared a state of siege on 18 April. That also provided cover for the arrest of other troublemakers such as leaders of the actions against the well-drilling.

In 1997/98 Cochabamba once again faced acute water scarcity. SEMAPA came up with the usual solution and conflict ensued duly. SEMAPA's actions were authorized by Supreme Decree 24716 issued in July. In the last months of 1997 SEMAPA announced a plan to drill ten semi-deep wells in Vinto and El Paso.

By then the Cochabamba chapter of the Bolivian Society of Engineers (SIB), until then supportive of such projects, had started changing its mind. It seriously questioned the productivity of the existing deep wells which had cost millions of dollars but did not yield as expected. Moreover, it questioned the environmental effects and pointed out the risk of desertification of the lower Central Valley. Both the SIB and other organizations, such as the newly emerging *Federación Departamental Cochabambina de Organizaciones de Regantes* (Departmental Federation of Irrigators Organizations, FEDECOR)<sup>20</sup> and the Association of Municipal Governments of the Lower and Central Valley, suggested a series of alternatives such as the capturing of surface waters and carrying out eternally postponed projects such as MISICUNI. Despite these protests, SEMAPA started drilling on army terrain on 10 March 1998. The

Quillacollo authorities protested and demanded that SEMAPA withdraw its machinery. By mid June the population of the Ironcollo community forced SEMAPA engineers and a military police contingent, which had occupied land to start drilling, to leave.

On the other hand, the municipal council of El Cercado<sup>21</sup> demanded that the Departmental Prefecture guarantee the progress of the drillings. In early July, SEMAPA manager Arturo Coca announced that by August the Cochabamba population would run out of potable water. In Cochabamba an *Asamblea de la Cochabambinidad*, organized by the Civic Committee, called for the drilling of wells "by force if necessary." That same month newly elected President Hugo Banzer and Defense Minister Fernando Kieffer promised military protection for the drilling of wells.

Over the 1976-1998 period the original defense of resource ownership by the Quillacollo municipalities had taken new dimensions. The early experience with well-drilling had brought broader issues into the picture, such as the ecological aspect and the unequal distribution of resources resulting from market forces and urban interests. The defense of resource ownership evolved into an autonomous "popular ecologist" movement (Crespo, 1999: 72) in defense of communitarian access and a way of life, thus increasing the symbolic content of the conflict. By the late 1990s FEDECOR had emerged as the main vehicle of protests in the rural area, independent of the established organizations such as the Peasant Federation (FSUTCC) and the Departmental Trade Union Federation (COD), which had shown little capacity to channel new

---

<sup>20</sup> FEDECOR emerged from 1995 onward to become the main vehicle of protests. It replaced the earlier community-based Defense Committees and remained independent of the established trade-union structure. FEDECOR thus provides for a supra-community network which is rooted in local level irrigators committees that have a high degree of participation rooted in local water management arrangements.

<sup>21</sup> By then, the popular Mayor of Cochabamba, Manfred Reyes Villa, who earlier had not taken sides on the issue and was regarded as a potential mediator by the Quillacollo residents, was in favor of the drillings to solve the city's water problem.

demands. On the other hand, we have seen that a united front of urban based organizations militantly defended well-drilling, even with military protection. Only the engineers started to express doubts, reflecting their privileged "cognitive access" (Offe, 1985: 848) to some of the issues involved.<sup>22</sup> This configuration of urban forces would change in the following years giving rise to new alliances.

## MISICUNI AND THE WATER WARS

While conflict raged in the late 1990s, the MISICUNI project as well as some alternative projects had remained on the agenda.<sup>23</sup> Towards the end of his term in office, President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada announced that MISICUNI would be auctioned. A few days later, government sources confirmed that this would be done but together with SEMAPA, since such a package-deal would assure profitability. Meanwhile, the MISICUNI (State-) enterprise was negotiating Italian development cooperation funds for the construction of a 19 kilometer diversion tunnel and eventually contracted the Italian-Bolivian ASTALDI-ICE consortium.<sup>24</sup>

When the bidding process of SEMAPA-MISICUNI was initiated various interested parties presented themselves but after studying the Bolivian terms came up with a series of observations regarding feasibility and profitability.

In February 1999 the Bolivian government "flexibilized" the conditions, reducing the irrigation component and postponing the electricity component. The only enterprise that showed interest was *Aguas del Tunari*.<sup>25</sup> Instead of opening a new round of bidding the Banzer government authorized further negotiations with *Aguas del Tunari*. The consortium was in a position to impose conditions on a government anxious to go ahead. In June 1999 a Supreme Decree authorized the signing of the contract.

The contract immediately was questioned and opposed by local organizations such as the FEDECOR and the *Colegio de Ingenieros de Cochabamba*, which had been against it from the start. FEDECOR president Omar Fernández asserted that the price for irrigation water would rise to levels that would make it unaffordable by many small farmers, and that this would drive between 15,000 and 20,000 farmers into bankruptcy. Edgar Montaña, leader of the *Comité Cívico* and supporter of the Tunari contract, replied that the price for irrigation water had not yet been fixed. The Ministry for Foreign Trade and Investment nevertheless managed a future irrigation water price which confirmed Fernández's statement. The College of Engineers compared the Tunari contract with the original MISICUNI and concluded that to guarantee profitability it had been reduced to a *bonsai*

22 Because of their place in the social structure, professional sectors are in a privileged position to develop knowledge of the risks and perverse effects of modernization and (instrumental) rationalization in technical, economic and political terms.

23 The Corani Reservoir Project is the principal alternative proposed. It would increase water supply to the urban area but not include a hydroelectricity nor an irrigation component. Corani falls under the *Empresa Nacional de Electrificación* which was "capitalized" under the Sánchez de Lozada administration. While this government favored the Corani project it met with local opposition from those committed to MISICUNI.

24 Earlier, in 1993, a contract had been signed with the Italian enterprise CONDOTTE, but this contract was rescinded in 1996/97 with the enterprise arguing that the Bolivian government did not comply and that the preliminary studies had been faulty in evaluating the difficulties of constructing the tunnel.

25 *Aguas del Tunari* had been created a few weeks before signing the contract. International Water, a subsidiary of the US conglomerate Bechtel, had a majority share, followed by the Spanish company Abengoa with nearly a quarter of the share. Some Bolivian enterprises had minor shares.

version. The quantity of potable water to be provided had been reduced by half and irrigation water by two thirds, while electricity generation had also been halved. The initially projected second and third phase of MISICUNI had been practically eliminated. As to the tariffs for potable water the College concluded that social criteria were eliminated which would result in price hikes of up to 180% for the poorer sectors of the population. It furthermore noted that the drilling of the 19.5 km tunnel had advanced only 1.5 km in eighteen months and thus would take an eternity to be completed.<sup>26</sup> Finally, the College questioned the way the contract had been granted (CEDIB, 30 Días, June 1999).

## FROM THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE TO THE COORDINADORA

Soon a Committee for the Defense of Water and the Popular Economy emerged, with engineers Osvaldo Pareja, Gonzalo Maldonado<sup>27</sup> and Jorge Alvarado among its driving forces and sought support from the associations of lawyers, architects and economists as well as some environmentalists. The Committee organized a Forum on 20 July where the criticism of the Tunari contract was rehearsed. Defenders of the contract shone by their absence. Engineer Gonzalo Rico, president of MISICUNI, argued

that the water prices predicted by the Committee were astronomical and did not correspond to reality. Prices would rise in August, he affirmed, but only by 40%. Civic Committee president Edgar Montaña did not recognize the Defense Committee as legitimate and Vice Minister of Investment Miguel López did not bother to show up either (*Opinion*, 21-07-99). A week later the Committee organized a street protest symbolically carrying the MISICUNI project to its grave.

On the other hand, with the December 1999 municipal elections coming up, Mayor Manfred Reyes Villa and the Civic Committee had their minds set on signing the long awaited MISICUNI contract. On 3 September the US\$ 300 million contract was signed in the Cochabamba Prefecture in the presence of President Banzer, Ministers of State and a range of local authorities. Reyes Villa and Edgar Montaña were among the signers. The Committee for the Defense of Water and the Popular Economy protested and asserted that the Water Superintendency had approved a *tarifazo* of 58% to 110%. FEDECOR also protested and announced that it would convene an assembly to discuss the matter and to analyze the Water Law that was being discussed in Parliament. Without ceremony, on 1 November *Aguas del Tunari* had taken over the SEMAPA offices<sup>28</sup> and provided the employees with new credentials. Manager

<sup>26</sup> Astaldi ICE accused the government of having provided deficient geo-physical studies which resulted in unexpected difficulties and therefore claimed more money. On the other hand, Astaldi ICE is accused of employing obsolete and inadequate machinery.

<sup>27</sup> At the time, Gonzalo Maldonado was deputy for Cochabamba of the *Nueva Fuerza Republicana* (NFR), a party created in 1996 as a vehicle for Cochabamba's Mayor Manfred Reyes Villa, nicknamed *Bombón* (sweetie). Reyes Villa had become Mayor of the city in 1993 on the *Movimiento Bolivia Libre* (MBL) ticket with 64% of the vote. In 1995 he was reelected with 70% of the vote (Mayorga, 1997). The December 1999 municipal elections showed that the shine was wearing off. Reyes Villa, now with his own NFR, was reelected but only with 51.7% of the vote. As to Maldonado, he would be thrown out of the NFR for revealing the implications of the *Aguas del Tunari* contract and thus damaging *el Bombón* who was among the signers of the contract along with Civic Committee president Edgar Montaña. Reyes Villa had organized the 1997 motorcade in favor of MISICUNI while for the Civic Committee the project was a favorite item in its *Asambleas de la Cochabambinidad*.

<sup>28</sup> A reduced "SEMAPA-Patrimonial" remained to supervise the execution of the contract with *Aguas del Tunari* which covered a forty year period up to 2040.

Geoffrey Thorpe announced that it would immediately set to work to improve water supply in Cochabamba and to execute the MISICUNI project. Tariff increases, covering the month of December and to be paid in January 2000, would be in the order of 35%, he said.

Meanwhile, as noted, while the Water Law was still being discussed President Banzer proclaimed Law No. 2029 on Potable Water and Sanitary Drainage on 29 November. This law, as we saw, introduced the concession system which implied that *Aguas del Tunari* would come to control all the wells drilled privately in the Cochabamba Valley and could install water meters on these wells.<sup>29</sup>

With the 5 December municipal elections nearing, Basic Sanitation Superintendent Luis Uzín suggested that the tariff hike might be reduced. Most of the parties participating in the local elections agreed not to politicize the water issue. Once the elections were over, however, Uzín declared that he had been misinterpreted and that the tariff hike would be implemented as foreseen. The hike, he argued, should be regarded as a “solidarity increase” that would allow expansion of the water supply to the marginal areas. Meanwhile, Thorpe confirmed that an average increase of 35% was expected.

Angry reactions to Uzín’s deception came soon. The new President of the Civic Committee, Mauricio Barrientos,<sup>30</sup> expressed objections to the *tarifazo* and doubts about the *Aguas del Tunari* contract. He was joined by FEJUVE leader

Germán Mercado who stated that the citizenry was not disposed to pay a high tariff for a service that they did not yet receive. Interim Mayor Néstor Villazón stated the same and Mayor-elect Manfred Reyes Villa joined in, although he earlier had co-signed the contract which allowed the *tarifazo*. The Committee for the Defense of Water and the Household Economy, as it now called itself, restated its opposition to the tariff raise, the sell-off of SEMAPA and MISICUNI *bonsai* and insisted that tariffs would rise much more than 35%.

In the course of December the opposition had taken on a new dynamic. Coca-growers leader Evo Morales, deputy for the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS), had taken an interest in the water issue.<sup>31</sup> Contacts between the factory workers’ union and the rural FEDECOR had also been established by then. Oscar Olivera, the well-known executive secretary of the Factory Workers Federation, had been invited to attend a FEDECOR protest against Law 2029 in November 1999. It was decided to bring actions into line through a *Coordinadora Departamental por la Defensa del Agua y la Vida*. The new organization soon gained wide adherence. Oscar Olivera was appointed president, with FEDECOR leader Omar Fernández as vice-president. Gabriel Herbas, until then president of the Defense Committee, became the General Secretary. Gonzalo Maldonado decided to take a back-stage position in keeping with his political interests. This new configuration introduced a

---

29 In keeping with Law 2029 the *Aguas del Tunari* contract established a monopoly on the concession area and stipulated that “The concessionaire shall have the right to install meters for any user at any moment and to demand payment for such installation” (...) “If a user possesses an alternative source of water (such as a private well) the concessionaire shall have the right to install a meter at this alternative source -which will cost \$80- at the cost of the user.” (CEDIB, 30 *Días*, January 2000: 7).

30 Edgar Montaña had left his post as president of the Civic Committee to join Manfred Reyes’ NFR for the municipal elections.

31 He had filed a demand of anticonstitutionality against Law No. 2029 which failed for being badly sustained. This resulted in friction with deputy, and leader of the Cochabamba Water Defense Committee, Gonzalo Maldonado who saw his plans to file a similar demand thwarted. This was one reason to call for “coordination” (*Pulso*, 14-20 April 2000: 19).

rural-urban dimension and brought a significant broadening and radicalization in comparison to the earlier Committee which had mainly appealed to professional sectors and some urban environmentalist groups (*Pulso*, 14-20 April 2000: 19). The offices of the factory workers union, located strategically on a corner of the Plaza 14 de Septiembre and easily accessible to the public, became the *Coordinadora* headquarters. On 28 December 1999 the *Coordinadora* organized its first march to the Plaza 14 de Septiembre. It was the run up to a series of “water wars”.

### THE FIRST BATTLE FOR WATER: JANUARY 2000

In early January 2000 water bills started to reach the Cochabambinos connected to the municipal water supply system and confirmed what the *Coordinadora* had been arguing: stiff raises, in some cases up to 150%. The population was outraged.<sup>32</sup> Hundreds of persons came to the factory workers union offices to complain about the augmented bills. This allowed the *Coordinadora* to gain ample media coverage, making public the increases and providing the media with dramatic case histories. The *Coordinadora* called for a refusal to pay the bills. In response *Aguas del Tunari* manager Geoffry Thorpe categorically stated that in case of non-payment water supply would be cut: “the only way to have water is by paying” (*Presencia*, 06-01-2000; *Opinión*, 16-01-2000).

The *Coordinadora* called a meeting for 10 January. Meanwhile, the Civic Committee declared a 24 hour *paro cívico* (civic strike) for 11

January and in an attempt to regain popularity Mayor Manfred Reyes Villa instigated the FEJUVE to organize a protest march. However, the *Coordinadora* meeting, a mixture of angry citizens, professionals who denounced the incoherences in the *Aguas del Tunari* contract, trade-unionists, members of irrigators associations, and rural and urban potable water committees, called for an indefinite blockade of the city to start on 11 January.

On 11 January the city was duly immobilized. This, however, was not so much the work of the traditional organizations like the Civic Committee or of the trade unions, such as those of the health and the air transport sector which had been present at the *Coordinadora* meeting. Although the latter had agreed to set up roadblocks at various strategic points in the city, hardly anything in the way of the usual trade-union sponsored roadblocks materialized. It was the associations of irrigators that effectively closed the strategic roads towards Cochabamba. And, in the city, it was mostly the potable water committees and other neighborhood associations of the periphery that set up a multitude of small barricades. Of the trade unions only the factory workers union was significantly present.

The next day, with the 24 hour strike of the Civic Committee finished, the rural roadblocks and those in the city’s periphery persisted. They were encouraged by an action of the Manaco shoe factory workers. Five hundred factory workers mounted their bikes and cycled the fifteen kilometers from the factory to the city center to protest the lay off of sixty workers and to call for continued action on the water issue. The *Coordinadora* had realized that most of the

---

32 What added to the outrage was that the contract with *Aguas del Tunari* included yearly adjustments based on the US consumer price index (Solón, 2000). This is an implication of Law No. 2029 which refers to the price index that directly affects the sector. Technical equipment was being imported.

traditional trade unions were barely participating and called for a march and a *cabildo* on 13 January. At that stage the transportation workers, divided between urban transport workers allied to the Civic Committee and heavy transport workers sympathizing with the *Coordinadora*, organized a meeting between the two groups where they agreed not to negotiate separately. Thus the Civic Committee sought to save face by relinquishing its claim to a representative monopoly and the *Coordinadora* secured a place at the negotiating table. A ministerial delegation was on its way.

The delegation arrived in a city in convulsion. A massive march and a *cabildo abierto* had just ratified the rejection of the *Aguas del Tunari* contract and of Law No. 2029. The *cabildo* denounced Mayor Reyes Villa, ex Civic Committee president Edgar Montaño, MISICUNI president Gonzalo Rico, ex-prefect Guido Camacho, Basic Sanitation Superintendent Luis Uzín and ex SEMAPA manager Oscar Coca as “traitors” for being responsible for the *Aguas del Tunari* contract. During the march the Civic Committee offices were attacked with stones. Some shops still open, the municipal *Casa de Cultura* and offices of public services also received their share of stones.

While teargas clouded the city center a delegation of four ministers started negotiations with representatives of the Civic Committee and the *Coordinadora*. The final outcome was an agreement signed by the governmental representatives, the Civic Committee, a representative of the Cochabamba parliamentary brigade and a representative of the motortransport federation, but not by the

representatives of the *Coordinadora* who argued that they should consult the population. The agreement included the creation of a commission to study water tariffs. The *Aguas del Tunari* contract would be revised to ensure execution of MISICUNI, to eliminate clauses that go against the interest of the State, and to include revised water tariffs. The proposals for a General Water Law would be discussed with society at large in order to reach consensus and Law No. 2029 would be modified within 45 days. Finally, it was stated that privately owned systems for water supply in the concession area would not be part of the water sources of the concessionaire (CEDIB, *30 Días*, January 2000: 1-11). The *Coordinadora* regarded this last point as an important victory. On the whole, however, the first Battle over Water ended in a truce that was to allow for further study and negotiation. Within a month hostilities would resume.

## THE SECOND BATTLE: FEBRUARY 2000

Negotiations proceeded sluggishly. The government, above all concerned with the “investment climate,” showed little willingness to review the *Aguas del Tunari* contract or the tariffs and sought basically to strike a deal with the Civic Committee so as to marginalize the *Coordinadora*. From the point of view of the government the original MISICUNI project would be unprofitable and therefore unfeasible.<sup>33</sup> For its part, the *Coordinadora* critique of the contract became increasingly vehement. It denounced the contract as irregular because it had been signed without abiding by the Law and only provided for a severely reduced

---

<sup>33</sup> In its *Bolivia, Public Expenditure Review* of 14 June 1999, the World Bank stated that it considered the MISICUNI Project to be a “white elephant” and insisted that no subsidies should be given to ameliorate the increase in water tariffs in Cochabamba, “which should reflect the full costs of provision by the MISICUNI Multipurpose Project” (World Bank, 1999).

MISICUNI while not containing any guarantee that the project would effectively be executed. Moreover, it was argued that the *Aguas del Tunari* consortium was not financially viable and therefore needed to be capitalized by raising water prices now against promises of better service in the future. Meanwhile, the drilling of the tunnel by Astali ICE proceeded extremely slowly. At that rate it would take years before water supply could be improved. Therefore, the *Coordinadora* argued, the contract should be rescinded and eventually it proposed to capitalize SEMAPA and convert it into a sort of cooperative of the Cochabamba population. By the end of January the *Coordinadora* organized a burning of water bills.

Meanwhile, tension rose in the national government coalition.<sup>34</sup> Coalition partner NFR, led by Cochabamba's Mayor Manfred Reyes Villa, opposed the authorization of the tariff hike and expressed its discomfort with the irresponsible and unilateral attitudes of the government and Superintendent Luis Uzáin. On 2 February the crisis broke and the NFR -twelve deputies and one senator- left, or was "given leave of," the coalition.

When, on 4 February, the government offered its "final proposal" of a 20% tariff raise<sup>35</sup> massive street protests followed and were met with heavy handed repression coordinated by Vice Minister of Internal and Police Affairs José Orías. Special Security Group (GES) detachments, also known

as "the dalmatians" for their battledress, were brought in from La Paz and Oruro. After two days of heavy street fighting Vice Minister Orías declared that police and military violence had been unavoidable to protect the doors and windows of the Cochabamba Prefecture. Doors and windows remained unbroken, noted the national daily *Presencia* (06-02-2000), but at the cost of heavy repression. All in all some 70 civilians and 51 policemen were wounded and 172 arrests were made.

Confrontations came to an end in the course of Saturday 5 February when after the mediation of Cochabamba's archbishop Tito Solari and national ombudsman representative José Luis Baptista an "Agreement for Cochabamba" was signed by Vice-Minister José Orías, Mauricio Barrientos of the Civic Committee, Néstor Guzmán of the Cochabamba Parliamentary Brigade and Gonzalo Maldonado of the *Coordinadora*. Departmental Prefect Hugo Galindo was absent at the signing and reportedly hospitalized. Main points were that MISICUNI should be executed, tariffs would be reviewed and for the time being they would be frozen at their October 1999 level. Proposals for modification of Law 2029 would be worked out between the various parties and presented within the 45-day period agreed in January. This would include respect for the *usos y costumbres*. A commission with representatives of the various groups would revise the *Aguas del Tunari* contract in its

34 In the 1997 elections General Banzer had obtained 22% of the vote. In such cases, where none of the candidates obtains an absolute majority, the National Congress elects one of the first two candidates. This system leads to pre- and post-electoral coalition making. The Banzer government started as a "megacoalition" which included the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR), the *Unidad Cívica Solidaridad* (UCS), *Conciencia de Patria* (CONDEPA) and *Nueva Fuerza Republicana* (NFR). Amidst heavy internal conflict, CONDEPA left the "mega" after a year. In June 1999 corruption scandals led to a cabinet crisis after which Banzer announced that the government had been relaunched. Corruption scandals, nepotism and ineptitude continued, however, aggravated by the bickering over power shares among the coalition partners.

35 In fact, the government proposed that the fixed charge for the first 12 m<sup>3</sup> would rise by 20% while additional water would be charged according to the tariff structure of the *Aguas del Tunari* contract.



technical, financial and legal aspects. In its considerations the commission should take the needs and possibilities of the population into account as well as the conditions to attract investment. Both the police and military forces and the social organizations would return to their bases, the detained would be released and the wounded cured. As long as the Agreement was in force the signing institutions would refrain from adopting protest measures that limit free circulation or threaten property rights. Peace lasted until 4 April.

### THE THIRD BATTLE FOR WATER AND THE STATE OF SIEGE: APRIL 2000

By the end of February negotiations were coming to a deadlock. The Civic Committee had failed to scrutinize the *Aguas del Tunari* contract of which it claimed to have no copy. It suggested, however, that water prices might be frozen for a few years or increases minimized. Government delegates gave little ground and for his part Superintendent Luis Uzín stated in the press that there were no alternatives to the *tarifazo* and that it was easy to rally the population over an issue like water prices. The *Coordinadora* insisted that the contract should be rescinded as it was not viable and because of its monopolistic features. Frustrated, the *Coordinadora* decided to withdraw from the technical meetings and challenged the Civic Committee to study the documents and speak out in favor of the Cochabamba population.

On 26 March the *Coordinadora* organized a *Consulta Popular* in which it asked the population to answer three questions: 1. Do you accept the tariff increase?; 2. Should the contract with Aguas del Tunari be annulled?; 3. Do you agree with the privatization of water in Law 2029? A total of 48,276 votes was given,

corresponding to some ten per cent of the Cochabamba population and equivalent to 31% of the votes cast in the December 1999 municipal election. 99% of the voters responded negatively to the first question; 96% thought that the contract should be annulled and 97% disagreed with the privatization orientation of Law No. 2029. The local press spoke of a successful experience and an advance in the construction of democracy (*Opinión*, 27-03-2000). Nevertheless, in another effort to trivialize the issue Vice Minister of Investment and Privatization, Humberto Böhr, stated that the referendum was illegal and that the government only recognized the Civic Committee as an interlocutor since that was the legally established entity for such purposes (*La Prensa*, 26-03-2000).

Two days before the *Consulta Popular* the Civic Committee had called an *Asamblea de la Cochabambinidad*, "made up of the institutions duly accredited by the Civic Committee." This Assembly had ratified a preliminary agreement with the government. It included modifications of Law No. 2029 so as to respect the investments made by neighborhood associations, cooperatives and other organizations in urban and rural areas. These modifications should be ratified in parliament within a fortnight. In the second place the *Aguas del Tunari* contract was to be renegotiated. Third, the recategorization of water users would be suspended for one year and a commission composed of the Superintendency and delegates of the Civic Committee would work out a more just and equitable scheme. Fourth, tariffs would be frozen until December 2000 and then increase gradually. Fifth, an office to receive and process consumer complaints should be opened by the concessionaire. Sixth, the central Government should guarantee the conclusion of the Mísicuni

tunnel. Finally, the Assembly expressed its confidence in the board of the Civic Committee, denounced the “anarchist and irresponsible attitudes of the *Coordinadora* leadership” and refused to recognize the *Consulta Popular* for not being legal, credible or verifiable. All leaders who go “against the prestige and the institutional and democratic integrity” of the Civic Committee would be banned from further participation, the document stated.

The *Coordinadora* continued to insist on the annulment of the contract and the legal recognition of *usos y costumbres*. It also proposed that the Superintendency be replaced by a National Water Council. By the end of March both the *Coordinadora* and the Civic Committee announced mobilizations if the government failed to respond before 31 March (CEDIB, 30 Días, March 2000). No response came and both organizations called for a Civic Strike on 4 April, after which the government sought to patch up its relations with the Civic Committee.

Around the same time the national peasant organization CSUTCB started to block roads throughout the country to press its own list of demands, which included its opposition to Law 2029. In Cochabamba the local peasantry, led by FEDECOR, blocked the main roads to the city.<sup>36</sup> In the city itself the civic strike passed quietly. The government and the Civic Committee congratulated themselves on the seeming impotence and isolation of the *Coordinadora*. Cochabamba's Prefect Hugo Galindo stated that “there is nothing to negotiate” (*Bolivian Times*,

13 April 2000: 3). They got it wrong. The next day, 5 April, thousands of Cochabambinos filled the Plaza 14 de Septiembre. The crowd rejected the *Coordinadora* proposal to give *Aguas del Tunari* 24 hours to leave the city and demanded that the enterprise leave “now.” It then marched to the company headquarters, attacking the Civic Committee offices on the way. At *Aguas del Tunari* the company sign was torn down after which the crowd proceeded to the water treatment plant in the Cala Cala district which was spray-painted with the slogan *Aguas del Pueblo*. Intervention by the *Coordinadora* leadership prevented damage to the plant.

On 6 April the Plaza again was taken over by the crowd. Meanwhile, the Prefect, police and deputies met at one place and the Mayor, the parliamentary brigade and the business community at another. After mediation by the Archbishop and the Ombudsman the authorities agreed to meet with the *Coordinadora* which called on its followers to hold a vigil around the Prefecture where the meeting would take place. By 10 p.m. a harassed group of policemen at the police headquarters launched a first round of tear gas. Meanwhile, the *Coordinadora* had started negotiations with a government delegation at the Prefecture. But by 10:30 p.m. a police force cleared the Plaza 14 de Septiembre, entered the Prefecture and arrested the *Coordinadora* delegates. They would be released again the next day by 4 a.m.

That day an unprecedented crowd gathered in the Plaza to demand a break with *Aguas del*

<sup>36</sup> Peasant roadblocks started on 3 April in the departments of La Paz, Oruro, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca and Tarija. Mostly they are simple affairs: “sow” sufficient medium size stones across the road so that cars cannot pass, mount the guard and build a fire to keep warm. In each of the departments the roadblocks responded to specific demands and certainly in the case of Cochabamba the water issue was of greater importance than CSUTCB general instructions. The military failed in attempts to control the main roads and by 5 April the departments of Beni and Potosí joined the actions. The arrest of Felipe Quispe in La Paz on 7 April and his deportation to San Joaquín in the Beni Department only added another issue to the agenda: the liberation of *el Mallku*.

*Tunari* and revision of Law No. 2029. It was decided to continue blockades until the demands were met. People prepared for the arrival of the army expecting a grim battle when later in the afternoon the first rounds of tear gas were fired. Then at 5 p.m. the news came that Prefect Hugo Galindo had announced the break with *Aguas del Tunari*. The crowd celebrated until a few hours later government sources denied the news. Prefect Galindo stated that he had announced the break to avoid an “inevitable blood bath” and then resigned.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, *Coordinadora* leaders were being arrested while others went into hiding. Throughout the country other leaders, such as Felipe Quispe of the CSUTCB, also were arrested and deported to San Joaquín in the tropical Beni Department.

A Decree declaring a 90 day state of siege was only made public by Information Minister Ronald MacLean on 8 April at 10:30 a.m.<sup>38</sup> MacLean also claimed that the unrest in Cochabamba was being financed by *narcotraficantes*, which added to protesters’ outrage. The state of siege backfired and simply became another reason for mobilization in various parts of the country. In Cochabamba

the streets and Plaza filled with protesters who were doused with teargas. To keep news from spreading, power supply to the El Temporal zone in Cochabamba, where various radio and TV stations are located, was cut by the military. In the afternoon protesters attacked local prisons, burned some cars, threw a molotov cocktail into the municipality and managed to reconquer the Plaza from the armed forces. Street kids, the marginals of the marginals, played a prominent role in defending the Plaza and various barricades. They operated in well organized gangs of “water warriors” and vehemently claimed their belonging to the movement and their Cochabambinoness, general patriotism and “willingness to die for the cause.” By the end of the day the attempts to reestablish order, or what national newspaper *La Prensa (Especial)*, 09-04-2000) dubbed “a surgical operation with a kitchen knife,” had claimed two lives. In Cochabamba, student Hugo Daza was shot in the face and died instantly.<sup>39</sup> His body was immediately carried to the Plaza and at the place where he died a shrine was constructed which displayed a bullet-perforated piece of sheet iron, but government and military sources denied that

37 Earlier, Civic Committee President Mauricio Barrientos had resigned due to the water issue. Besides “personal reasons” he argued that the *Coordinadora* had dragged the crowd along “like a herd of sheep” (*Presencia*, 08-04-2000).

38 The Decree is dated 7 April. It refers to social unrest, particularly in Cochabamba, and invokes the constitutional stipulations regarding the exercise of popular sovereignty. It states that “groups without any legal basis whatsoever are claiming to represent the people” and are therefore violating the Constitution. Given that the decree was only made public on 8 April the preceding nationwide arrests were unlawful.

39 That same day in the locality of Lahuachaca in the La Paz Department, on the road to Oruro, Rogelio Callisaya who had earlier tried to mediate between roadblocking peasants and the military was shot in the belly and died on the way to a hospital. Three more people were killed during the state of siege when on 9 April a violent confrontation occurred in the locality of Achacachi resulting in the death of two peasants and an army captain. In an attempt to depict the Aymara inhabitants of Achacachi as irrationally violent and cruel Defense Minister Jorge Crespo and army sources claimed that Captain Omar Téllez had not only been beaten to death but also had been quartered and that his eyes had been torn out, claims that would later be denied by the director of the local hospital Gastón Vázquez and by national ombudswoman Ana María Romero who denounced the abusive actions of the military and pointed out that Captain Téllez had been the first to shoot to kill (*La Prensa*, 13-04-2000; 14-04-2000; 21-04-2000; 06-05-2000).

any shots had been fired into the crowd.<sup>40</sup>

On Sunday 9 April it was officially announced that *Aguas del Tunari* would withdraw, but by then such promises were hard to believe and a crowd occupied the Plaza to wait and see. *Coordinadora* members who had eluded arrest launched appeals to the government to come up with real solutions. On 10 April a new Agreement was signed between government representatives and the *Coordinadora*. It established that SEMAPA would again take charge of water supply in the city under a board made up of representatives of the municipality and popular and professional organizations, just as the *Coordinadora* had suggested. Roadblocks would be lifted as soon as parliament approved the modifications of Law No. 2029. A further condition was that the Superintendency give documented proof of the ending of the *Aguas del Tunari* contract. The wounded should be cured at the expense of the government and compensation should be paid to the families of the dead. The detained held in San Joaquín were to be released.

When Oscar Olivera informed the crowd in the Plaza of the agreement and claimed victory, he received a tepid applause. Peasant delegates, who had become ever more suspicious of government promises, demanded that the modifications of Law No. 2029 should be approved “right now.” Nevertheless, the crowd disbanded. Modifications to the Law were approved in parliament that same night and a modified Law No. 2066 was proclaimed by President Banzer on 11 April.

The reform modified 36 articles. Main points were that it left open the possibility to create a National Water Council through a future General Water Law. Instead of 5 year licenses peasant and indigenous organizations now only have to register for an indefinite period of “the useful life of the service.” In concession areas the concessionaire will not have monopoly rights and neighborhood associations, water committees, cooperatives and other *usos y costumbres* are recognized. Dollar indexation was banned from the law and new tariff structures are to be consulted with the municipalities and the local Popular Participation bodies.<sup>41</sup>

While calm returned to Cochabamba, the protests elsewhere continued. On 20 April, on the eve of the Easter weekend the state of siege was finally lifted. President Banzer asked a pardon for any error that might have been made and the country prepared for what would come after the weekend.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I focused on the dynamics of one of the movements that played a central role in the episode of upheaval that led the Bolivian government to declare a state of siege: the Cochabamba Water War. What does this conflict tell us about contemporary protest movements in Bolivia?

In a comment on the “water war” sociologist Roberto Laserna has argued that “the poor were summoned to struggle against imperialism, but

<sup>40</sup> A few days later PAT-TV made public a video film showing a sniper in civilian clothes, later identified as Captain Iriarte, kneel behind a line of soldiers, who clearly offer him cover, and then taking aim and firing into the crowd. Other footage showed Iriarte giving orders and talking to superiors. Though what happened was clear for all to see, government officials invented lie after lie to cover up any government or army responsibility. In the city of Cochabamba the *Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos* registered 59 wounded, of whom 24 had bullet wounds.

<sup>41</sup> The 1994 Popular Participation Law recognizes “territorial base organizations” such as neighborhood associations, rural unions and indigenous communities. Among them they elect representatives to a Vigilance Committee charged with monitoring municipal investment plans. The Popular Participation Law was one of the showpieces of the Sánchez de Lozada government.

the direct beneficiaries of the struggle would be the few urban consumers connected to the water supply system and a small proportion of peasants with access to irrigation" (*Pulso*, 14-20 April, 2000: 9). This suggests that the poor were carried away into irrational actions that go against their own interests by the radical rhetoric of some left wing political agitators such as Oscar Olivera. It reminds us of late 19<sup>th</sup> century crowd psychology and rather reflects the ideology of the constituted order and the attempts to trivialize the protests. It hardly can count as a sociological explanation. In contrast, by now classic and elementary social movement theory suggests looking for the stakes in a conflict, the adversary and the process of identity formation of the contesting party in relation to the former two elements (Touraine, 1978). If we look at the immediate cause of the conflict it is clear that "the poor" were concerned about respect for their *usos y costumbres* and feared the announced dispossession of their water sources. And those who happened to be connected to the SEMAPA system saw their water bills rise. That certainly contributed to the credibility of the *Coordinadora*. This should be set against a background of frustration with government's (non-) policies and kleptocratic practices, nepotism, and arrogance, and concern over a contract concocted through insufficiently transparent negotiations and which might postpone materialization of MISICUNI for quite some time, if not forever, while making the population foot the bill for "capitalizing" a transnational consortium. The immediate targets of anger also were quite clearly defined:

*Agua del Tunari*, the Civic Committee and municipal offices. The former representing the dispossession of the people in favor of foreign capital and the latter two for their connivance.

The stakes in the conflict, however, went beyond a mere defense of *usos y costumbres* and a protest against rising water bills or even against governmental corruption. On the one hand, in the course of the conflict the issue moved beyond the mere control of immediate resources or material gain and increasingly acquired a symbolic content challenging the dominant societal model and the mode of development imposed since 1985 at rather high social costs and without much benefit for large sectors of the population.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, as we saw, the *Coordinadora* came to constitute an important challenge to the instituted system of legally accredited representation which failed to channel the concerns and interests of increasingly large sectors of the population and thus prompted "extra-institutional" action.

The first aspect points to the process of identity formation or cultural framing as the resource mobilization approach to collective action now would say (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1996). Rather than opposing strategy to identity we should look for their interaction in the course of a conflict and the ongoing definition of the stakes (Cohen, 1985). It is this process that accounts for the articulation of diverse social actors in a single movement. Rather than assuming the unity of movements it has become increasingly clear that they must be viewed as social constructs or products of mutual recognition among actors which gives rise to a

<sup>42</sup> While the economic growth it promised had been meager anyway it plummeted in 1999 in the wake of the Samba Crisis, despite drastic measures implemented under a series of states of siege. Since then, talk about economic reactivation has been prolific but the results are few and concern over the sustainability of the model adopted in 1985 is spreading among different sectors of the population.

shared system of action that allows for interaction and the negotiation of orientations, interpretations and strategic aims and the evaluation of opportunities. At the same time such processes knit together the submerged networks of everyday interaction that provide the basis for involvement (Melucci, 1999).

In this article I have shown how the “war over water” has roots going back to earlier conflicts and resulted from a gradual build-up of symbolic stakes and the articulation among them. The early conflicts over well-drilling gave rise to a broadening interpretation of stakes. It was no longer just a question of control over resources. These conflicts acquired a dimension of defense of communitarian rights and resource management<sup>43</sup> embedded in a way of life as well as an ecological dimension linked to the denunciation of the market ideology, political discourse and militancy never being absent from the framing process. Thus emerged a subaltern discourse over the right to a resource and its management and the defense of the ecological conditions to maintain a way of life in the face of capitalism’s urban bias. At the same time the simple material fact of being irrigators – which became an identity in the course of the conflicts and was articulated in the FEDECOR – accounts for the solidity of the submerged networks among this sector where cooperation and social control are two sides of the same coin.<sup>44</sup>

The involvement of urban professionals in the movement resulted from a quite different trajectory. In this case cognitive access (Offe, 1985: 848) of a different type and guided by

different knowledge interests – which again does not exclude political interests – played a key role.<sup>45</sup> As we saw, doubts about well-drilling projects, based on cost-benefit calculations, had started to be voiced by the late 1990s. With Gonzalo Maldonado in a key role engineers and other professionals were first to submit the *Aguas del Tunari* contract to an extensive critique which included its social dimension, the tariff issue. The activities of the Defense Committee, however, were transformed in the context of the December municipal elections and the actual taking charge of water supply by *Aguas del Tunari*. It was in this context that public debate broadened, the factory workers’ union became involved and links were established with FEDECOR. NGOs concerned about water as a result of their involvement with peasant organizations through capacity building programs enhanced their role in promoting debate over water legislation.<sup>46</sup>

In the urban area the variety of self-help arrangements that had arisen to make up for the deficiencies of public services, that is SEMAPA, saw themselves directly menaced by the new monopoly of the concessionaire, and those connected to the SEMAPA system saw their bills rise. In some cases neighborhood committees and more often committees that had been formed to demand connection to the public system provided a framework for organization. It was, however, the old solidarities among ex-miners, rural migrants and among workers who had worked together before industrial restructuring dispersed them that constituted important networks which

---

43 Note that in rural areas water management includes both potable water and water for irrigation purposes.

44 And, to be sure, the development of initiatives regarding water legislation have for years been a recurring item on the agenda of local irrigators meetings.

45 For a discussion of such interests in a different context, see Assies (1999).

46 The La Paz based *Fundación Solón*, for instance, has made the water issue its principal concern. The *Mesa Técnica Nacional del Agua* brings together various NGOs and peasant-indigenous organizations.

were revived in the effort of barricade building. Memories of earlier struggles were dragged up and the role of local radio stations in spreading news and facilitating coordination brought to mind the role of the famous miners' radio station Pío XII. Such networks linked local activities to the factory workers' union with its headquarters on a corner of the Plaza which thus became a locus for information exchange and coordination.

Finally, a group that attracted attention during the confrontations were the street children who grasped the occasion to break out of their marginality and join the common cause. They were on top of the main roadblocks and during the final battle took it as their task to defend the *Coordinadora* from possible police attacks. Faces painted and sling at hand the self-proclaimed "water warriors" mounted a quasi military organization to seal off the Plaza after it had been reconquered on April 8.

The confluence of groups made the *Coordinadora* into a rather heterogeneous assembly which from late 1999 onward deployed a variety of initiatives and managed to gain broad sympathy among the population. Rather than being carried away by some agitators who made them act against their own true interests the protests were rooted in a variety of local experiences while the symbolic charge of the movement gradually built up in the face of government indifference. What they had in common was the rejection of *Agua del Tunari* which was perceived as an assault against the dignity of the Cochabambino and the popular economy and the opposition to the new legislation that sanctioned the assault.

A second aspect of the *Coordinadora* is the challenge it posed to the instituted system of representation which marginalized important sectors of the population and failed to transmit

their concerns or even made itself an accomplice in making them invisible to the convenience of the political class.<sup>47</sup> While Laserna's "irrational crowd" view is bad sociology, his notion of "forced negotiation" (Laserna, 1999) may be more to the point to gain some understanding of the events. In relation to the coca growers mobilizations he describes a typical pattern of mobilization and its outcomes which may be more generally applicable to Bolivian circumstances. In the initial stage the government usually shows itself indifferent to a demand, next it disparages the mobilization as it perceives its gathering strength and sometimes it contributes to making it more consistent by repressing leaders or groups. The growing tension comes to a head in confrontations and the spread of mobilization to other groups. Finally, the government gives in to the force of social pressure and ends up by signing last minute agreements and promises in which it evidently does not believe and which it will not carry out. That leads to another round of the same while communications between the parties deteriorate in a process of mutual exhaustion.

In the case of the Cochabamba conflict government indifference to early signs of protest and its refusal to listen to the Defense Committee and, later, to recognize the legitimacy of the *Coordinadora* triggered a dynamics that augmented the stakes and added the issue of representation and popular organization to the agenda. The Civic Committee is a case in point. It pretends to represent the "regional interest" but is hegemonized by business interests and local notables and hardly has organic roots in the population. Instead it claims legitimacy on the basis of "the law" and government recognition. For the government it is a "reasonable" interlocutor and an accomplice in ignoring or

---

47 For a discussion of the "representation deficit" of the Bolivian political system, see Tapia and Toranzo (2000).

deprecating demands. In the case of the neighborhood associations federation FEJUVE the problem is that its leadership is strongly tied to the Manfred Reyes Villa political machine which has governed the city since 1993.<sup>48</sup> We also noted that trade unions, with the exception of the factory workers union, shone by their absence. Under the assault of adjustment policies the once so proud *Central Obrera Boliviana*, the articulator of popular protests up to 1985, has been disarticulated and debilitated. Its former centrality has been replaced by the emergence of regional poles of organization and political action with a new dynamic (Tapia, 2000).

The *Coordinadora* emerged at the margin of such structures through a convergence of different groups at a specific juncture as a loosely-knit organization focused on a single issue. Its significance, however, may not stop there since it points the way for a more general overhaul of the inherited system of representation. The corporatist features of this system have resulted in the presence of quite a few phantom organizations surviving on clientelistic relations and without organic links to the population. In the aftermath of the water conflict, to cite one example, a *Coordinadora de Juntas Vecinales* arose in Cochabamba and disputed current leadership positions in FEJUVE, calling for a democratization of both the FEJUVE and the Civic Committee whose leaders, some suggest, should be directly elected by popular vote. As we saw, the *Coordinadora* forced its place at the negotiating table and had to be listened to, despite constitutional and legal regulations stipulating that a sovereign people cannot deliberate or govern except through its representatives and the authorities created by law. An objective that gradually was defined in the course of the protests

was not so much to participate in the political system but to promote alternatives to the existing system and the established organizations. Thus the *Coordinadora* does not seek to turn itself into a formal organization and rather than official recognition it seeks to break with the hierarchical tradition of established organizations. It strongly values grassroot participation through frequent local meetings in neighborhoods and rural communities. At the same time it seeks to broaden its scope to multiple issues so as to become an alternative force aiming for democratization, a politicization of civil society and a recuperation of popular sovereignty.

The outcomes of the Cochabamba conflict and the nationwide peasant protests were a modification of Law No. 2029 and the annulment of the *Aguas del Tunari* contract. The new Law No. 2066 includes a better protection of the *usos y costumbres*, that is the cooperatives and other associations involved in local water supply. It also introduces an important element of public control over tariffs and opens the way for consideration of social criteria. Finally, any mention of a Water Superintendency has been eliminated, thus opening the possibility for creating a National Water Council. A next step will therefore be the elaboration of a General Water Law to substitute the obsolete 1906 Law, and the corresponding regulations.

The annulment of the *Aguas del Tunari* contract meant that water supply in Cochabamba returned to SEMAPA, now with some representatives of the *Coordinadora* on its management board. The search has started for long-term alternatives that go in the direction of rejecting both a public enterprise plagued by bureaucracy and corruption like the old SEMAPA, and privatization. Instead, ideas go in the direction of a cooperative or a social and

---

<sup>48</sup> Reyes Villa resigned as Mayor on 24 April 2000 after his daughter died in a car accident.



self-managed entity under permanent popular control. While ideas about a long term alternative to both statist and market-based solutions gradually take shape, at another level discussions revolve around questions like the elaboration of a new socially acceptable tariff structure and the ways to compensate cooperatives and other self-help initiatives that run their own water supply systems for their incorporation into the SEMAPA system so as to achieve sustainable resource use in the long run and to improve the quality of water supplied. And finally, MISICUNI remains on the agenda.

The “war over water” was the outcome of a

specific juncture that united several sectors of the population, each with its own experiences of conflict and its own expectations. It augured a new form of social protest that revealed the obsolescence of established forms of representation. It may be premature to say that a “new social movement” has emerged in Bolivia, but the “war over water” does suggest a significant change in the dynamics of social protest in combining new views on protest and participation with the defense of *usos y costumbres*, a brand of popular ecologism, and a search for alternatives to both statism and neoliberalism.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Assies, Willem

1999 "Theory, Practice and 'External Actors' in the Making of Urban Social Movements in Brazil". In: *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 18, No. 2.

2000 "El constitucionalismo multiétnico en América Latina: El caso de Bolivia". In: Castro Lucic, Milka and Albó, Xavier (coords.). *Actas XII Congreso Internacional Derecho consuetudinario y pluralismo legal: desafíos del tercer milenio, Marzo 13-17 2000, Arica, Chile (Tomo II)*. Universidad de Chile, Universidad de Tarapacá.

Baldivia Urdininea, José

1998 "La capitalización". In: Chávez Corrales, Juan Carlos (coord.). *Las reformas estructurales en Bolivia*. La Paz: Fundación Milenio.

Bustamante Zenteno, Rocío

2000 "El difícil camino de la formulación de una nueva Ley de Aguas para Bolivia". Paper presented at the *Foro Público Seminar-Workshop*, Cochabamba, 23-24 February.

Calla, Ricardo; Pinelo, José Enrique and Urioste, Miguel

1989 *CSUTCB: debate sobre documentos políticos y asamblea de nacionalidades*. La Paz: CEDLA.

CEDIB

30 días de noticias, resumen especializada de 12 periódicos (January 1999 - June 2000).

CEDIB

2000 "Una guerra más allá del agua, febrero-abril del 2000, recopilación de artículos publicados en BOLIVIAPRESS" (mimeo).

Cohen, Jean

1985 "Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements". In: *Social Research*, Vol. 52, No. 4.

Crespo Flores, Carlos

1999 "Gestión ambiental: El conflicto por la perforación de pozos profundos en Vinto-Sipe Sipe". In: Crespo Flores, Carlos and Orellana Halkyer, René. *Conflictos ambientales; dos casos: agua y territorio*. Cochabamba: CERES.

2000 "Continuidad y ruptura: la Guerra del Agua y los nuevos movimientos sociales en Bolivia". Cochabamba (mimeo).

Dourojeanni, Axel and Jouravlev, Andrei

1999 "El Código de Aguas de Chile: entre la ideología y la realidad". In: *Debate Agrario*, No. 29-30.

Gamarra, Eduardo A.

1993 "Crafting Political Support for Stabilization: Political Pacts and the New Economic Policy in Bolivia". In: Smith, William C.; Acuña, Carlos H. and Gamarra, Eduardo A. (eds.). *Democracy, Markets, and Structural Reform in Latin America; Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers.

Hendriks, Jan

1998 "El agua como propiedad privada; apuntes sobre la problemática de aguas en Chile". In: Boelens, Rutgerd and Dávila, Gloria (eds.). *Buscando la equidad; concepciones sobre justicia y equidad en el riego campesino*. Assen: Van Gorcum.

Hoekema, André and Assies, Willem

2000 "Managing Resources: Between Autonomy and Partnership". In: Assies, Willem; van der Haar, Gemma and Hoekema, André (eds.). *The Challenge of Diversity: Indigenous Peoples and Reform of the State in Latin America*. Amsterdam: Thela Thesis.

Kruse, Tom and Vargas, Humberto

2000 "Las victorias de abril: una historia que aún no concluye". Cochabamba (mimeo).

Laserna, Roberto

1999 "Prólogo". In: Laserna, Roberto; Camacho B., Natalia and Córdova E., Eduardo. *Empujando la concertación: Marchas campesinas, opinión pública y coca*. La Paz: CERES, PIEB.

2000 "La guerra contra el agua". Cochabamba (mimeo).

Lavaud, Jean-Pierre

1991 *L'instabilité Politique de l'Amérique Latine; Le cas de la Bolivie*. Paris: L'Harmattan, IHEAL.

Lohman, Maria

1997 "Las 4 trampas de la capitalización y de las AFP's". In: *30 Días*, May '97.

Marinissen, Judith

1998 *Legislación Boliviana y Pueblos Indígenas*. La Paz, Santa Cruz: SNV, CEJIS (2nd edition).

- Mayorga, Fernando (coord.)  
1997 *Ejemonías: Democracia representativa y liderazgos locales*. La Paz: PIEB/SINERGIA.
- McAdam, Doug; McCarthy, John D. and Zald, Mayer N. (eds.)  
1996 *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Melucci, Alberto  
1999 *Acción colectiva, vida cotidiana y democracia*. Mexico: El Colegio de México.
- Molina, Fernando  
1998 *Capitalización, resultados y perspectivas*. La Paz: CEDOIN.
- Monroy Pascoe, Sara and Rufz Gutiérrez, Silvana  
1997 *Capitalización, promesas y realidades*. La Paz: CEDOIN (2nd edition).
- Morales, Juan Antonio  
1993 "Democracy, Economic Liberalism, and Structural Reform in Bolivia". In: Smith, William C.; Acuña, Carlos H. and Gamarra, Eduardo A. (eds.). *Democracy, Markets, and Structural Reform in Latin America; Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers.
- Offe, Claus  
1985 "New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics". In: *Social Research*, Vol. 52, No. 4.
- Orellana Halkyer, René  
1999 "Agua que no has de beber, no la vendas....déjala correr". *Separata, Edición especial de la revista Artículo Primero*, Año 3, No. 5. Santa Cruz: CEJIS.
- Patzi Paco, Félix  
1999 *Insurgencia y sumisión. Movimientos indígenas campesinos (1983-1998)*. La Paz: Muela del Diablo.
- PEIRAV  
1998 "La guerra del agua; conflicto y negociación entre organizaciones campesinas y SEMAPA en el Valle de Cochabamba, 1977-1998 (Informe Final y Anexos)". Cochabamba: PEIRAV, UMSS-UAW (mimeo).
- Quispe Huanca, Felipe  
1999 *Tupak Katari vive y vuelve....carajo*. Oruro: Pachakuti (3rd edition).
- Solón, Pablo  
2000 "Las nuevas políticas de saneamiento básico: privatización y concesión de los servicios de agua potable y alcantarillado". Paper prepared for the *Foro Público*, Cochabamba 23-24 February, 2000.
- Tapia, Luis  
2000 "La crisis política de abril". La Paz (mimeo).
- Tapia Mealla, Luis and Toranzo Roca, Carlos  
2000 *Retos y dilemas de la representación política*. La Paz: PNUD (Cuadernos de Futuro 8).
- Ticona Alejo, Esteban  
2000 *Organización y liderazgo aymara 1979-1996*. La Paz, Cochabamba: Universidad de la Cordillera, AGRUCO.
- Touraine, Alain  
1978 *La Voix et le Regard*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Vargas, Gonzalo  
2000 "Condiciones del desarrollo agropecuario y la demanda de riego en el Valle Central". Paper prepared for the *Foro Público*, Cochabamba 23-24 February, 2000.
- World Bank  
1999 *Bolivia; Public Expenditure Review*, Report No. 19232-BO.
- Yaksic Feraudy, Fabían II and Tapia Mealla, Luis  
1997 *Bolivia, Modernizaciones empobrecedoras, desde su fundación a la desrevolución*. La Paz: Muela del Diablo, SOS Faim.





*Marcelo Suaznabar*



# Speaking of Indigenous Peoples' Rights<sup>1</sup>

Esteban Ticona Alejo<sup>2</sup>

**A conversation with Bartolomé Clavero, expert on constitutional law and indigenous law. The interview, conducted in December 1998, focuses on indigenous peoples' rights, the conceptual framework and international conventions on the subject.**

Bartolomé Clavero is a recognised specialist on constitutional law and indigenous law. In Latin America one of his best known books is *Derecho indígena y cultura constitucional en América*, published in Mexico by Siglo XXI in 1994.

Clavero, an expert on the laws and rights that protect and encourage the development of indigenous identity in Latin America and professor at the University of Seville in Spain, came to La Paz following an invitation by the Cordillera University to teach on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> diploma course on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and the Masters Programme in Social Science and Anthropology.

## INDIGENOUS LAW AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

**Esteban Ticona (ET):** What should we understand by indigenous law and what does it mean today?

**Bartolomé Clavero (BC):** I would start by making a distinction that should be borne in mind. One concept is *indigenous law*, in the sense of any sort of law, social standard or norm that is more or less binding, or a community convention among indigenous peoples. This is what anthropology is concerned with, seeking knowledge of the social, cultural and legal situation, and there you have humanity's indigenous law.

Another concept is *indigenous peoples' rights*. This is not what indigenous peoples do in the world of law, but their capacity to be in the world of law. When we speak of peoples' rights we are saying that the work does not involve anthropology or jurisprudence (lawyers and people of that sort, among whom I include myself). From that starting point, the capacity lies with the indigenous people because it is then a different question: not knowledge of indigenous legal practices, but indigenous peoples' self-

<sup>1</sup> This article was published in *T'inkazos* 8, February 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Sociology graduate with a masters in anthropology. UMSA university anthropology degree lecturer.

determination. The questions are therefore very different.

**ET:** In today's world, is it therefore more accurate to speak of indigenous peoples' rights than indigenous law?

**BC:** It depends on the context. In other words, if it is a question of doing research on indigenous reality, always a good idea to develop, and if that research is being done on the indigenous people, then the term indigenous law is fine, as it identifies a good subject for study.

It would also be good if indigenous peoples themselves had the scientific training needed to produce knowledge about themselves, in a situation of equality and reciprocity. This is happening but not to the extent that would be welcome.

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

**ET:** Do indigenous peoples' rights always involve the state?

**BC:** Not necessarily, because it may be that they want to form a state, if this arises from the recognition of the indigenous people's rights. It may involve the United Nations, if it does not take forward the Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights. So it's all relative, it doesn't have to involve the state, and states don't necessarily have to feel attacked by indigenous self-determination. In a good many cases, recognition and exercise of these rights can imply a constitutional arrangement between the diversity of peoples living within the borders of one state. Self-determination may be something that is not only more viable for the future, but more peaceful. That is important, as is greater respect for the rights of all individuals and all people, not just

those who belong to one of the cultures present in a state.

**ET:** What are the factors needed to internationalise the term 'indigenous' in the legal sense? Although the concept enables certain groups of people to be identified, not all indigenous peoples accept the term.

**BC:** It has in fact been internationalised in the last few decades, because previously, in the different European and Indo-American languages, which are largely those used by the United Nations and international organisations, you had a large variety of terms that not always meant or implied the same thing.

At a certain point the UN started to concern itself seriously with the indigenous question. The term adopted is 'indigenous', on the understanding that it is neutral, objective or identificatory, and can be used simply to recognise those peoples who have lived in their own territory for centuries, preserve their customs, including their own jurisdictions, and were there before the people who arrived in the colonial period and set up states, thereby positioning themselves over and above the original peoples.

The term 'indigenous' is neutral in the sense that it is not a pejorative concept nor particularly appreciative of certain peoples in comparison to others. For the UN, if in fact the Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights does come to pass, all peoples are equal.

However, what you say is true. There is a risk that indigenous people themselves share that sentiment, and indeed many do reject that way of identifying themselves. Moreover, they do so for many different reasons. What is their argument? That the term 'indigenous' does not take account of their own specific identities, fuses



together too many different realities and can be confusing.

A well organised people, who control their territory and their resources, even though they may not have international political recognition, do not face the same problems as other peoples who, being indigenous, do not have that clear, defined and sustained status. They then want to be called by the name of their own people, which obviously does not rule out solidarity with other groups with different names. At a time of veritable international ignorance of indigenous reality, it may certainly be too much of a generalisation, implying that the whole panorama is now known, when in fact it continues to be unknown in all its variety.

Another type of reservation may be even more serious. This is that the term 'indigenous', as in the case of all the terms created by the colonising culture to describe the colonised peoples, can be understood as pejorative, degrading, marginalizing, discriminatory and even excluding. Objectively it arose in the course of colonial history to degrade, and there is no other term without that connotation that could be used to describe all these excluded peoples.

Of all the terms that exist, 'indigenous' is perhaps one of the less harmful; although, logically, calling peoples 'indigenous', whether from the standpoint of anthropology or international law, can unintentionally be a totally offensive term. This is because it could imply that European or Euro-American culture represents progress, and therefore the future, while the other peoples are backward and incapable of governing themselves, as if they were 'uncivilised' or didn't have their own cultures. All this can still be implied by terms of colonial origin.

But of course, it still needs to be demonstrated that the term is not in fact degrading. This may be why the indigenous peoples who have good

reasons for rejecting the term prefer something more individualised, a name of their own.

## APPLYING THE 'INDIGENOUS' CONCEPT

ET: It is clear that the term 'indigenous' is related to colonial and post-colonial situations. But is it possible to apply it to other realities, such as Japan for example, which has not suffered colonialism as Latin America, Asia and Africa have?

BC: What I said about European or Euro-American culture should be extended to include other colonising peoples, because there is evidence that there are indigenous peoples even in present-day Japan and Africa; in other words, parts of the world not colonised by Europe or now decolonised. Again, they are peoples who have lived there longer than those who established or now control the respective state.

Although some peoples who were colonised in the past now control their own states following decolonisation, they are peoples who are to some extent more Europeanised, who maintain situations of internal colonialism in a manner similar to states in the Americas. Decolonisation itself was carried out in such a way as to bring this about. The same can be said of Asia, where one country that did not go through decolonisation fell under the orbit of the United States a century ago: I am referring to the Philippines, where the constitution today recognises an indigenous presence. In every continent there are indigenous peoples who pre-date those who are identified today with the culture of the state and are excluded from its structures.

What we need to arrive at now, especially after decolonisation, is a more extensive meaning of the generic 'indigenous' identification itself, without detriment to particular indigenous

identities. There is one common problem: peoples who are not yet properly recognised either by the state or by the international order.

ET: Are we suggesting here the practice of legal pluralism?

BC: Exactly, but not any kind of legal pluralism. Pluralism in the sense of many nationalities within the same state, a plurality of peoples and cultures, with a scope that is not usually understood when legal pluralism is spoken of in general terms or as a general theory. The pluralities usually looked at are those of lesser magnitude, not those that interest the diverse peoples in a single state. This kind of legal pluralism does not usually address the need for all peoples to be on an equal footing, the imperative need not to have some peoples forced to submit to others in the same state. This sort of unitarianism, as we may call it, will disappear with the type of pluralism envisaged in the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights, if it prospers.

## CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

ET: The constitutions of several Latin American states, such as Ecuador, Bolivia and Mexico, have been reformed so that they recognise indigenous peoples. What does this mean?

BC: There are many constitutions today that now accept that the state is multicultural, whether they use that term or another one. This is understood to mean that the state is made up of a diversity of cultures, because it includes indigenous cultures and also those of colonial origin. These are states that then develop or materialise this very unequal principle. Some, such as Mexico, have barely started, while others are making an attempt to bring about certain results by introducing a special

regime for indigenous communities, as in the case of Bolivia.

None of them situate all cultures on an equal footing with each other. Of all the cases, possibly the most exceptional at the moment is Ecuador, due to the degree of recognition in its new 1998 constitution. In general, the concept of a plurality of peoples is not accepted, and they even continue to maintain a state structure that is not adapted to the principles of multiculturalism, meaning that this remains as something superimposed and marginal. The most they do is create special regimes for situations which are understood to be special, as though indigenous peoples were not really peoples to the same extent as those others that have run the state since independence.

Ecuador may be considered the exception, not so much in terms of what the constitution says as the proposals made by the indigenous side during the constitutional reform process. In the Constitutional Congress the attempt was made to have the plurality of nationalities recognised, with the challenge that implies for the whole constitutional structure, significantly greater than what is implied today by pluri-ethnicity and multiculturalism. A genuine re-founding of the Ecuadorian state was proposed. But this proposal, which was made by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONIAE), was not taken up. What has been achieved so far, thanks to the recognition of multiculturalism, is that the indigenous presence comes alive in almost every section of the constitution. The possibility of gaining territorial recognition for the indigenous jurisdictions remains open.

The recognition of territories, with certain very limited jurisdictional effects, is also taking place in Colombia, Brazil and Nicaragua, as an exceptional measure under a special regime.

I would even venture to say (and I say 'venture' because I am an outside observer with no right

to make conclusive statements) that the indigenous presence has gained significant constitutional recognition from Mexico to Bolivia, and even in Argentina, though not in Chile. But constitutions may carry less weight in this area than a supranational piece of legislation, thanks particularly to Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation on indigenous peoples in independent countries, which many Latin American states, including Bolivia, have been ratifying. The reformed constitutions generally do not meet the Convention's requirements.

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE ERA OF GLOBALISATION

ET: For some sectors of society, to speak of indigenous peoples as a special case in the era of globalisation seems paradoxical and reductionist. What is your opinion of this position in the Latin American and European context?

BC: I have the impression, with the proper exceptions of course, that when politicians, writers, ideologists or scientists describe things in those terms, they are displaying a profound ignorance of what is being discussed in the United Nations with regard to indigenous peoples.

This ignorance lies in the fact that it is gratuitously assumed by non-indigenous people that they know all about the existence and customs of indigenous peoples, without even taking them into account as such. They have been invisible as peoples for centuries, due to the political and legal effects of colonialism. Although it's a strong statement to make, it is this force that continues to perpetuate the colonial culture that degrades these peoples.

This lack of knowledge is today displayed by globalisation itself, which is understood to be

incompatible with the rights of peoples, particularly if they are not yet states and do not have a recognised political status, which is the case of indigenous peoples.

Mario Vargas Llosa of Peru is an example of this. He is a great novelist but a small thinker, a person characterised by globalisation, with all his presumption of knowledge in comparison to most of humanity. He has come to feel contempt for the indigenous population of his country of origin, Peru. He believes that indigenous people need to be civilised gradually by force, because it would be for their own good, and that there is no possibility of recognising the rights of those who are understood to be incapable of exercising them.

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

ET: The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was recently commemorated. To what extent does the Universal Declaration address the rights of different groups of human beings?

BC: I have two very different views on this. On the positive side is the recognition of individual freedoms and that these are considered to be human rights. The value of this can only be appreciated in the specific context of 50 years ago, as it was a way of consecrating the victory over nazism and other racisms, though of course not all of them. But the victory was valid and seemed to be definitive, although fascism could always be reborn in different parts of the world and give rise to a period of barbarity. In these parts of the world and in others there is still profound racism against the indigenous presence.

In terms of individual freedom the Universal Declaration has been enormously positive, not

just in the specific circumstances of 50 years ago, but structurally, then and now, and I imagine for a long time to come. That value has been developed, and human rights have taken concrete form as civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

As far as the rights of groups are concerned, whether they be indigenous rights or the gender question and women's rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is often criticised for its insensitivity to rights that do not strictly pertain to individuals. It seems to me that the criticism is unfair, because the freedoms of the individual are there, without discriminating by sex, precisely as human rights. It is not a question of criticising the Universal Declaration outright, but of analysing where its weakness lies with regard to collective or not directly individual rights.

ET: Does this mean that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights leads to the Universal Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights?

BC: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is leading to the recognition of the rights of all peoples without exception. In what I have just said you can see the negative side, in my judgement, because the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is practically blind to non-individual rights.

Literally, and of course under a very euphemistic supposition, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights accepts colonialism with a certain awareness that it conflicts with individual freedoms, and there is something there that does not fit. But the Declaration expressly says that individual freedoms are also understood to apply to those individuals – here comes the euphemism – who are subject to a colonial

situation, and this is where indigenous peoples come in.

At the time, the captive majority continued to live under colonialism. Who could possibly imagine, even 50 years ago when the United Nations signed the Declaration, that there could be individual freedom under collective subjugation? The only possibility of achieving it would be to abandon one's own culture or people. The consequences of doing so to achieve one's own freedom are evident, because this does happen. Peoples are destroyed, and so are individuals.

So the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is tremendously harmful to those peoples who do not have states. Despite everything and after decolonisation, there have clearly been developments with the Universal Declaration leading to rights for all peoples.

ET: Let's go on to Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). What is your opinion of the 1989 document, its scope and limitations, both in the Latin American context and the European context?

BC: Don't forget these are two different things. The Convention itself, and what it means in the Latin American context or the context of the Americas as a whole, and what it means in the European context. The Convention itself was a rectification for the United Nations, except that in this case it involved one particular UN organisation, the ILO or International Labour Organisation.

The ILO, which existed before the United Nations, had been concerned since the 1920s with indigenous peoples from the point of view of labour. Indigenous peoples today are more vulnerable to exploitation than people in other cultural and political contexts such as that of 20<sup>th</sup>

century Europe, where collective rights for trade unions or other forms of representation in the world of work had already been legally accepted.

The ILO had a very paternalistic mentality, culture and policy towards peoples subjected to colonialism. Ultimately, this was an expression of, or derived from, the colonial situation itself, the assumed superiority of non-indigenous peoples over indigenous peoples. The non-indigenous peoples ended up believing the idea that they are there to civilise, to protect, to show colonised and indigenous peoples the way forward. That is the colonial mentality. And it was present in the ILO and also in the UN.

Convention 169 was a rectification of that whole policy and culture. From the 1950s to the 1970s, particularly with regard to indigenous peoples in the Americas, the ILO had found that despite all the measures taken the indigenist policy was not producing any significant results. In fact, the effects it did have turned out to be adverse and unjust, as they attacked indigenous cultures. The dialogue between the ILO and the indigenous peoples was totally unequal, with states interfering.

There was no suggestion of taking indigenous peoples' own aspirations or cultural realities into account, for example. In short, the understanding was that they had to disappear as peoples and cultures.

To start with, Convention 169 met with a certain amount of rejection from indigenous organisations, and quite rightly, as it plays a joke on indigenous peoples. Its official title is *Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*. This was after the decolonisation process led by the UN, whose expressed principle is that peoples have the right to free determination.

But it so happened that (and this is why I talk of a joke) the Convention says that the term

*people* cannot be given the meaning it has today in international law. In other words, the term is useless for anything practical, but it is a sign that all the previous policy has been rectified. The Convention is very respectful and gives indigenous peoples guarantees.

It is useful to read the Convention today in the light of developments in human rights. In this case this means a relationship with the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights currently being proposed. It continually stresses that states have the obligation to show respect and obtain indigenous peoples' consent before taking any action that affects them. This is an accepted principle that should start to be applied to the incorporation of these peoples into states.

ILO Convention 169, which is becoming very important in Latin American states, even those which have not ratified it yet, has the potential to lead to equality between peoples by correcting in practice the defect of denying from the start the legal consequences of describing them as peoples, which the Convention itself adopted.

For Europe this issue is important because it has its own indigenous peoples, described as such by UN, such as the Sami or Lapps in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Europe provides a significant amount of aid to states that have indigenous peoples without generally respecting them, failing to meet the Convention's requirements or to comply with the spirit of the proposed Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights.

## STATE, PEOPLE, TERRITORY

ET: Bearing in mind that the situation differs from country to country (in Bolivia, for example, 70% of the population is indigenous, in Colombia the figure is 2%, in Guatemala over 70%, in Ecuador and Peru around 50%, while

in Chile the indigenous population is less than 1%), do you think that ILO Convention 169 can contribute to the process of autonomy for indigenous peoples?

BC: Let's look at the words used in Convention 169, which are also in common use. Some of them mean a lot. To apply one term is not the same as applying another. Today, especially, there are words that have acquired tremendous value in terms of presenting demands. This has happened with the word 'territory', as opposed to the more neutral or less political 'land'.

It is said that a state, as the 19<sup>th</sup> century European meaning normally implies, is population and territory. The population is understood to be passive humanity who are the subjects of the same state, subjects rather than citizens of it, and can be the object of demographic study. If you speak of a people it is totally the opposite: a people is a collective human entity with its own culture and territory that takes its own decisions, though it may not be recognised as a people or have the possibility of acting as one. But it is a people nevertheless, and has that importance.

A similar thing happens with territory: territory is not the same as land. Territory is understood to be the dominion of the state, while land is the property of individuals, including indigenous peoples, which is why they are not recognised as having territory. They are allowed to have land but not territory, in accordance with the way these terms are used. States tend to speak of land, while indigenous movements tend to speak of territory. This is because the word 'land' implies a certain form of occupation, use and management under the concept of private property. This makes it difficult for community ownership to be recognised, even in this limited sense of land without territory.

Territory has another dimension. It may mean the same as land, but it also means something else that is more important. It means jurisdiction, political settlement, autonomous organisation. That is why states do not usually speak of 'the state and its land' but rather 'the state and its territory', which includes the population. But things are now developing along the more constitutional lines of freedom that is not just individual but also collective, at least for the people identified with the state. These days it is not said that the state has a population, but that the state is the people, or, said in another way, the people and their territory, because the state with its people has its political organisation, a jurisdiction over that territory. There may be other peoples in that territory, but this is still not acknowledged.

When used by indigenous peoples, words like people or territory imply that they are making a demand, affirming their own autonomy. In other words, they are demanding recognition of the nature of the peoples themselves, not as rootless entities – because indigenous peoples are the most rooted of all – but as political subjects with their own territorial base. By using these words they are demanding recognition of indigenous peoples on their own territory, with their jurisdiction, their political organisation, their own means and procedures for self-determination, recognised, accepted and guaranteed.

This is why these terms, people and territory, are posing a great deal of problems for Latin American states today, particularly where there is a truly significant and forceful indigenous presence, as you mentioned. Why? Because they understand the force of these words very well, and they are not mistaken. Behind them lies autonomy, self-determination. I wouldn't venture to say whether this self-determination necessarily implies the danger that some states will break up, because I am not Latin American or Amerindian

but Spanish. I don't think I have the right to make a statement on that.

But I can speak of Spain. If political autonomy had not been granted in the last 20 years to accommodate peoples, the country would have broken up, like Yugoslavia, although I don't know if it would have done so quite so tragically. The state was increasingly centralised, more effective in the good sense, in terms of the constitution, and in the bad sense, as peoples continued to be ignored. This situation was not sustainable. In Spain too the state has been used to marginalize cultures that don't identify with it, such as the Basque and Catalan cultures.

In reality some Latin American states are already broken up, or were never established in the first place, because they didn't include the majority of the population when they became independent. Indigenous peoples were not offered the choice of deciding for themselves to be included, on an equal footing and with the dignity due to any human being. We are talking of a recognition of indigenous peoples and giving them the capacity for political self-determination and autonomous organisation if this is what they wish. Guarantees of recognition and autonomous political organisation within states would of course pose certain very serious problems, but they would also represent solutions of equal importance.

In some particular cases, peoples are divided between more than one state. For example, the Shuar in Ecuador and Peru, the Guaymí in Panama and Costa Rica, and of course the Quechua, Aymara and Guaraní in Bolivia and other states. Similarly, this type of serious problem would not arise, or significant solutions would be arrived at, if Latin American states were re-founded and re-constituted through the recognition of indigenous peoples and their rights as peoples. It seems to me that this would mean at last starting to put in

practice a type of political organisation that would make states work in favour of the people's freedoms, or rather the peoples' freedoms, because at the end of the day that is why states should exist, not for anything else.

ET: Those who are against indigenous peoples fear the possible consequences that ILO Convention 169 would bring about, such as fostering ethnic nationalism and the potential consequences of that. That is why, looking at the experience of Yugoslavia or the former Soviet Union, the questions nearly always asked are: is this what we want? is this what we are seeking? What is your opinion of that?

BC: It seems to me a somewhat biased attitude on the part of those who do that, constantly making reference to Yugoslavia when they don't say anything about Spain, for example. However, it is true that Spain still has a problem with the disengagement of the Basque culture, especially because a sector of Basque nationalism has persisted in trying to achieve political objectives through terrorism. This has blocked the development of accommodating Basque autonomy between the Spanish state and the European Union.

Having been very centralised and authoritarian in the past, Spain has ended up becoming a multinational state, as proclaimed by its current constitution which expressly recognises nationalities. It is a plural state, not just significantly decentralised but also with several different political units with a genuine status for the purposes arising from internationalism, at least internally.

ET: What comments would you make on the proposed United Nations Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, its negative and positive points?

BC: The positive consequences of the recognition of individual freedoms as human rights half a century ago were only feasible for that part of humanity not living in a colonial situation. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples now being proposed in the UN is a response to something else, starting with the participation of indigenous organisations in the genuine indigenous forum that the working group that drafted the text has become. The proposal can be said to be indigenous and therefore it is not surprising that it is supported by indigenous peoples and representatives rather than by states.

Why? In the first place, because it is a proposal that would definitively make indigenous peoples equal to other peoples, which is coherent with the principles of decolonisation and with the idea that all peoples without exception have the right to free determination. Why should one type of peoples be excluded from this, as in fact happened with decolonisation? Why can't those peoples be on an equal footing with others?

Something else that seems to me very important in this proposal is the provision it makes, not for states to proliferate, as happened with decolonisation, but for autonomies to be established within states and guaranteed internationally. This would be determined by the indigenous peoples themselves and not, of course, by states. The indigenous problem is not exactly the same as the colonial problem, although historically it has its origins in colonialism. This provision for indigenous free determination without leading to independence seems to be a fundamental premise of the proposal. It can be plausible if the indigenous side is offered sufficient guarantees, not just by states – which, given what has happened in the past, would give rise to distrust – but by the international community, which could be more

credible. Otherwise, the proposal does not make the future any brighter.

If this international order recognises indigenous peoples and guarantees them sufficient autonomy from their respective states to fulfil their own aspirations, they will be able to place themselves and conduct themselves on an equal footing with other peoples. What the provision means is that indigenous peoples are going to organise themselves autonomously within the same states. This, if it comes about, seems to me the most important aspect of the proposal. It points to the reconstruction of peoples.

The proposal is based precisely on the understanding that indigenous peoples deserve an autonomy that they themselves determine. This definitely implies that states will not be able to do anything that affects indigenous peoples without their free and informed consent. Neither will indigenous peoples be forced into any degree of incorporation that they do not decide upon autonomously for themselves. The fact that some peoples will establish themselves politically as a result of this autonomy, as a principle that is always maintained, is a tightening of the bolts, a step further than Convention 169.

Indigenous peoples will not only have self-determination for internal purposes, but also in the way they relate to the state and the rest of humanity. This includes receiving aid or cooperation, given the usual situation of indigenous people with the levels of poverty they have been reduced to, and also given the responsibility of those who have been and those who wish to continue being colonial powers.

Up to a certain point all this was already included in Convention 169, although it was neutralised. The legal consequences of being called a people, in a particular UN organisation, is just the start, little more than incipient. Now



it is fully formulated as a proposal at the heart of the United Nations. Therefore, if this Declaration prospers, and it seems that informed indigenous peoples and those that have organisations and participate at the international level are determined that the proposal will go through, it will be a satisfactory and very important step forward for indigenous peoples, and also for states that will have to be re-constituted.

The proposal also has a negative side, as can be suspected from everything I've said. In a slightly insidious way, it concludes by stressing that the UN founding charter and subsequent human rights declarations must be respected. If this was an innocent matter, there wouldn't be a need to state it. But it is said with the unconcealed intention of preventing any indigenous people from being able to decide to become independent and form their own state. In accordance with the UN charter, that would be overruled by the right to integrity of constituted states within their established borders. If autonomy is compulsory rather than optional, where does that leave free determination, as a principle that also legitimates autonomous accommodation within an existing state?

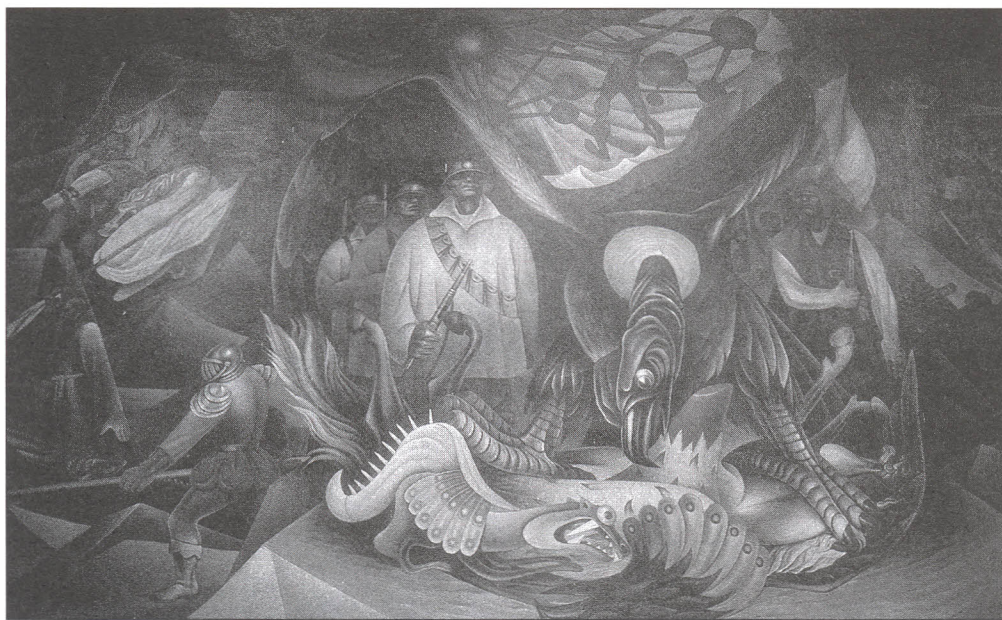
There is a certain understanding in the proposal that indigenous citizenship can never be exclusive, that it is always complementary, we

might even say subsidiary to the nationality corresponding to the state. Of course, that means that this citizenship cannot constitute a nationality in the sense of belonging not only to an autonomous people, but also to an independent state, if this was the choice. In this sense the proposal contains a dual concept of non-indigenous nationality and indigenous citizenship. It says that all indigenous people have the right to nationality as something different to their own. This presupposes that citizenship is never going to coincide with nationality, as though they were different rights, and as though indigenous peoples were not equal to other peoples in the sense of being able to determine whether they want to integrate, incorporate themselves autonomously in a state, or other sorts of alternatives.

It seems that some options are still going to be closed. But of course, the scenario the proposal will create if it does finally become a Declaration will change things, by empowering indigenous peoples, by placing commitments on states, and through the need for states to re-found and re-constitute themselves in the sense I described earlier. It is an unprecedented challenge. I think it would create quite a promising scenario for addressing this whole problem that has been going on for centuries, since the beginning of European colonialism.



## VI. CULTURE AND AESTHETICS



*Miguel Alandia Pantoja*



# Aesthetic Models of Bolivian National Culture<sup>1</sup>

Javier Sanjinés C.<sup>2</sup>

**A journey through Bolivian national culture, from Tamayo and Guzmán de Rojas to Marcos Loayza and Raúl Lara. Three ways of understanding beauty in Bolivian cultures are explored along the way: "the aestheticisation of politics", "the politicisation of aesthetics", and "the aestheticisation of the real". This paper was presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International History Conference on "The 20<sup>th</sup> Century: end-of-century views in Bolivia and Latin America".**

*Dedicated to the memory of  
María Milagros López and Jorge Suárez*

In this paper I want to focus on the historical-political essay and the visual arts to explore three aesthetic models linked to the development of Bolivian national culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. "Aestheticisation of politics", "politicisation of aesthetics" and "aestheticisation of the real" are the three models developed from the hypothesis that the scholarly enterprise of national culture, late to develop in our social context, and linked to the "aestheticisation of politics" and the "politicisation of aesthetics", has given way to new manifestations of everyday life, such as festivals, rituals, film, radio and television, which I call "aestheticisation of the real".

Before beginning to study the models, I want to make a few observations on the notions of culture and national culture. The common meaning of the word culture is linked to a narrow vision that reduces it to its spiritual *raison d'être*. It is said, for example, that culture is the set of values and ideas that guide how peoples act. That is an abstract and static way of looking at it. Cultivating the land and cultivating the spirit means working them so that they bear fruit. It follows that when we speak of the relationship between the state and culture, which is how national culture is understood, we need to bear in mind that this does not arise only from the need to satisfy a people's spiritual aspirations, but also from the material and intellectual work that the state itself promotes with the practical aim of

1 This article was published in *T'inkazos* 2, December 1998.

2 Lawyer and literary and cultural studies critic with a PhD in Hispanic-American Literature. He is currently teaching at the University of Michigan.

delimiting, integrating, drawing together and managing territories, populations and ethnic groups, while, naturally, universalising the interests of one class or hegemonic group over the broad spectrum of society.

I am aware that doubt has been cast on such a close relationship between power and culture by recent demythologising studies such as those of Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt Letelier with regard to Chilean culture. He questions the assumption that erudite culture is basically state culture. Whether it is closely linked to power or an elitist public sphere built on dialogue, I still think that a weakly formulated national state that was late to take shape makes it difficult to build a solid national culture that would express the achievements of modernity. And this weakness has a lot to do with the contradictions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an aspect that I will not develop in this essay.<sup>3</sup>

## MESTIZAJE AND METAPHORICAL NATION-BUILDING

The Bolivian ethno-historian Rossana Barragán has followed the process of *mestizaje* in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries with particular interest. Barragán points out that *mestizo-cholo* identity, denigrated and undifferentiated in Alcides Arguedas, splits shortly afterwards, so that the stigmas pass from the *mestizo-cholo* to the *cholo* alone. She also states that the change “has its distant origins in a series of losses of national territory, and, fundamentally, the defeat in the Chaco War which demonstrated the weakness of the state, the elites, the ‘nation’ and the country....” (Barragán, 1992: 19). Barragán does not record, however, that the split is already made in *Creación de la pedagogía nacional*, a work by Franz Tamayo published in 1910.

In cordial disagreement with some of the

3 If we start from the premise that Latin American scholarly enterprises, which began at the time of 19<sup>th</sup> century economic liberalism, are essential for the construction of national imaginaries, the national culture project in Bolivia came late and was conflictive. Late, because 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal economic policies did not help to build the necessary mediation between the state and society; conflictive, because the scholarly mind displayed a constant contradiction between an extremely modest modernity, incapable of rigorously taking on the demystification of the world and history, and the pre-modernity of religious life, which prevented the validity of a transcendental and sacred principle from being overcome as the legitimising basis of the new social order. This oscillation between religion and laicism, between the pre-modern and the modern, resulted in an unresolved contradiction between the formation of a type of society that could recognise itself and be recognised as national, and how to find the way to bring about its rapid and sustained progress and modernisation. In Bolivia there were incipient projects that stated the need to build a nation, but we cannot yet see in them the hegemonic role of a progressive and erudite sector of society charged with building the national enterprise. As Javier Mendoza has just shown in *La mesa coja* (La Paz: PIEB, 1997), his polemical essay on the Governing Council's proclamation of 1809, the “true” historical facts of this proclamation were in reality hatched in the social imaginary of “Los Lanzas”, a didactic play written in 1859 by the scholar Félix Reyes Ortiz. This didactic play, in which San Martín declares the independence of Peru, illustrates the contradiction inherent in calling for liberation while still clinging to religion and colonial tradition. Antonio Cornejo Polar, in his article on 19<sup>th</sup> century Spanish-American literature, published in *Esplendores y miserias del siglo XIX. Cultura y sociedad en América Latina*, compiled by Beatriz González Stephan, Javier Lasarte, Graciela Motaldo and María Julia Doroqui (Caracas: Monte Avila Editores, 1994), finds *Juan de la Rosa*, the didactic novel written by Nataniel Aguirre in 1885, insufficient. Here the subject of modernity is still confused and disorderly, according to Cornejo. With regard to Gabriel René Moreno's *Los últimos días coloniales*, the Ecuadorian historian Guillermo Bustos pointed out to me how curious it is for a 19<sup>th</sup> century historian to devote his attention not to independence, considered to be Spanish-American countries' founding moment, but to the development of the “erudite city”. We see in Moreno's work that it is not the “republic of scholars” that drives the intellectual movement that prepares the revolution, but Archbishop Moxó, a man of the church who is as monarchical as he is erudite. In this way, in Moreno's work too, the enterprise of modernity is still in the pre-modern minds of scholarly men of the church. All these aspects lead me to state that in our case the 19<sup>th</sup> century did not build a solid national culture project.

observations made by the North American historian Brooke Larson about Tamayo's work,<sup>4</sup> I would suggest that it is in this work by the Bolivian thinker where the metaphorical construction of *mestizaje* as national symbol appears. In my view, Tamayo not only dissociates the *mestizo* from the *cholo* here, he also replaces the metaphors of blood and the sick body, related to the naturalism of Le Bon and the social Darwinism of Alcides Arguedas, with the new metaphor of the healthy and well-formed social body of *mestizo*-indigenous identity.

In effect, in *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* Tamayo shapes a bodily metaphor that links *mestizo* intelligence to indigenous energy. Tamayo proposes this ideal of higher unity in a didactic metaphor that helps us to organise nation-building visually.

Let us examine the metaphor. If the *mestizo* "shows the intelligence inherited from his white forefathers" (Tamayo, 1975: 113), but "restraint and moderation do not yet exist in the *mestizo*'s intelligence" (*Ibid*: 117), then "we need to contain the frequent overflowing of the imagination, so characteristic of the race" (*Ibid*: 118). This can best be done by seeking "the centrifugal tendency of our interior forces" (*Ibid*: 120), meaning the force of morality that directs and restrains intelligence. For Tamayo the "basis of this higher morality lies in a genuine physical superiority" (*Ibid*: 139) that belongs to the indian. Several things come to mind with regard to the construction of this *mestizaje*.

Firstly, it seems to me that Tamayo, influenced here by Schopenhauer, inverts the traditional relationship between the intellect and the will, in which the former restrains the vital impulses of

the latter. Now, on the contrary, the intellect is subordinated to the act of will of a social subject who guides the intellect in accordance with the moral force of his vital impulses. This is why Tamayo stresses the need for a moral strength based on the physical superiority of the indian. Tamayo believes that the anarchic character of the *mestizo* is morally questionable. If he is bereft of the indigenous moral strength and vital energy, the *mestizo* then degenerates irretrievably into a *cholo*. And so, "the first fatty deposits that betray a gradually inferior physiology start to become evident in the *mestizo*'s tissue" (*Ibid*: 141).

Secondly, Tamayo's ideal *mestizaje*, where *mestizo* intelligence retains indigenous moral strength, is constructed by a bodily metaphor that also represents national culture. In effect, *mestizo* intelligence (the head) requires indigenous moral strength (the taut and energetic muscular body) in order to avoid degenerating into the *cholo* (the flaccid body with fatty deposits). In other words, the indigenous vital force shapes national culture with taut, grooved muscles, because it provides the balance between the spirit (the head) and matter (the body).

This balance between spirit and matter, between the abstract and the concrete, between the sacred and the profane, was precisely what was lacking in Bolivian culture since the 19<sup>th</sup> century in order to balance the pre-modern and the modern.

Finally, it seems to me that Franz Tamayo's ideal *mestizaje* marks the beginning of the "aestheticisation of politics" process, present in the "mysticism of the earth" tendency and in the literature and painting of the time.

<sup>4</sup> Brooke Larson, "Redeemed Indians, Barbarized Cholos: the cultural politics of nation-making in Bolivia (c. 1900-1910)". According to Larson, who favours the "sociological and ethnographic" analysis of Alcides Arguedas, Tamayo gets distracted by an abstract philosophical and moral discourse. In my view, in this paper Larson fails to recognise the constructive proposal in Tamayo's essay.

## AESTHETICISATION OF POLITICS

When Walter Benjamin theorised his “aestheticisation of political life” concept in 1936, he said that the true artistic achievements of German fascism could be found in its demagogic and authoritarian political methods (Benjamin, 1968). I am not saying that Tamayo’s thinking was fascist, and I do not wish to be misunderstood here. I am saying that homogenising concepts such as ideal *mestizaje*, forged, as we saw, in *Creación de la pedagogía nacional*, then took on a life of their own, going through the construction of revolutionary nationalism in the 1940s to end up later in that authoritarian, vertical vision characteristic of the spiritual monumentalism of the works of Fernando Diez de Medina. I will not deal with the whole of this lengthy trajectory in this paper, however. Instead, I will focus on how Tamayo’s ideas influenced some of the major painters in the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I will start with some brief reflections on the “aestheticisation of politics”.

I use the term “aestheticisation of politics” to refer to any sublimating artistic process that, in its attempt to exalt the national, ends up giving a vertical and demagogic view of the community. This aesthetic process is therefore a vertical procedure that must be compared with the development of the reverse process, which Benjamin calls the “politicisation of aesthetics”. I will now return to Tamayo to examine the process of aestheticising politics.

*Creación de la pedagogía nacional* fits within the German tradition of political philosophy which, for the last two centuries, has used aesthetics as the point of departure for political philosophical reflection. Tamayo is attracted by the aesthetic construction of an ideal *mestizaje* that achieves the harmonious integration of all the elements. He forges the bodily metaphor that

links the *mestizo* and the indigenous; intelligence and physical strength, the head and the taut muscles, full of energy. The break-up and fragmentation of society observed by Arguedas with a sort of suicidal rancour can only be counteracted by the vital impulses of a synthesis that Tamayo considers essential for establishing national culture. Thus idealised, as though in its indigenous energy it preserved the theoretical essence of the Greek ideal, the figure of the *mestizo* would mark the process of Bolivian culture for many decades to come. It would be present in the literature of the first half of the century, and also, in a much more revealing way, in art.

The paintings of Cecilio Guzmán de Rojas are an interesting example. Guzmán de Rojas, who was born in 1899 and died in 1950, began his artistic career in 1919. In his work the indigenous figure is clearly aestheticised in a way that is close to Tamayo’s reflections. The representation of *mestizaje* in beautiful, stylised human bodies with taut muscles appears in his paintings from the 1920s, particularly in *El beso del ídolo* (The idol’s kiss) and *El triunfo de la naturaleza* (The triumph of nature), which were both exhibited in Madrid in 1928 and La Paz in 1929. But it is in his *Cristo Aymara* of 1939 where Guzmán de Rojas shows, revealingly, that Tamayo’s metaphor has a validity that time cannot erase. The work of Guzmán de Rojas is thus the iconographic equivalent to the vitalist philosophical discourse inaugurated by Franz Tamayo.

In the *Cristo Aymara* there seems to be a clear similarity between the painting we are analysing here and Tamayo’s pedagogical essay we referred to earlier, in the way in which this aestheticisation of politics is achieved. Of course, in both cases the virtuous, cultured, almost apotheosised indigenous figure is exalted. The construction of the symbol is immersed in the



*Cristo Aymara*. In it we can see the unified and total glorification of ideal *mestizaje*, meaning the inseparability of the representation and what is represented. Aymara vitality, represented by the enigmatic gaze, the hard, somewhat aggressive face, the prominent cheekbones and the strong and taut structure of the race shows that the phenomenological world is saturated with archetypal meaning. The indigenous figure painted by Guzmán de Rojas is not an ordinary indigenous person; on the contrary, it is a sublime, “auratic” example, dominated by the head, the spirit and the intelligence. It is, then, an idealistic aesthetic, in which the aim is to reach an “objective” interpretation of the phenomena and the metaphysical construction of the national “being” in its beautiful essence. My reading of the painting leads me to state that the *Cristo Aymara* is a stable symbolic image of the eternal and transcendental perfection of the *mestizo*-indian, in which real world suffering and frustration does not matter. We should not forget that it was painted only a few years after one of the most crushing Bolivian defeats: the Chaco War.

In short, there is a similarity between the essay and the painting on the level of discourse. In both cases we are dealing with very conscious efforts to construct an ideal and virtuous identity based on themselves. The paintings of Guzmán de Rojas should be understood precisely in the way I have been arguing so far, as a “demand” to have nation-building portrayed. Fundamentally, his painting acts as a mirror that reproduces the individual not as he is, but as it is wished he should be seen: as an ideal individual.

In this sense, what can be deduced from the painting of Guzmán de Rojas is not so very different from what Tamayo’s essays postulate. We will now go on to look at the reverse model, the “politicisation of aesthetics”.

## POLITICISATION OF AESTHETICS

In opposition to the process of “aestheticising politics”, I situate the reverse process of “politicising aesthetics”, which affirms the popular-democratic proposal of a vanguardism that breaks with the verticality of aesthetic discourses. This popular vanguardist proposal, launched by the political essay of the 1930s and 40s, was not solidly expressed in literature. In fact, with the rare exception of Augusto Céspedes, it seems to me that Bolivian culture was unable to create a vanguardist literature that would reach the people and accompany them until the 1952 Revolution. Even the post-revolutionary literature, as I pointed out in *Literatura contemporánea y grotesco social en Bolivia*, is part of a cultural fragmentation that views the revolutionary events of 1952 with profound disillusion (Sanjinés, 1992). It seems to me, then, that the “politicisation of aesthetics” must be found in the visual arts, particularly in mural painting and film. In a recent study of contemporary painting in Bolivia, Alicia Szmukler finds in mural painting the force of conciliation between art and post-revolutionary society. When Szmukler, following the observations of Fernando Calderón (1991), states that mural painting “demystified art as cultured art, making the popular beautiful and attempting to integrate the population” (Szmukler, 1998: 4), she is relating mural painting to the eclipse of the aura. This is, then, the rupture with the modernist grandeur and singularity that assumes the production of the work of art to be something unique, removed from society and fully self-sufficient and entire. Mural painting, in contrast, is a way of returning to the popular and breaking with the individualised viewing of art. In my opinion the eclipse of the aura came earlier, in the important essay written by Augusto Céspedes

in 1931 entitled “Viaje alrededor de un Monolito pensante” (Baptista, 1983: 219-234) (Travels around a thinking Monolith), which removes the aura from the figure of Tamayo. The eclipse brings about a selective and partial blurring of the boundaries between high culture and official culture.

If the process I call “the aestheticisation of politics” involves art presenting the sublime and exalts the national, ending in a vertical and demagogic view of the community, the model that “politicises aesthetics” is constructed in the work of dissident intellectuals such as Carlos Montenegro. These intellectuals believed that the danger of art presenting the sublime lies in the loss of contact with the organised social masses, who are fundamentally *mestizo*. What I wish to stress here is that the functional metaphor of ideal *mestizaje* gradually lost its vigour until it was taken up in the revolutionary thinking of René Zavaleta Mercado who, in *La formación de la conciencia nacional* gives an interesting twist to the metaphor.

In Zavaleta’s work the proletarian masses, on whom the national enterprise depends, are expressed in a bodily metaphor that makes *mestizaje* more harsh, portraying it in skeleton form. (A strict correspondence can be seen here between this new bodily metaphor in Zavaleta’s essay and the mural painting of Walter Solón Romero.) It is interesting to observe here that Zavaleta has also modified *mestizo* muscularity, now bringing in the flesh, meaning the relationship between the proletariat and the peasantry. In Zavaleta, however, the proletarian point of view takes precedence, anchored in the metaphor of the thin, almost skeletal body. This is the point of view of the suffering miners described by Zavaleta as “diminished flesh of indefatigable mestizos” (1990: 23). It is important to highlight that this new model that “politicises

aesthetics”, in which I locate scholars such as Carlos Montenegro and René Zavaleta Mercado, has its origins in the rectification of Tamayo’s ideal *mestizaje* that Augusto Céspedes introduces in his “Travels around a thinking Monolith”, written in 1931.

In his recent book on national allegories in Bolivian literature and film, Leonardo García Pabón (1998) makes an accurate observation about how Tamayo wrote his “Para Siempre” (“Forever”) in order to establish himself as spokesman for La Paz society. For García Pabón, Tamayo the auratic subject turns out to be the national subject. And it is to the task of rectifying that disproportionately large aura created by Tamayo for himself that Augusto Céspedes’ essay addresses itself.

Céspedes starts his essay by speaking of Tamayo “in terms of gesture”. The reader gathers that Céspedes is approaching the Bolivian thinker from the starting point of his body language and physical peculiarities. Céspedes portrays Tamayo as “a man whose virtue consists in updating himself by resorting to pose, a picturesque way of always attracting the audience’s attention” (Céspedes, 1983: 220). There is, then, a clear intention from the start of the essay of giving Tamayo human proportions to correct the sublimating view of him held by the “mystics of the earth”, among others, and that Tamayo takes care to foster with his peevishness and distant solitude.

Although Benjamin did not leave us a definition of the word ‘aura’, and we have interpreted it freely on the basis of several of his theoretical texts, particularly his reflections on photography it is clear that someone or something can be called “auric” or “auratic” when he, she or it is perceived as unique and appears to be distant, regardless of how close the body or object is to us. And this phenomenological reflection is easily

applicable to the figure of Tamayo. The aura that surrounds him and distances him from his contemporaries is related to the fact that he is unique, inimitable, eternal. Céspedes' devastating essay is aimed at breaking down that distance.

First Céspedes portrays Tamayo as distant, almost inhuman: "The blood shed by Tamayo is clearly colourless and only in his mind. ... His intellectualism weighs upon his actions as his head weighs upon his torso". Next comes the sarcastic comment that, using simile, cuts the figure down and removes its human attributes: "...when Franz Tamayo attempts to escape the crushing of his body by the weight of his head, he becomes disorientated like an insect wounded in its centre of movement", and adds: "He belongs to the kingdom of pure intelligence where he should have stayed, instead of launching himself into criollo electoral tours round the villages of politics" (1983: 221). Tamayo is, then, a "protean compound" whose ideas, having descended from Olympus, can get dangerously disorganised to the point where they become grotesquely incoherent. Perhaps for this reason, Augusto Céspedes, the coruscating journalist of the future "La Calle", author of the most important stories of the post-Chaco War, decided in 1931 to rectify the vision of Tamayo promoted by the "aestheticisers of politics", in order to re-direct the national project. And in this process of "politicising aesthetics", the ideas cannot be separated from the image. If Tamayo's image is deformed, having "a large head, a heavy chest (as though made of stone), short, quick-stepping legs, a long jacket and trousers that barely reach the ankles, the whole crowned not with oak leaves but with a straw hat...", his thought will be too: "we are dealing with a deformed work.... overburdened with mythology, rhythmic erudition rather than poetry" (*Ibid*: 228). Here again Céspedes'

purpose is clear: he is seeking to desubliminate the creator of ideal *mestizaje*. The young journalist says that Tamayo's verse "does not show free embellishment of the idea, but instead the limitations of his philosophical flight". Tamayo's work being thus cut down, his essays seen as incomplete and philosophically truncated constructions, the unity and singularity of the aura are eclipsed, and the figure of Tamayo is left at the middle-ranking level of a "thinking monolith", whose ideas "neither take root like Nietzsche's nor soar like Goethe's" (*Ibid*: 232).

We have seen how this model began with Céspedes and his aesthetic desublimation of the figure of Tamayo, and continued with the changes to the bodily metaphor introduced by, among others, Montenegro and Zavaleta Mercado, whom I have only been able to mention very much in passing. We shall now explore how the model is challenged by the process of "aestheticisation of the real" which, in my opinion, marks most recent Bolivian culture.

## AESTHETICISATION OF THE REAL

This is an approach to the most recent urban imaginary, which shows an aestheticising model that has very little in common with the scholarly enterprises of national culture. Pre-modern, modern and with a touch of the post-modern, we are experiencing a cultural "mishmash" that distances itself from the aesthetic models presented above. The "real" is now linked to the new social movements arising from the increase in rural-urban migration, the emergence of new social players, the presence of media that address the people in a way that is far removed from the erudite projects of yesteryear. In general terms, applicable not just to Bolivia but to all Latin

American societies, it can be said that the “aestheticisation of the real” is related to three major post-modern themes (Beverley, 1993: 103-123). First is the collapse of the distinction between elite culture and mass culture. This involves a loss of autonomy by the aesthetic that translates into the prodigious expansion of culture throughout society. From economics to politics and the very structure of the social psyche, our whole lives have become a truly “sui generis” cultural phenomenon.

Second is the end of the macro-narratives that exercised so much influence on us. The progressive vision of the writers of the “boom” generation has come to an end. These writers continued to use the theory of representation to give us fine abstract, homogenous solutions, brilliantly carrying on the scholarly project of Latin American culture and identity. Third is the loss of the aura with the consequent desublimation of the work of art. This phenomenon can be seen in the contemporary painting of Roberto Valcárcel, Raúl Lara, Fernando Rodríguez Casas and others, as well as in the watercolours of Alejandro Salazar and Darío Antezana.

The phenomenon is also present in the films of Marcos Loayza, who marks a profound aesthetic break with the revolutionary and “politicising of the aesthetic” cinema of Jorge Sanjinés. Most recent Bolivian film, which I will refer to in this final section of the paper, strongly expresses the desublimating aesthetic, detached from the ideal symbols of modernity, which in the visual arts opts for the allegorical discourse of the fragment, the multiple meaningful fragments of reality (see, for example, *Quipus Leaping* by Fernando Rodríguez Casas). Close to the way in which Benjamin conceived of allegory (see the final chapter of his “Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels” (Benjamin, 1985: 159-235), the

process of “aestheticisation of the real” is opposed to the clarity and unity of meaning. No longer present in this process are the mystical national moment and the vanguardist vision that links art to the people, a vanguardism that can be seen in the mural painting of Solón Romero and the films of Jorge Sanjinés.

On the contrary, we now have multiple and fragmented views of the real, such as contemporary painting and the films of Marcos Loayza, views that range from the celebration of existence – festivals and rituals – to the not at all apotheosised presence of ossuaries, ruins and skulls – Pérez Alcalá, Rodríguez Casas, Jaime Sáenz – that mark the multiple meanings of deterioration and death. By way of a conclusion, I will now go on to refer to the films of Marcos Loayza.

*Cuestión de fe* is concerned with local and somewhat banal problems, which break with the totalising view of history. Loayza’s film obliges us to rebuild the micro-stories, the small, almost inconsequential episodes of everyday life. As Fernando Calderón observes in a book he and I are about to complete (Calderón and Sanjinés, 1999) the friends in *Cuestión de fe* are Sanchos, meaning that they are desublimated anti-heroes who live in the dissolution of the epic world, even the dissolution of the “epic of daily life” so characteristic of the testimonial cinema of Sanjinés. The film does not have a final story. On the contrary, it is built on the basis of micro-narratives of daily life that celebrate otherness, marginality, and the emergence of new social players who are neither capitalist nor anti-capitalist. These local Sanchos, fleshy figures who are aesthetically close to the *mestizo* baroque of Raúl Lara’s paintings, have their own language which reinforces the structure of male friendship, a discourse that no longer addresses us as “comrades” nor appeals to our class solidarity.

What is interesting about the film is that it is constructed on the basis of the small episodes and adventures of these Sanchos. It seems to me, for example, that the first scene, in the marginal La Paz bar, is aesthetically close not just to the *mestizo* baroque of Lara but also to the surreal and enjoyably grotesque nature of his paintings. Of course I am speaking here of a progressive, expansive, jubilant grotesque, close to the “jouissance” theorised by Baudrillard (Yol Jung, 1996). And it also seems interesting to point out that Solón Romero’s Quijotes, the skeletal and sublimated bodies found also in Zavaleta Mercado’s political essay, have given way to the fleshy and voluptuous bodies of Lara’s paintings and Loayza’s film.

Another interesting aspect of *Cuestión de fe* is its picaresque structure. The Sanchos, and here I am calling them this because of their fleshiness, are in reality post-modern picaresque figures, “tacticians of the everyday” in the words of Michel Serres, characters who learn to live life day by day, connected to the new emergent social sectors arising from the informal economy and, possibly, drug trafficking. El Sapo is the picaresque figure I have in mind here. And these post-modern picaresque figures “avant la lettre” distance themselves very clearly from the social proposals of the witness-bearing individuals in the Jorge Sanjinés film *El coraje del pueblo*.

To conclude with this third aesthetic model of the urban imaginary, I feel it is highly suggestive that we are speaking of the picaresque to refer to the structure of *Cuestión de fe*. In fact, we are also living through the culture of transition, just as the picaresque narrative of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century marked the transition to the novel, which appeared at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century with *Don Quijote*. We have left behind state capitalism and the authoritarianisms of the 1960s and 70s,

economic and political events that marked our precarious modernity, but we no longer have a “telos”, a clearly defined historical purpose. Today, now that democracy is established, we are living a culture that is difficult to define. The neoliberal reforms and the changes taking place on the political stage oblige us to think of new possibilities for integration – gender issues and ethnic and linguistic diversity are some of these possibilities – that will link these new practices with the diversity at work in the new socio-cultural forces. I do not believe that these mechanisms are solidly constituted. Like the plot of *Cuestión de fe*, I think we are jumping from episode to episode, trapped by “local adventures” without a final goal or story.

The pleasure of Loayza’s film subverts rationality. I am referring to the carnal pleasure that is important for understanding the post-modern sensibility. And post-modern carnal pleasure, Baudrillard’s “jouissance”, not only means aesthetic appreciation of body politics – “j’ouis sens”, “I hear the sense” – but also the subversion of ocular centrism, of the “mind’s eye”, that has dominated modern rationality since Descartes’ “I think”. There is no doubt that enjoyment and pleasure are of absolute importance to balance rationality and prevent it becoming a “phallocracy of the visual”. But rationality is supremely important to balance carnal pleasure. And in my opinion it is the imbalance between the rational and the carnal that is expressed by the social schizophrenia of our times. It is difficult to predict how we will emerge from the morass. At today’s historical crossroads, the paradox is that it may perhaps be necessary to think of a new national pedagogy, as Tamayo did in 1910, a proposal that balances the spiritual and the material, the concrete and the abstract, thereby giving a new direction to the national enterprise.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barragán, Rossana

1992 "Identidades indias y mestizas: una intervención al debate". In: *Autodeterminación 10*, October.

Benjamin, Walter

1968 "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". In: Arendt, Hannah (ed.). *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books.

Benjamin, Walter

1979 "A Small History of Photography". In: *One Way Street and Other Writings*. London: New Left Books.

1985 "Allegory and Trauerspiel". In: *The Origins of German Tragic Drama*. London: Verso.

Beverly, John

1993 "The Politics of Latin American Postmodernism". In: *Against Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Calderón, Fernando and Sanjinés, Javier

1999 *El Gato que ladra. Diálogos culturales*. La Paz: Plural.

Calderón, Fernando

1991 "Memorias de un olvido. El muralismo boliviano". In: *Nueva Sociedad 116*.

Céspedes, Augusto

1983 "Viaje alrededor de un monolito pensante". In: Baptista, Mariano. *Yo fui el orgullo. Vida y pensamiento de Franz Tamayo*. La Paz/Cochabamba: Los Amigos del Libro.

García Pabón, Leonardo

1998 "Franz Tamayo educa al mestizo nacional". In: *La Patria Intima. Alegorías nacionales en la Literatura y el Cine de Bolivia*. La Paz: Plural/Cesu.

Sanjinés C., Javier

1992 *Literatura contemporánea y grotesco social en Bolivia*. La Paz: BHN/Ildis.

Szmukler, Alicia

1998 *La ciudad imaginaria. Un análisis sociológico de la pintura contemporánea en Bolivia*. La Paz: PIEB.

Tamayo, Franz

1975 *Creación de la pedagogía nacional*. La Paz: Biblioteca del Sesquicentenario de la República, 3rd edition.

Yol Jung, Hwa

1996 "Phenomenology and Body Politics". In: *Body & Society* Vol. 2, June.

Zavaleta Mercado, René

1990 *La formación de la conciencia nacional*. La Paz/Cochabamba: Los Amigos del Libro.



*Mariano Fuentes Lira*





---

*T'inkazos*, the Bolivian Social Sciences Journal, is now on the internet. At [www.pieb.org](http://www.pieb.org) readers can find the full text (in Spanish) of the following articles.

ROSSANA BARRAGÁN

**"University Theses in Bolivia.  
Universidad Mayor de San Andrés.  
History and Anthropology-Archaeology Degrees 1991-2001"**

One problem in research is how to gain access to the bibliographic material needed by researchers, public policy-makers, teachers, students and the social stakeholders involved. Since this production has not been systematically documented, work often tends to start from zero, although in reality it is a question of a *tabula rasa*, meaning that everything that has been done before is dispensed with due to the lack of documentation, dissemination and, finally, possibilities for consulting it.

With the aim of contributing to dissemination processes, *T'inkazos* has started to publish a series of bibliographies, including systematised information about university theses produced in different degree courses and universities in Bolivia.

---

KARIN M. NAASE

**"Waqe and Cacicata: Continuity and Institutional Change  
in an Andean Community in Southern Bolivia"**

This article is based on fieldwork carried out in the community of Totora, in Nor Chichas province in the department of Potosí, before the Popular Participation Law was enacted.

As Karin Naase points out, the partial or total integration of Andean communities into the state took place over the course of several centuries. The phases in the integration process can be organised along a continuum, a scale that runs from "hardly at all" to "fully integrated in the modern state and the market economy". The article explores the extent to which this partial integration into the state and the market economy brings about internal and institutional changes in the indigenous farming community. Taking the case of the community of Totora, the author looks at current social institutions and analyses where the ruptures and institutional transformations are taking place and the consequences this process has for the community as a socio-cultural system.

TON SALMAN

### **"Research for Development. Reflecting on Ideals in a Post-Idealistic World"**

Faced with growing poverty, despite the ideals and objectives of development, and criticisms of the results and also the strategies used, the author reflects on research in terms of its relationship to development, as a way of emerging from the perplexity and confusion. The first section of the article analyses some of the efforts made in the past with development in mind. The second section re-evaluates the results achieved, and the article ends by putting forward certain proposals and challenges. Salman proposes that research can no longer be thought of as a contribution to a development plan or project that then attempts to reach the actors involved. Instead, it should start with the actors and place them centre-stage. Being critical and subversive does not mean dreaming up rebel doctrines but distrusting the inherited, dominant wisdom, giving voice to the actors involved instead of trying to speak on their behalf.

---

ERIC HINOJOSA

### **"Limits and Possibilities for Autonomous Forest Management by Indigenous Peoples in the Light of the Yuracaré Experience"**

The new forestry regime in Bolivia has defined the legal rules of the game that govern indigenous peoples' participation in the management of their forests in the Indigenous Community Territories. In this context, the author asks whether the legal permission awarded is sufficient for autonomous forest management in keeping with indigenous peoples' traditional use of their forest resources and ways of life, and also in terms of the sustainable forest development policy promoted by the state.

---

BARTOLOMÉ CLAVERO

### **"Dual Minority: International Adoption and Indigenous Cultures"**

This article looks at the international human rights order and its difficulties in overcoming the dual minority concept that is hindering and even preventing the exercise of freedoms, both individually and, to a much greater extent, when they are compounded: when someone is a minor in terms of age and also a member of a cultural minority. The latter is more important and still applied to indigenous peoples. The best place to examine its impact is where both types of minorities converge: in states and in the United Nations.

The author analyses different systems governing human rights and the rights of the child, as well as international adoptions, particularly of children from indigenous cultures. He then goes on to focus on Bolivia, looking at the 1992 Children's Code, the 1999 Children and Adolescents Code, and their relation to the 1994 constitutional reform.

The article ends with a chronology and a very useful directory.

## PIEB PUBLICATIONS

### Research Series

- Wiethüchter, Blanca (coord.); Paz Soldán, Alba María; Ortiz, Rodolfo and Rocha, Omar  
2002 *Towards a Critical History of Literature in Bolivia Volume I*. La Paz: PIEB.
- Paz Soldán, Alba María (coord.); Wiethüchter, Blanca; Ortiz, Rodolfo and Rocha, Omar  
2002 *Towards a Critical History of Literature in Bolivia. Volume II: Towards a Geography of the Imaginary*.  
La Paz: PIEB.
- Lehm, Zulema (coord); Melgar, Tania; Lara, Kantuta and Noza, Mercedes  
2002 *Inter-Ethnic Marriages. The Reproduction of Ethnic Groups and Gender Relations in the Mojos Lowlands*.  
La Paz: PIEB.
- Lema, Ana María (coord.); Caballero, Gisel; Ibargüen, Roberto and Ayreyu, Hebert  
2001 *From Trace to Impact. Popular Participation in Municipalities with an Indigenous Population*.  
La Paz: PIEB.
- Urioste, Miguel (coord.) and Pacheco, Diego  
2001 *The Bolivian Lowlands at the End of the 20th Century*. La Paz: PIEB.
- Fernández, Marcelo (coord.); Lozano, Guido; Rosas, Oscar and Quispe, Adrián  
2000 *The Law of the Ayllu. The Practice of jach'a justicia and jisk'a justicia (Greater Justice and Lesser Justice) in Aymara Communities*. La Paz: PIEB.
- Rojas, Gonzalo (coord.); Tapia, Luis; Bazoberry, Oscar  
2000 *Elites at the Turn of the Century. Political Culture in Beni*. La Paz: PIEB.
- Rodríguez, Gustavo (coord.); Barraza, Mario and De la Zerda, Guido  
2000 *From Revolution to Evaluation in the University. Higher Education Culture, Discourse and Policies in Bolivia*. La Paz: PIEB.
- Domic, Jorge (coord); Chevarría, Ana; De la Fuente, Julia Elena; Campos, Gisela and Rivadencira, Aida  
1999 *Child Workers. The Emergence of New Social Players*. La Paz: PIEB.
- Talavera, Maria Luisa (coord.); Vera, Gilberto; Sánchez, Ximena; Jurado, Erick and Cordero, Zonia  
1999 *Other Voices, Other Teachers. An Approach to the Processes of Innovation and Resistance in Three Education Reform Programme Schools in the City of La Paz, 1997-1998*. La Paz: PIEB/SINERGIA.
- Spedding, Alison and Llanos, David  
1999 *There is no Law for the Harvest. A Comparative Study of the Production System and Social Relations in Cari and Chulumani, La Paz*. La Paz: PIEB/SINERGIA.

Schulte, Michael (coord.); Cruz, Reyna; Magne, Francisco; Montoya, Patricia; Montes, Gonzalo; Patifio, Marco and Paz, Lidia

1999 *Llameros and Caseros. The Kallawaya Regional Economy*. La Paz: PIEB.

Quintana, Juan Ramón

1998 *Soldiers and Citizens. A Critical Study of Compulsory Military Service in Bolivia*. La Paz: PIEB.

Szmukler, Alicia (coord.); Herrero, Mireya and López, Bernarda

1998 *The Imaginary City. A Sociological Analysis of Contemporary Painting in Bolivia*.

La Paz: PIEB/SINERGIA.

Mayorga, Fernando (coord.); Andia, Luis; Zegada, María Teresa and Saravia, Joaquín

1997 *Hegemonies? Representative Democracy and Local Leadership*. La Paz: PIEB/SINERGIA

MENDOZA, Pizarro Javier

1997 *The Unsteady Table. History of the Governing Council's Proclamation of 16 July 1809*.

La Paz: PIEB/SINERGIA

### **Research Documents Series**

Antezana, Mónica (coord.); Téllez, Selvira; Mayna, Julio César and Copeticona, René

2001 *Food Security in Pando*. La Paz: PIEB.

Blanes, José (coord.); Sánchez, Rolando and Arias, Rodolfo

2000 *Mallkus and Mayors. The Popular Participation Law in Rural Communities on the High Plateau*.

La Paz: PIEB.

Dory, Daniel and Manzano, Nelson

2000 *Territorial Logic and Public Policies. The Conditions for Democratic Governance in Cochabamba*.

La Paz: PIEB.

Laserna, Roberto (coord.); Camacho, Natalia and Córdova, Eduardo

1999 *Pushing for Consensus. Farmers' Marches, Public Opinion and Coca*. La Paz: PIEB/SINERGIA.

Torrico, Erick (coord.); Gómez, Antonio and Herrera, Karina

1999 *Cultural Industries in La Paz. Structure and Trends in the Publishing, Music and Audiovisual*

*Circuits and the Scope for National-Level Production*. La Paz: PIEB/SINERGIA.

### **Pocket Collection Series**

Guaygua, Germán; Riveros, Angela and Quisbert, Máximo

2000 *Being Young in El Alto. Ruptures and Continuities in Cultural Traditions*. La Paz: PIEB.

Hinojosa, Alfonso; Pérez, Liz and Cortez, Guido

2000 *Comings and Goings. Small Farmers from Tarija in the North of Argentina*. La Paz: PIEB.

Soruco, Ximena; Pabón, Ximena and Sanginés, Esteban  
2000 *Owners of the Microphone. Citizen Tactics and Strategies in the Media*. La Paz: PIEB.

### **Training Series**

Aillón, Virginia and Brinatti, Rossana  
2001 *Guide to Organising Documentation Centres*. La Paz: PIEB.

Barragán, Rossana (coord.); Aillón, Virginia; Sanginés, Javier and Langer, Erick  
2001 *Guide to Drawing up Research Projects. 2nd edition*. La Paz: PIEB.

### **Analysis Documents Series**

2001 *Young People Looking. Research Themes in the Second National Contest*. La Paz: PIEB.

### **Regional Research Series - Beni**

Bogado, Daniel (coord.); Lijerón, Arnaldo and Vaca, Cristhian  
2002 *The Brain Drain and its Impact on Regional Development in Beni*. La Paz: PIEB.

Flores, Elba (coord.); Guzmán, Ismael and Paz, Walter  
2002 *Social and Cultural Oversight and Normative Systems in the Use of Forest Resources in Beni Indigenous Territories*. La Paz: PIEB.

Molina, Wilder (coord.) and Soleto, Wigberto  
2002 *Local Society and the Municipality in Beni*. La Paz: PIEB.

Plaza, Wilfredo (coord.); Bello, Ikebana and Franco, Ignacio  
2002 *The Nutritional Status of Small Farming Communities in Riberalta*. La Paz: PIEB.

Saavedra, Oscar (coord.) and Ávila, Ximena  
2002 *Participatory Planning and Municipal Zoning in Beni*. La Paz: PIEB.

### **Regional Research Series - Oruro**

Condarco, Carola (coord.); Huarachi, Edgar and Vargas, Mile  
2002 *On the Trail of the Paria Royal Inn*. La Paz: PIEB/CEPA/DPIC-UTO.

Moeller, Hans (coord.); Trujillo, Elvys; Soria, Nelly and Soria, Yovana  
2002 *Dynamite and Pollutants. Mining Cooperatives and their Impact on Environmental Problems*.  
La Paz: PIEB/CEPA/DPIC-UTO.

Montoya, Juan Carlos (coord.); Amusquivar, Jorge; Flores, Angélica; Mollo, Angel and Sánchez, Pamela  
2002 *The Desaguadero River Oil Spill: A Study of the Social and Environmental Conflict*.  
La Paz: PIEB/CEPA/DPIC-UTO.

Sanjinéz, Freddy (coord.); Vargas, Bruno and Herrera, Zulema

2002 *Comparative and Competitive Advantages in Regional Commerce in Oruro*.

La Paz: PIEB/CEPA/DPIC-UTO.

Quispe, Eliseo (coord.); Aguilar, Alberto; Rocha, Ruth and Aranibar, Norka

2002 *Land and Territory: Thaki in the Ayllus and Former Estate Communities*. La Paz: PIEB/CEPA/DPIC-UTO.

Guzmán, Richard (coord.); Castro, Miguel; Jungwirth, Jeanette and Palenque, Wayra

2002 *From Outside Assistance to Self-Management in Irrigation Systems*. La Paz: PIEB/CEPA/DPIC-UTO.

Madrid, Emilio (coord.); Guzmán, Nilda; Mamani, Ernesto; Medrano, Daveiba and Núñez, René

2002 *Mining and Small Farming Communities in the Andes: Coexistence or Conflict?*

La Paz: PIEB/CEPA/DPIC-UTO.

### **Regional Research Series - Potosí**

Tacuri, Victor (coord.); Ramirez, Mavel and Carvajal, Mirkó

2002 *Farmers' Knowledge of Soil Conservation in the Ayllus of Qhorqa, Qapaqhnaqa and Aranzaya*.

La Paz: PIEB/DICYT/ISALP.

Ríos, Hector (coord.); Quereimba, David; Delgado, Antonio and Ugarte, Guadalupe

2002 *The Ayllus of Tacobamba. Historical Processes, Development and Local Power*.

La Paz: PIEB/DICYT/ISALP.

Nicolás, Vincent (coord.); Pozo, Miguel and Zegarra, Sandra

2002 *The Ayllus of Tinkipaya. An Ethno-Historical Study of their Social and Territorial Organisation*.

La Paz: PIEB/DICYT/ISALP.

Tapia, Lourdes (coord.); Quintana, Ernesto; Ance, Delfín and Morales, Jenny

2002 *Quality of Life in Potosí. Environmental Effects in Four Municipalities*. La Paz: PIEB/DICYT/ISALP.

Aguilar, Martín (coord.); Vilches, Ruth and Condori, Francisco

2002 *Agricultural Terracing: in Search of an Ethnic and Cultural Andean Rural Development Strategy*.

La Paz: PIEB/DICYT/ISALP.

### **Working Documents Series**

Zabala, Ingrid (coord.); Moreno, Fernanda and Plaza, Casto

2002 *The Impact of the Trinidad-Santa Cruz Road on Agriculture in the Elvira-Puente San Pablo Section*.

La Paz: PIEB.

Rodriguez, Hernán (coord.); Urufía, Martha; Rocha, David and Ocaña, Corsino

2002 *The Municipal Government's Relationship with the Community*. La Paz: PIEB.



*Mario Alejandro Illanes*





## GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS TO *T'inkazos* IN ITS PRINT AND ONLINE FORMATS

*T'inkazos* is a social sciences journal about Bolivia, published three times a year, with a national and international circulation. It publishes articles on research supported by PIEB and collaborative work outside PIEB. Articles that cannot be published in the print edition for reasons of space, but whose dissemination is considered important, will be included in the online edition of *T'inkazos* on PIEB's website.

### Fields

Sociology, Anthropology, Politics, Law, Education, History, Psychology, Economics and social science disciplines.

### Sections

Articles must be suitable for inclusion in one of the journal's eight sections.

### Types of contribution

1. Articles for the different sections
2. Book reviews and commentaries
3. Bibliographies
4. News items

### Articles

Multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary articles. Articles must be the result of research carried out about Bolivia. Priority will be given to work that links empirical research to theoretical reflection. The journal does not publish research projects not supported by PIEB or journalism-style articles.

Length: A maximum of 60,000 characters including spaces, notes and references.

### Reviews

Reviews can be brief presentations of books in the style of abstracts or informative reviews with commentaries.

Length: Between 5,000 and 8,000 characters including spaces, notes and references.

*Note:* If you wish to notify us of the publication of a book or to request a review of your book, please send two copies of it to the journal's director. These will be used for information on recent publications in Bolivia, and will be given to academics interested in writing the review. Sending in these copies does not guarantee that a review will be written but it does ensure that publication of the title will be disseminated.

### Bibliographies

Papers providing general bibliographic information or detailed lists of works on a specific subject, region or discipline.

### News items

If you would like to inform us about activities or events your institution has organised or plans to carry out, please send us the details to be published in the News section.

### Contributions

All contributions are assessed by the Editorial Board, which will decide whether to publish them on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Their social relevance and relevance to the main themes decided upon for each issue.
2. Their academic quality.
3. The space available in the print edition of *T'inkazos*. Otherwise, articles will be included in the online edition of *T'inkazos*.

In no case will contributions sent for publication be returned, and neither will any correspondence be entered into regarding the reasons for deciding not to publish them.

### General style norms

**Titles and subheadings:** These should preferably be short.

**Notes:** Notes must be at the foot of the page and numbered consecutively. Footnotes must not be used for detailed references.

**References:** These must be placed at the end of the article or review and abide by the following norms:

#### 1. Books (and by extension monographs)

Surname(s) and name(s) of the author(s)  
Year of publication *Title: subtitle*. Edition  
Nº. Place of publication: publisher.

#### 2. Chapters or sections of books

Author(s) of the chapter or section of the book  
Year of publication "Title of the article or chapter of the book". In: Author(s) of the book. *Title of the book: subtitle*. Place of publication: publisher.

Page numbers between which this section of the book is found.

#### 3. Journal articles

Author(s) of the newspaper or journal article  
Year of publication "Title of the article: subtitle". *Title of the journal: subtitle*.  
Volume, Nº. (Month and year). Pages on which the article is found.

#### 4. Documents found on the Internet

Author(s) of the document  
Year of the document or its latest revision  
"Title of a part of the document" (if relevant).  
*Title of the full document*. File name. Protocol and address or route (URL, FTP, etc.). Date accessed.

### Submission

Articles or enquiries may be sent to the following email addresses:

[fundapieb@unete.com](mailto:fundapieb@unete.com)  
[rosana@ceibo.entelnet.bo](mailto:rosana@ceibo.entelnet.bo)

Contributions may also be submitted on diskette to PIEB's office on the sixth floor of the Edificio Fortaleza (Avenida Arce 2799). Please remember to attach your personal details and address so that we can contact you. Thank you for your interest in *T'inkazos*.

### Young contributors

For general guidelines on how to write articles or reviews, please refer to the second edition of the *PIEB Guide to Formulating Research Projects*.



The Strategic Research Programme in Bolivia (PIEB) is an autonomous programme supporting research in the social sciences. It was set up in 1995 and is sponsored by the Directorate General for International Cooperation of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS).

PIEB's objectives are as follows:

1. Support research that seeks to reflect on and understand Bolivian reality, with the aim of contributing to the development of policy proposals to address the country's different problems; promote a reduction in current levels of social disparity and inequality; achieve greater social integration and strengthen democracy in Bolivia.
2. Encourage the production of socially relevant knowledge and multidisciplinary approaches that lead to integrated views of society, while promoting academic excellence. PIEB believes that the development of knowledge, research and access to information are key cornerstones for a society to be able to face its future.
3. Promote the training of new generations of researchers and update their knowledge, placing emphasis on training for young people.
4. Develop regional and local capacity to carry out socially relevant research, thereby contributing to the sustainability of research in Bolivia.

PIEB seeks to achieve these objectives through four areas of work:

- a) Research. Provide financial support to research teams, following contests for projects.
- b) Training. Strengthen the capacities of young researchers and professionals through the formulation and implementation of research projects, courses, advice, conferences and workshops.
- c) Institutional strengthening. Carry out activities to support information units specialising in the social sciences and others linked to research, as essential back-up in laying the foundations for sustainability in the field.
- d) Dissemination and use of results. Take forward an editorial policy that includes publishing books resulting from the research financed by the Programme, the specialist journal *T'inkazos* and the Nexos Newsletter. Develop spaces for stakeholders in different areas to meet, in order to promote linkages between research and development.

In all these areas of work PIEB applies two basic principles. The first is recognition of the country's diversity, which implies encouraging equity in regional, gender and age-related terms. The second is respect for research proposals in terms of theory and methodology, approaches and actors researching themselves and others.

This publication was printed  
in february 2003 by:  
Editorial Offset Boliviana Ltda.  
"EDOBOL"  
Telephone: (591) 2 241-0448  
e-mail: imprentaedobol@entelnet.bo  
La Paz - Bolivia

# Tinazos

BOLIVIAN SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

# SUBSCRIBE NOW

PUBLISHED EVERY FOUR MONTHS


Country

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Single issues	2 years (6 issues)	1 year (3 issues)
Bolivia	Bs. 25	Bs. 140	Bs. 70
Latin America	US\$ 18	US\$ 50	US\$ 32
Rest of the world	US\$ 19	US\$ 60	US\$ 36

Form of payment enclosed: Cheque ☐ Cash ☐ In Bolivia: please deposit in account "Banco de Crédito; Cta. Cte.201-4020893-2-02 Fundación PIEB". From abroad, please send cheque payable to "Fundación PIEB"

# AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS

Cut Here 

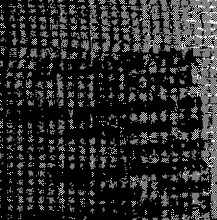


**PATRIMONIOS INTERÉTNICOS**  
Representación de los  
grupos étnicos y  
territorios en el espacio de  
los Andes de Tarma  
Vernicia Soto  
ISBN: 9802-017-5-4

PEB 2002



**EL ESTADO Y LA NACIÓN**  
El caso de la región  
de Tarma  
Carmen Pareda  
ISBN: 9802-017-5-4



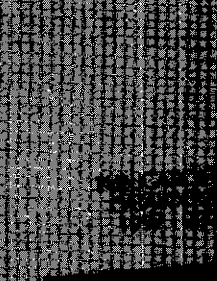
**VIDA**  
El caso de la región  
de Tarma  
Carmen Pareda  
ISBN: 9802-017-5-4



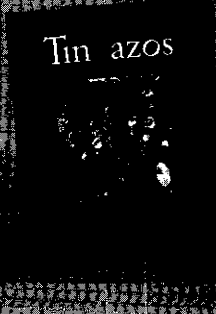
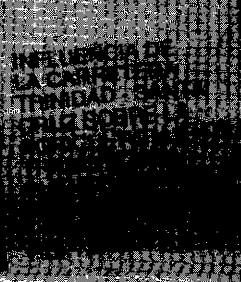
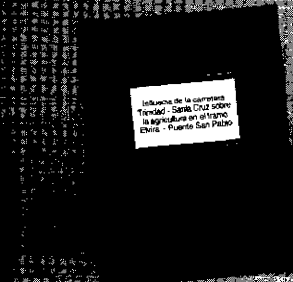
**LOS ANILLOS DE INKARIMAY**  
Estudio etnohistórico de la  
organización social y  
territorial  
Regional Research  
Series - Potosí  
ISBN: 9802-017-5-4



**TACOBAMBA**  
El caso de la región  
de Tarma  
Carmen Pareda  
ISBN: 9802-017-5-4



**Influencia de la corriente**  
El caso de la región  
de Tarma  
Carmen Pareda  
ISBN: 9802-017-5-4



**Tin azos**  
El caso de la región  
de Tarma  
Carmen Pareda  
ISBN: 9802-017-5-4

1997-2002