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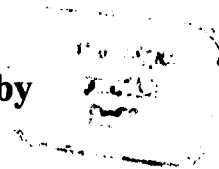
Gender Issues, Indigenous Peoples & Popular
Participation in Bolivia

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in The University of Hull

by

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Section I

Chapter 1

Introduction

Explanatory Note

The following work is the culmination of a research process undertaken between December 1995 and September 1997 in various sites throughout Bolivia. Although the research process itself will be outlined more thoroughly in chapter 4 it would be useful to initially clarify a few key points as to the processes of fieldwork which resulted in the analyses presented in this thesis. The research process can be viewed in three phases. Phase I was undertaken in La Paz and Cochabamba between December 1995 and February 1996 by myself, Professor David Booth, then working at the University of Hull, and Charlotta Widmark representing the University of Stockholm. Phase II was conducted between May and September 1996 and involved a total of 14 Bolivian researchers[1] working in four teams, with myself, Booth and Widmark.

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[1] The researchers were: Xavier Albó, Oscar Bazoberry and Mónica Crespo from CIPCA, Benjo Alconz, Porfirio Alconz, Norka Aranibar and Blanca Huanacu from the Allyu Sartañani, Mónica

During this second phase we conducted fieldwork in four rural areas: the Amazonian region of Moxos, Corque on the Altiplano, Independencía in the High Andes and Puerto Villerroel in the coca-growing region of El Chapare. I worked in each of these areas except Corque on the Altiplano. Both phases I and II were commissioned and funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

Phases I and II aimed to provide an initial appraisal of the process of democratisation in Bolivia, focusing in particular upon[2]:

- the coherence and practicality of the institutional reforms (decentralisation and popular participation) given the principal constraints on their operation;

- the interpretation of, and responses to, 'democratisation' among women and men in poor communities, including the cultural ramifications and relations to previously existing representative institutions at various levels;

- the effectiveness of the changes in improving the position of formerly disempowered groups and social categories, including Amerindian minorities and women;

Herbas, Alberto Lizárraga, Karen Ruiz, Juan Torrico, Gonzalo Vargas, Humberto Vargas and David Vocal from CERES.
[2] from Booth & Clisby et al. (1997, Appendix 4:152)

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- any positive or negative interactions with objects of government policy and SIDA support, including poverty reduction, gender equality and educational reform;

- the possible design of appropriate quantitative or qualitative indicators suitable for monitoring the progress of democratisation at the regional, provincial and community levels in Bolivia, bearing in mind the specific social and cultural conditions of the country.

Phase III, the aims of which are outlined below, involved a further eight months of independent research conducted in the urban centre of Cochabamba between February and September, 1997. This was purely doctoral research and was self-funded and which I carried out alone and independently of the SIDA study. The following work is, however, based upon the findings and experiences resulting from all three phases of the research.

Introduction

In 1994 the Bolivian State, headed by Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada of the centrist *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR) (1993-97), initiated a series of institutional reforms in an attempt to extend both fiscal and administrative decentralisation within the country. One of these reforms, the *Ley de Participatión Popular* or Law of Popular Participation (LPP), was practical in its attempt to extend citizenship rights and promote increased democratisation throughout Bolivia, and,

within this, it had the potential to impact especially upon previously marginalised and disenfranchised groups.

Through the LPP, Bolivia has seen a significant decentralisation of government expenditure and the creation of new opportunities for the enfranchisement and involvement of traditionally marginalised groups in the political sphere. In several respects within the Bolivian context the Law is an unprecedented attempt to give official recognition to community-level organising, involving local populations in the planning and regulation of regional development, giving a new formal status to indigenous and popular organisations, and, for the first time in Bolivian legislature, explicitly acknowledging the right of both women and men to participate equally in these decision-making processes. The LPP is further significant within the Bolivian context in that it attempts to increase democratisation and levels of citizenship in a region of significant cultural and linguistic diversity, and one in which political arenas have historically been characterised by attitudes towards notions of democracy and 'popular' participation ranging from ambivalence to hostility.

The gender dimensions of the LPP are interesting in as much as attempts were made by the creators of the LPP to incorporate a level of gender awareness previously unseen in Bolivian legislation. Other than those measures aimed specifically at women, such as the legal acknowledgement and criminalisation of domestic violence since the mid-1990s, there was no prior explicit legislative attempt to encapsulate gendered equality of opportunity into such a wide-ranging political measure. In terms of indigenous peoples, by providing formal recognition combined with new political avenues for indigenous forms of local organisation, the reform was significant in that

it marked a potentially radical departure from the historic centralism and ethnic exclusivism of the Bolivian state.

With this in mind, it is the aim of this thesis to critically examine the implementation and initial effects of the LPP between 1994 and 1997, with a particular focus upon its potential significance for indigenous groups, *campesino* unions, women's community-based organisations (CBOs) and gender relations in a broader sense within the Bolivian context. I will argue that, although flawed and in its early stages, the LPP has the radical potential to effectively devolve greater political power to local spaces. More significantly, rather than merely being a tool for the decentralisation of corruption and prebendalism[3] or clientalism, the Law may actually partially succeed in opening up political participation and decision-making to those groups previously marginalised and often ignored by both the national and regional political realms dominated by historically powerful elites.

Furthermore, it may be the case that, regardless of changes in the wider political climate, once set in motion, the LPP will create something of a 'snowball effect' in as much as it will provide people with a sense of empowerment and greater control over their own 'development', combined with tangible increases in formal political power for previously disenfranchised groups. In this way, I would argue that, once set in motion, such perceptual and actual changes in 'popular participation' will raise expectations and levels of involvement amongst community, indigenous and

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[3] The term prebendalism refers to a system of political clientalism – the ways in which political or economic favours may be exchanged in return for political support.

campesino[4] groups which cannot be entirely revoked regardless of any future attempts by the state or regional elites to retract the advances made by the reform.

The Law does nevertheless raise a number of justifiable concerns. In addition to the concern that the LPP will merely facilitate the decentralisation of corruption and prebendalism, there are serious concerns that the LPP, regardless of the initial intentions of its creators, can and will be used as a tool for the further assimilation and cooption of 'dissident' groups, such as indigenous and *campesino* organisations, into the dominant hegemony.

The latest MNR-led reforms have some historical precedence: the first MNR-led administration headed by Víctor Paz Estenssoro (1951-56) spearheaded Bolivia's national revolution and introduced major redistributive social and economic reforms. The revolution proclaimed universal suffrage, nationalised the tin mines, presided over the abolition of the old *hacienda* system in a process of land reform, and formed a national system of rural workers' unions (Ladman, 1982, Malloy, 1968). Paz Estenssoro (1985-89) again went on to lead the MNR into government in the mid-1980s and initiated the neo-liberal trend in Bolivia. This neo-liberal reformism was then continued in the mid-1990s with Sánchez de Lozada heading the MNR-led government (1994-97) and introducing integrative and redistributive measures resonant of the heyday of Bolivian national reformism in the 1950s.

This association between the MNR in its various manifestations and cycles of reformism in Bolivia could, however, be viewed as a cause for concern from certain

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[4] *Campesino* can be roughly translated as peasant.

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quarters. The 1952 revolution can be seen to have achieved greater national integration at some cost to the cultural integrity, autonomy and livelihood prospects of Bolivia's indigenous peoples, especially the Aymara and Quechua majorities of the highlands. Within this context it could be argued that the LPP is yet a further way in which indigenous peoples are 'assimilated', that the law is an extension of the historic 'modernising' project aimed at the cultural and political incorporation and co-option of groups which have hitherto remained less than fully incorporated into the dominant hegemony.

The following work will thus examine the implications of the LPP for various sectors of Bolivian society, with particular emphasis being placed upon indigenous groups, *campesino* unions and women's community organisations. It is, however, important to recognise that these groups do not necessarily represent discrete categories in the obvious sense that each form of social and territorial organisation overlaps with and incorporate elements of one another, perhaps most simply expressed with reference to the figure below:

1 = women

2 = indigenous peoples

3 = *campesinos*
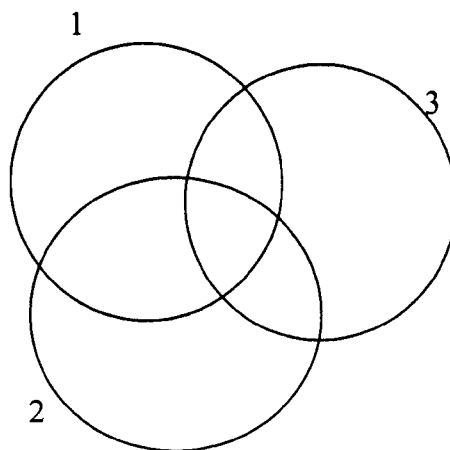
In this way, when referring to, for example, women's groups, it is important to note that the women in question may also be defined as indigenous and /or *campesina* women to lesser or greater extents, the key defining factor clearly then being gender. Similarly, when examining the implications of the LPP for both *campesino* union groups and indigenous organisations, whilst the membership of each inevitably intersects, the leadership tends to be overwhelmingly male. In this sense, then, gender becomes a significant differentiating factor between the nominally categorised sectors subject to examination.

The following work will thus employ a gender analysis as the theoretical framework within which the LPP will be critically analysed. It will draw upon gender and development literature as a means of assessing both the gendered implications of the Law and its impact on indigenous groups. In particular the approach I adopt here draws upon the guidelines and insights developed by gender and development (GAD) theorists and practitioners such as Kabeer (1998), Momsen (1991), Moser (1993), Papart (1995), and Peasron and Jackson (1998), and which are discussed at length in chapter 7. In short, my perspective, within the GAD framework, argues that a gendered analysis should be adopted and incorporated throughout any development process from the inception and throughout the planning, implementation and on-going monitoring of development processes, projects and initiatives – in this case the process of Popular Participation in the Bolivian context.

Chapter Summaries

Whilst keeping such intersections in mind, for clarity the following work will be divided into three main sections: the first examining the implications of the LPP for indigenous peoples, using the Amazonian region of Moxos as an area case study, the second focusing specifically upon the gender implications of the reform, and the third concluding section bringing together intersections of gender, class and the experiences of indigenous-*campesinos*.

Initially, however, it is important to place the reform within the broader socio-economic and political context of contemporary Bolivian history before providing a more complete overview of the intentions and formulation of the LPP itself. As such, chapter 2 will provide a summary outline of key socio-economic and political trends in contemporary Bolivia. Such key issues include the linked themes of Bolivia's chronic economic problems coupled with social and political unrest, crisis and change which has formed a resurgent feature of Bolivian life. Similarly linked to these broad themes of socio-political unrest and economic crisis is the role of the *cocaleros*[5] and the importance of the cocaine economy to the nation, an importance which should not be underestimated.

This broad backdrop will provide a context within which the significance and potentialities of the Law of Popular Participation can be placed. Chapter 3 thus outlines the central tenets of the LPP from inception to implementation and concludes

with a summary of three scenarios which, following both Phases I and II, and reflected in Phase III of the research, appear to encapsulate the possible longer term dynamics of the reform and provide a framework within which the subsequent case-study analyses can be viewed.

Prior to the case-study illustrations, however, chapter 4 focuses upon the research processes themselves, discussing both the practical chronology and methodology of the research before moving on to examining the nature of these processes. The research, for me, raised a number of issues worthy of critical analysis, in particular the nature and implications of feminist participatory methodologies within the context of the research/researched/researcher in question. Chapter 4 also provides an account of the participatory methods I employed in the doctoral study, focusing largely upon work undertaken in Cochabamba, and a consideration of the 'time-poverty' of women which contributes to their lack of formal participation in community politics, including the LPP processes themselves, a theme developed further in chapters 8 and 9.

The subsequent work is then divided into sections II, III and IV. Section II, incorporating chapters 5 and 6, will examine the implications of the LPP for indigenous peoples through the use of a selected case-study. Initially, however, section II begins with an overview of issues affecting ethnic minority and, principally,

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⁵The term *Cocaleros* refers to the farmers, largely indigenous peoples, who have grown and continue to cultivate coca for both traditional use and for use as a base product within the more recent cocaine industry.

indigenous peoples[6] not only in Bolivia but within Latin America as a whole. Given that the LPP is perceived as an attempt to extend citizenship rights amongst the more marginalised groups - chiefly indigenous peoples and *campesino* groups - sectors of Bolivian society which are by no means distinct categories, it is important to provide some contextual background to the historical, social, political and economic factors experienced by and affecting indigenous peoples / indigenous-*campesinos* in the region.

Within the Latin American context, such indigenous histories and experiences are not necessarily distinct to singular national entities. Chapter 5 thus provides both a broad sweep approach and specific regional foci with the provision of 'area reports' of Brazil, Honduras and Mexico in addition to Bolivia as a means of demonstrating that the experiences of indigenous peoples of Bolivia are manifestations of a broader historical process of colonisation and post-coloniality within the region as a whole.

Following the overview of key issues affecting indigenous peoples in Bolivia provided in the final section of chapter 5, chapter 6 will focus more specifically upon the history of the *Katarista*[7] or indigenist movement in Bolivia. I will trace the historical passage of the indigenous peoples from their marginalised and discriminatory colonial categorisation as *Los Indios* prior to the National Revolution of 1952, their subsequent redefinition as *campesinos* in a process that de-ethnicised

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[6] The principle indigenous groups in Bolivia are the Ayamaran and Quechuan peoples and a number of smaller, largely Amazonian groups, who in total constitute the majority of the overall population of the country (refer to chapter 5 for greater detail).

[7] The Bolivian *Katarista* Movement was so named after Tupaj Katari, an Aymaran anti-colonial hero during the 18th Century. It can be perceived as both a political and cultural movement which places importance upon the Aymaran flag or *Wiphala*, the re-valorisation of Aymaran culture and language

indigenous identity, and the more recent re-valorisation and re-discovery of ethnicity and identity politics with the emergence of the self-identification as indigenous-*campesinos* through the rise of the indigenist or *Katarista* Movement.

The latter sections of chapter 6 will then focus upon the post-1994 institutional reforms and their impacts upon indigenous peoples, with particular emphasis upon the implications of the Law of Popular Participation for indigenous groups throughout the country. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of the implementation of the LPP in the Amazonian region of Moxos and its initial impacts upon the minority Amazonian indigenous groups living within this municipality.

Whilst gender issues are threaded, if at times obliquely, through each of the chapters in this work, gender becomes the central focus of section III (chapters 7 and 8). If perceived as an example of a State-led development initiative or governmental social policy, the LPP, despite its attempt to incorporate a level of gender-awareness and equality of gendered participation within the text of the Law, can be seen to have failed to explicitly or effectively synthesized gender analysis or women's enfranchisement into the development planning framework.

Chapter 7 thus initially examines the concept of 'development' itself and some of the contemporary theoretical underpinnings of gender analyses of development. In this way, the socio-political, legal and economic processes which embody gender divisions and inequalities within both public and private spheres are examined from

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and seeks to secure improved rights and status for indigenous Bolivians through political lobbying and demonstrations.

the perspective of gender analysis. Within this, a brief overview is provided of the development of theoretical and empirical standpoints from 'Women in Development', to 'Women and Development', to 'Gender and Development'.

This provides a contextual framework within which the gendered implications of the LPP in Bolivia can be placed. This is the focus of chapter 8, which initially looks at gender relations within the broader socio-economic and political contexts of Bolivian society, before going on to examine the impacts of the LPP for Bolivian women. I will ultimately argue that giving Popular Participation a strong gender dimension will inevitably be a slow process. However, despite its shortcomings, women are beginning to move into some of the spaces for decision-making and political participation opened up by the LPP and beginning to exploit the potentialities of the Law.

Section IV (chapters 9 and 10) draws the thesis together by way of a final case study which demonstrates the intersections between class, gender and the experiences of indigenous-*campesinos* in relation to the introduction of the LPP. In this way, chapter 9 will focus upon the implementation of the Law in the High Andean region of Independencía, a case which highlights the effects of the reform for *mestizo*[8], indigenous, indigenous-*campesino* and *campesino* union identified groups. Again the intersections between such identified groups are frequently blurred, but the fact that people categorise themselves or are thus categorised makes for interesting

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[8] *Mestizo* nominally refers to people of colonial descent, in this case descendants of Spanish colonisers who may have both indigenous and Spanish blood in their families. The term in reality additionally refers to a broader sense of differential power relations, hierarchy and status, although *Mestizos* do tend to continue to have paler skin and less obviously 'indigenous' features than their non-*Mestizo* counterparts.

comparisons of differential power dynamics within the context of the LPP processes. The case of Independencía also serves to illustrate some of the negative consequences of failing to incorporate a gendered analysis in both the formulation and implementation of the reform. Despite this, however, the case nevertheless demonstrates the ways in which the LPP can provide new avenues through which women can exercise power in regional political arenas, arenas which are now, through the LPP, accorded greater structural prominence and *de facto* power.

The final chapter, chapter 10, continuing to draw together the arguments posited throughout the study, returns to consider the extent to which the LPP has increased democratisation and levels of citizenship for various sectors of Bolivian society. In particular I return to consider which of the hypothetical scenarios outlined in chapter 3 appears most valid:

- the more sceptical interpretation which emphasises Bolivia's long tradition of 'modernising incorporation' and the extension of prebendalism or clientalistic forms of politics. There would be little *de facto* change in terms of gendered equality of political participation, and women's enfranchisement into the processes of decision-making extending little further than the text of the Law;

- the more positive perspective which focuses on the potential for inverse cooption and increased recognition of Bolivia's ethno-cultural diversity and genuine advancements in women's enfranchisement;

• a mixed or neutral scenario, regionally differentiated, incorporating elements of both the above hypotheses or with little or no perceived impact as a result of the LPP upon the *status quo*.

As already indicated I would argue that the implications of the LPP incorporate elements of each hypotheses. As the case studies demonstrate, whilst there are positive spaces for change through the Law, with increased opportunities for participatory enfranchisement of marginalised groups, such changes are inevitably mediated by the historical conditions under which the Law was conceived and has been implemented.

Chapter 2

Contemporary Bolivia in Socio-Economic & Political Context

In order that the radical potential of the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) can be more fully appreciated, it must be placed within the broader historical contexts of political, social and economic change experienced within contemporary Bolivia. The following chapter will thus provide an overview of key factors experienced by Bolivian peoples over the course of the past several decades in the run up to the implementation of the recent political reforms. The primary focus will be upon the years leading up to the implementation of the LPP, particularly from the mid-1980's and the inception of the neo-liberal reforms known as the New Economic Policy (NEP).

Bolivia has a population of approximately 8,000,000 people, of which approximately 60% belong to one of several indigenous groups (World Bank, 2000, UNICEF, 1994)[1]. However, despite comprising the majority of the population, the indigenous peoples have long experienced problems of discrimination, inequality and disenfranchisement, with wealth and power being concentrated in the hands of a largely *Mestizo* [2] elite.

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[1] The socio-economic and political factors affecting indigenous peoples in Bolivia will be examined in greater detail in chapters 5 and 6.

[2] *Mestizo* nominally refers to people of colonial descent, in this case descendants of the Spanish colonisers who may have both indigenous and Spanish blood in their families. The term in reality refers to a broader sense of differential power relations, hierarchy and status, although *Mestizos* do tend to continue to have paler skin and less 'indigenous' features than their non-*Mestizo* counterparts.

In addition to its often stark socio-cultural and economic polarisation, Bolivia is a country historically characterised by chronic political unrest, having experienced a record-breaking number of coups and rapid changes of governments in recent decades. For example, following the resignation of President (General) Hugo Banzer Suárez on 21 July, 1978, marking the end of a particularly repressive regime, Bolivia experienced no fewer than nine presidents in a period of political turmoil and violent unrest, before civilian rule was established on 10 October 1982 when Hernán Siles Zuazo took office for the centre-left Unión Democrática y Popular (UDP) (van Lindert & Verkoren, 1994:25).

The retreat of the military and advent of a civilian government did not, however, mark a period of social calm. Indeed, during the Siles Zuazo administration, Bolivia experienced extreme civil unrest, with widespread strikes, demonstrations, road-blocks, and other protests which crippled the country. The Siles Zuazo regime was also characterised by severe economic crisis, with inflation soaring to 25,000% in the mid-1980s and the purchasing power of the average Bolivian having shrunk by 46% (van Lindert & Verkoren, 1994:28). Siles Zuazo was forced to declare a presidential election a year earlier than planned, leading in 1985 to the election of the veteran Víctor Paz Estenssoro to the presidency for the third time.

Experiments with neo-liberalism: Bolivia's New Economic Policy

In an attempt to bring Bolivia back from the brink of economic collapse, in August 1985, Paz Estenssoro, leader of the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR, 1985-9), backed by the IMF, announced a programme of structural adjustment, or, as

it was referred to, the 'New Economic Policy' (NEP)[3], in Decree 21060 (Associated Press 17.3.93). Based on a typical IMF adjustment package, the NEP involved radical economic reform and a dramatic restructuring of the state sector, a process initiated, for example, by the dismantling of *Comibol*, the State mining sector which was operating at a loss. As Dijck argues, these neo-liberal reforms were aimed at '*putting an end to economic stagnation and chaos, widespread deep-rooted poverty, and political instability*' (Dijck, 1998:1). The first target on the agenda was the hyperinflation Bolivia had been experiencing throughout the 1980s – which stood at 11,857% in 1985 (Dijck, 1998:32). Government spending was severely reduced by freezing wages and making widespread redundancies within state enterprises and central government administration. Cost-recovery policies were implemented in which government subsidies were abolished on public services and food and public sector prices were raised to world market levels. A major tax reform was then introduced in 1986 which included the introduction of a flat rate of value-added tax (VAT), a standard income tax, and a tax on inferred wealth, all of which had the desired effect of significantly increasing tax revenues (Dijck, 1998:32). This latter initiative was to be particularly significant to the success or otherwise of the introduction of the *Law of Popular Participation* in 1994, which relies on the allocation of 20% of national tax revenues to local governments for development purposes under the LPP.

As a result of such painful economic measures introduced as part of the NEP in 1985, the rocketing inflation was brought under some control, declining to 276% in 1986

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[3] Although key tenets of the NEP are outlined here, for a more detailed and comprehensive examination of Bolivia's NEP refer to the collection of articles which examine structural adjustment and economic reform in Bolivia brought together by Dijck (ed) 1998. For further discussion of the overall

and a reasonable 15% in 1987 (Dijck, 1998:32). The announcement of the NEP, however, coincided with the collapse of the price of tin on the world market, contributing to the devastation of the Bolivian state mining sector and the dismissal of approximately 23,000 miners by the end of 1985. The further fall in tin prices in 1993 created a new crisis in the remaining mining sector (Associated Press, 17.3.93). The tin crises coupled with the NEPs' cost-recovery policies led to widespread job losses and severe economic hardship and so unsurprisingly did little to aid the popularity of the neo-liberal reforms.

Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB), the state oil and gas concern, along with over 150 other state-owned enterprises, were put up for sale shortly after the privatisation of *Comibol*, a process which inevitably involved large-scale redundancies (including approximately 20,000 civil servants) (CEDIB, 7.5.94). However, when the sales were announced few foreign investors were interested, nor was it possible to convince those Bolivian entrepreneurs who were in a position to do so to buy the companies. Consequently, despite the continuing pursual of the neo-liberal policies by Paz Zamora (1989-93) of the *Moviemiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR), who succeeded Paz Estenssoro as President in 1989, by the beginning of 1994 only a few state-owned companies had been fully privatised (CEDIB, 7.5.94).

In response to this lack of interest in the privatisation process, the administration of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (MNR, 1993-97) announced its *'Capitalisation'* (read privatisation) programme in May 1995 – Bolivia's alternative to the straight sell-off

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implications of neo-liberal reforms in Bolivia see also Green (1995), and of the effects of the collapse of the tin markets refer to Latin America Bureau (1987).

of the six leading state companies. Foreign investors were encouraged to inject fresh capital in return for a 50% controlling share. The rest was to be distributed to Bolivian nationals over the age of 18 via private pension funds. According to *Capitalisation* secretary, Edgar Saravia, the programme raised US$920m in 1995, all but US$70m coming from the *capitalisation* of the four largest state enterprises: electricity, railways, telecommunications, and the national airline. A further 28 smaller companies were sold off during the year, leaving 40 more to be privatised over the course of the following year, accruing an estimated revenue of US$60m (InterPress Third World News Agency (IPS) 8.9.96).

The programme did, however, face some difficulties and provoked significant protests from union and other social groups throughout the country, particularly regarding the sale of YFPB, the State oil and gas company, in 1996. The privatisation process also experienced difficulties attracting bidders at the right price for some of the sales. For example, in December 1995, Cruz Blanca from Chile came forward as the only suitable buyer for the national railway company, *Empresa Nacional de Ferrocarriles*, but their bid fell US$12.7m short of the railway's book value (InterPress Third World News Agency (IPS) 8.9.96).

Bolivian Experiences of Economic (Under) Development

Economic development over the course of the past few decades has been hindered by several factors, not least of which is the inability or unwillingness of the Bolivian business community to invest in national industry. Such development has also been stalled by a weak production structure dependent on agriculture and mining. Bolivia

continues to export raw materials (mineral and agricultural produce) and to import industrial and semi-finished products. It is thus particularly vulnerable to changes in world markets. The economic situation is not improved by the crippling national debt, which amounts to over US$4bn, the servicing of the repayments alone accounting for approximately a quarter of Bolivia's annual Gross National Product (GNP) (Latin American Weekly Report, 11.4.99).

Few industries have emerged which are capable of processing raw materials to raise their export value. However, in Santa Cruz in the eastern lowlands there are a small number of cotton mills, sugar cane refineries, sawmills and abattoirs aimed at production for export markets. There, linked to the rise of large-scale modern agribusiness, some processing of agricultural products has developed (World Bank, 1996). When, in 1985, under the New Economic Policy, the import substitution policy was abandoned, allowing cheap foreign imports to flood the country, much of the existing domestic industry was driven to bankruptcy, leading to an estimated 35,000 job losses through factory and small business closures (van Lindert & Verkoren, 1994, Dijck, 1998).

As outlined above, coupled with trade liberalisation there was an almost complete abolition of government subsidies on foods and basic goods. The cost of transport fares, petrol and basic foods increased dramatically, inevitably leading to further factory and small business closures due to increased production costs. Levels of poverty have also inevitably increased. Although poverty indicators tend to be based on incomplete empirical data, thus inevitably leading to the necessity of viewing any such statistics as indicators rather than definitive facts, Bolivia is nevertheless

generally regarded as being one of the poorest nations in Latin America. According to a report by UNICEF, for example, during this period in the early 1990s an estimated 8 out of 10 people in rural Bolivia lived in conditions of poverty. The figures for urban areas were not much improved, with approximately 6 out of 10 urban Bolivians living in poverty (UNICEF, 1994: 126). It was recognition of the extreme social costs of liberalisation which led the IMF and the World Bank, in conjunction with the Bolivian government of Paz Zamora, to create the Social Investment Fund (*Fondo de Inversión Social* or FIS) in 1992 to mitigate the effects of the NEP (Zoomers, 1998).

In addition to the creation of the SIF, Bolivia's economic reform programme has received international support, to the extent that by November 1994 the Bolivian government had received pledges of assistance amounting to US$1.5bn from various donor countries and international institutions. Then, in February 1995, the World Bank authorised US$160m in credit to Bolivia to finance a ten-project programme, including privatisation, educational reform, municipal participation, judicial reform and land administration (*Agencia LatinoAmericana de Información*, 23.2.95). Due to a limited efficacy of governmental agencies in the management of development programmes and the distribution of the SIF, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have played an increasingly important role throughout the country. According to World Bank estimates, in 1995 over 600 NGOs were working across the region, managing US$200m of both bilateral and governmental funding (World Bank, 1995, cited in Zoomers, 1998:160).

Socio-Economic Development in Regional Variation[4]

Migration within the country has led to significantly varied growth rates between regions. Most urban populations seem to be rising and there has been a marked increase in the population in the Eastern plains, in some parts of the Yungas (the tropical valleys north of La Paz) and the Andean valleys (van Lindert & Verkoren, 1994). In 1994, for example, the estimated annual growth rate of El Alto, the satellite city of La Paz, stood at over 9% (UNICEF, 1994: 117). Many migrants are from the Altiplano, an area currently experiencing massive out-migration – in Oruro and Potosí the population is in particular decline, a situation exacerbated by the collapse of the tin mining industry.

Cochabamba[5] and the smaller towns around it are growing. The population boom in the valleys is a direct result of the process of agrarian colonisation which began after the 1952 Revolution. Farmers from the Altiplano were encouraged to establish holdings in new territories which were opened up in the foothills of the eastern Cordillera (in the Departments of La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and Tarija). Over the past few decades, increasing numbers of people have settled in this area, putting significant pressure on both land and infrastructure in some regions.

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[4] Refer to the map on page iii for an overview of Bolivia's departmental regions referred to in this section. Bolivia is basically split into 9 departments: Pando, El Bení, La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Oruro, Potosí, Chuquisaca, and Tarija

[5] Cochabamba was visited during Phase II of the SIDA study in 1996, and subsequently became the primary focus of the final phase of fieldwork in 1997, focusing specifically upon the gender implications of the LPP.

In the southern part of the Andean valleys the employment created by the oil and gas industries is attracting migrants. This is a relatively economically successful area, with above average earnings and sufficient oil production to cover national consumption. There have been new finds in the Chapare[6] region, north of Cochabamba which may make it possible to export oil in the future. The region also has natural gas resources, a commodity which has been exported to Argentina for a number of years.

The city and Department of Santa Cruz has benefited from preferential treatment at the hands of successive governments since the 1952 Revolution. A large proportion of investment capital has been channelled into El Oriente, resulting in thriving large-scale agro-industry aimed at the export market. Agriculture also benefits from investment capital and technological inputs, and as a result the Eastern plains achieve high yields per hectare. Santa Cruz has become the epitome of the widening divide between rich and poor, with overtly conspicuous extremes of wealth and poverty. The Lowlands in general have also become the country's cattle-breeding area, with the Department of Beni[7] accounting for over half of all cattle in the country. Most meat production is destined for the domestic market, particularly for the towns in the Cochabamban valleys and on the Altiplano.

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[6] El Chapare was one of the research sites visited during Phase II of the SIDA research in 1996. Team members were myself, David Booth,Tito Vargas, David Vocal, Juan Torrico and Karen Ruiz.
[7] Moxos, in the Department of Beni was one of the focus areas for Phase II of the SIDA Research. I conducted research in this region with Oscar Bazoberry, David Booth and Mónica Crespo in 1996.

The New Political Scene

With the retirement from politics of Paz Estenssoro in 1989, the last of the 1952 generation, the way was left open for new political figures to come to the fore. Paz Estenssoro was succeeded in 1989 by Jaime Paz Zamora (*Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria*, MIR) who was in turn replaced by President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada *(Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*, MNR) in August, 1993. As Minister of Planning and Coordination in Paz Estenssoro's government, Sánchez de Lozada was primarily responsible for implementing the structural adjustment programme. His alliance with Vice-President Víctor Hugo Cárdenas - an Aymara and leader of the *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Katari de Liberación* (MRTKL), Bolivia's small *Katarista*[8] party which aims to promote the emancipation of the Indian population - won him widespread support from the majority indigenous constituency (van Lindert & Verkoren, 1994).

Two new populist parties have emerged in recent years, the leaders of which have both met with untimely deaths. Carlos Palenque, owner of the populist radio and television station *Radio y Televisión Popular* founded his own political party in September 1988, called *Conciencia de Patria* (Conscience of the Nation), abbreviated to CONDEPA. CONDEPA has been particularly successful in the urban areas of El Alto and La Paz amongst both indigenous and poorer sectors of the population. Although Palenque died in 1997, not long before the national elections, his death opened the way for the first Aymaran woman, Remedios Loza, to become the leader

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[8] *Katarista* is a term used to refer to the indigenist movement of Bolivia, the more ethnically-concious of the political tendencies which arose out of the peasant union movement after 1970. The name is taken from the reknown Aymara rebel leader of the 18th century, Tupaq Katari (Albó 1987, Rivera 1987, Ticona et al. 1995:40-45).

of a Bolivian political party. CONDEPA has subsequently formed part of the *megacoalicion*[9] which currently holds power under the leadership of General Hugo Banzer's *Accion Democrática Nacionalista* (ADN) (*Los Tiempos*, June, 1997).

Max Fernández, another highly popular public figure until his death in November 1995, set up his party, *Unidad Cívica de Solidaridad* (UCS) in 1989. Fernández was the main shareholder and Director of the largest brewery in the country. He was known as Max *Obras* (public works) because he personally financed several public schemes in working-class communities. Fernández appealed to the victims of structural adjustment – the poorer sectors of society and those who had lost jobs as a result of the neo-liberal policies of privatisation and cost-recovery - while claiming to be a supporter of the New Economic Policy (NEP)(CEDIB, 6,12.95). Following the death of Fernández, his son took leadership of UCS in time for the municipal elections held in December, 1995.

Whilst neither of these new parties seemed to have a wholly coherent programme, both aspired to represent the poorest sectors of Bolivian society and have played a part in the recent resurgence of Indian identity in the country. The terms *palenquismo* and *maxismo*, referring to the leaders Carlos Palenque of CONDEPA and Max *obras* Fernández of UCS, were used as synonyms for populism and demagogy, both men being charismatic but authoritarian and paternalistic figures (van Lindert & Verkoren, 1994).

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[9] the *megacoalicion* is the term used to refer to the collection of political parties which form the current administration led by the *Acción Democrática Nacionalista* (ADN). Banzer, leader of the ADN, although constituting by far the most powerful party in the coalition, did not gain sufficient votes in the

Coca and Cocaine

It is impossible to present a complete picture of Bolivian society, politics, culture and economy without recourse to some examination of the commercial and cultural uses of coca and cocaine production. With approximately 40,000 hectares of land dedicated to coca production at the beginning of 1999 (an estimated 30,000 ha going to illegal trafficking), it is calculated that approximately 300,000 people are directly dependent on coca and cocaine production – about 10% of the working population of the country (*Los Tiempos* 5.1.99, CNN 18.1.00, *Hoy* 18.1.00). This sector has taken over from tin as Bolivia's most important export product, with estimates of the value of annual cocaine exports varying between US$300m and US$700m; that is between 23% and 43% of the total value of exports. Despite increased eradication programmes over the past few years, Bolivia continues to be the third largest producer of cocaine in the world (Hoy (NY) 18.1.00).

Paz Estenssoro's Decree 21060 (a central tenet of his New Economic Policy), announced in 1985, abolished tax on repatriated capital and at the same time the investigation of the origins of any monies deposited in the bank was made illegal. These policies have been very effective in securing the return of a significant tranche of off-shore capital to the country, including money generated by the drugs economy – drug-dealers are now able to keep their narco-dollars in the Bolivian Central Bank, no questions asked. It is generally believed that the economic successes of the NEP are in actual fact based largely on these policies, which manage to keep a large part of the returns from the drug trade in the country.

1997 elections to take overall rule and so had to form a series of pacts with smaller parties in order to collate a sufficient percentage of the vote to take power.

It is not surprising therefore that the anti-drug war had been waged fairly half-heartedly until the most recent 'crack-down' of the current regime headed by Banzer and his *megacoalicion*. The Sánchez de Lozada government did attempt to maintain a good relationship with the United States, and to help in this 'coca President' García Meza was finally captured and detained in March 1994. As a further 'good will' measure, during the first months of 1994 the new administration stepped up its anti-drug campaign and, as a result of joint operations with the US Drug Enforcement Agency, the key figures and several members of the country's two most important coca-gangs were arrested, though at least five more gangs continue to be active (Agencia Informativa Púlsar 12.4.94).

In April 1994, U.S. President Clinton proposed a 1995 aid package of almost US$132m with US$68m earmarked for the war on drugs, on the condition that Bolivia eradicated 5,400 ha of coca plantations per year. However, due to Bolivia's failure to meet this condition, the US announced in February 1995 that it was to reduce its aid package by 30%, to just over US$80m. Then, on 27 January 1996, Interior Minister Carlos Sánchez Berzaín travelled to Washington to seek greater financial assistance for the coca eradication policy - as things stood, the 1996 campaign would have to be financed out of local resources, most of which comprised compensation payments to growers at the rate of US$2,500 per ha. Fortunately for the Bolivian government, Berzaín arrived back from the United States in February 1996, having succeeded in gaining President Clinton's promise that the US would not, after all, cut aid to the anti-drugs programme (*Los Tiempos*, Cochabamba, 23.2.96).

The colonisation of the Eastern lowlands has contributed largely to the growth in coca production in recent decades. The coca grown here is less suitable for chewing (and hence for the domestic market) and so is grown for the international cocaine trade. The coca growers or *cocaleros* are mostly small peasant farmers in the new colonisation areas whose plots are typically between one and two hectares. These are largely migrants from the Altiplano, now joined by the redundant tin miners, who have settled in their thousands in the higher parts of Bení and in the Chapare plain of Cochabamba.

The work is attractive in the sense that coca cultivation yields the largest profit for the small farmer – for example, in 1989 crops such as bananas, maize and rice provided the peasant farmers of the Chapare with an annual income of between US$300 and US$600 per ha, compared with US$3,200 per ha for coca (Van Lindert & Verkoren, 1994). Nevertheless the coca growers are faced with significant problems, caught as they are between something of a rock and a hard place - caught between government attempts to appease the US in their anti-drugs war, and the drug cartels themselves attempting to ensure that their production targets are met.

The Coca Eradication Act of 1989, developed in conjunction with the US, was meant to severely restrict coca production throughout the country. Various coca-producing zones were differentiated and a separate policy developed for each. Production was permitted in Los Yungas of La Paz, seen as a traditional coca-growing region, but in the recently colonised areas of El Chapare and Los Yungas of Bení, the peasants were to switch to other crops over a period of five years with compensation of US$2,500 offered for every hectare of coca destroyed (*Los Tiempos*, Cochabamba, 12.3.95).

The problem with the compensation scheme was that no money was paid out until 70% of the coca crop was demonstrably destroyed (*Los Tiempos*, Cochabamba, 17.5.00). This means that the peasants did not receive money to plant new crops until it was no longer possible to harvest the coca, necessitating a period without income which is often insupportable for such low-income families. In all other regions, such as the plains of Santa Cruz and Beni, coca cultivation was to be prohibited and plants destroyed without compensation.

The Bolivian peasants' confederation (CSUTCB) insisted on a wider range of incentives and compensation, stipulating that members would only begin switching to other crops when the government found the resources for compensation and could guarantee the further development of regional economies. US agencies have initiated a few alternative income-generating schemes in North Potosí and Cochabamba, aimed at improving living conditions so as to discourage migration to El Chapare. Thus far these schemes seem to have had limited success. Indeed, *cocalero* leader, Evo Morales, commented that many families, in the face of severe poverty and disillusioned with alternative development programmes, have resumed planting coca crops (*Los Tiempos* , Cochabamba, 17.5.00).

The eradication programme has been met with strong opposition from the *cocaleros*, who have staged a series of demonstrations and protests – perhaps most notably with the Christmas march on La Paz between December 1995 and January 1996 by approximately 1000 *cocaleras* from the Cochabamba region. This march was followed by a hunger strike declared on 23 January 1996, by approximately 150

cocaleros, the majority of whom were women, in protest at the government's refusal to discuss their demands. The Chapare coca grower's leader, Evo Morales, threatened to step up the hunger strike if necessary and claimed that 350 cocaleros had been arrested in clashes with the police in the Chapare. The hunger strike lasted for 12 days until 3 February 1996, when the government finally agreed to end the compulsory eradication of coca plantations. This accord, signed by Oscar Salas, President of the Bolivian Central Workers' Organisation (COB), Coca-leader Evo Morales, and Interior Minister Carlos Sánchez Berzaín, was the culmination of a prolonged struggle between the *cocaleros* and the government (The Economist, 19.9.98).

The forerunner of the Christmas protest was the mass demonstration and march on the capital in August 1994. This was again organised by coca growers in the Chapare to demand both the right to grow coca and the 'demilitarisation' of the region. At this time, hundreds of police and soldiers were mobilised, culminating in the arrest of between 20 and 80 peasant leaders. In July 1995, there were further clashes between the military and the coca growers in the Chapare following the arrest and internal banishment of 55 of the growers' leaders on 14-15 July. The arrests came after growers blocked roads and staged demonstrations to halt the destruction of their crops within the boundaries of Isiboro National Park. The government finally agreed to release 53 imprisoned leaders of the coca growers' union on July 29. In exchange for the release of their leaders, including the well-known Evo Morales, the coca growers officially accepted the eradication of new plants – those planted since April 1995 (The Economist, 19.9.98).

A Decade of Social Unrest

The coca growers have proved particularly vociferous opponents to governmental neo-liberal reforms in recent years, but they are by no means the only such group. A diverse range of unions and peasant groups have staged a series of strikes and social protests throughout the 1980's and 1990's, protesting against the effects of the processes of economic liberalisation imposed during this period as part of the IMF-imposed structural adjustment packages. The longest series of strikes and protests witnessed by the country in recent years, culminating in the declaration of a State of Siege by the government on 19 April 1995, began on March 14 1995 when 70,000 school teachers went on strike demanding higher salary increases and improvement in conditions of work. The Bolivian Central Workers' Organisation (COB) joined the strike in protest at the military being called out to block a teachers' march on La Paz and at the arrest of protest leaders (*Agencia LatinoAmericana de Información*, 6.5.95).

The Bolivian Federation of Press Workers (FTPB) also began a series of countrywide demonstrations in March 1995 to protest against military brutality targeted at journalists. The wave of protests spread, with community groups, student associations and other unions coming out in support of the teachers. The telecommunications workers and miners were also on strike over privatisation and workers' unions in all the major cities declared general strikes in their support. In Tarija, the levels of unrest led citizens to declare their administration independent from the government. The government responded to the unrest by calling out the military, resulting in widespread violent clashes and the detention of over 1000

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demonstrators and 300 union leaders, effectively leaving the Bolivian labour movement leaderless. The unrest did not cease following the 1995 State of Siege, which bans demonstrations and gatherings of over 3 people. Those people caught demonstrating were arrested, including over 100 coca producers who were protesting in Cochabamba on 24-25 April 1995. The Human Rights Assembly, a Latin American-wide NGO, reported that, in addition to the numbers of people detained in 'concentration camp-style' confinement sites, approximately 26 people 'disappeared' following the declaration of the State of Siege (*Agencia LatinoAmericana de Información*, 6.5.95).

In late May 1995, the Bolivian government and labour unions signed an accord, effectively putting an end to the social unrest. Oscar Salas, head of the COB, admitted that the union leaders had to sign the document without a consensus having been reached. For example, the COB had demanded that the minimum monthly wage be raised to US$180, but it was finally raised from 190 to 205 Bolivianos (approximately US$43). The estimated cost of living for an average family in the country in 1995 was US$380 per month (*Associated Press*, 7.9.95).

On 21 July 1995, the pro-government majority in Congress approved the renewal of the State of Siege for a further 90 days. Continuing unrest amongst coca growers in El Chapare and threats to block the *Capitalisation* Programme convinced the government that exceptional circumstances justified the extension of the emergency. The response of all major unions and social movements was defiance and calls for a further national general strike from 25 July 1995. Several groups came out on hunger strike, including 2000 women from the peasants' confederation CSUTCB in

Cochabamba, demanding, and ultimately securing, the release of coca leader Evo Morales (Associated Press, 7.9.95).

Civil unrest continued to be a recurring theme over the course of the late 1990s, to the extent that not a year has gone by since 1995 without Bolivia experiencing some form of significant social protest. In January 1996, for example, the MNR Government was faced with a further series of strikes and protests at its attempts to balance the 1996 budget by, amongst other things, confining wage increases to 8% whilst raising petrol prices by 16% (Associated Press, 23.1.96). According to union leaders, the fuel price rise had already had wide repercussions, with substantial increases in food, services and transport costs.

In response, the COB called a twenty-four hour strike on 25 January 1996, supported by miners, social security workers, and health and education employees, calling for wage increases of 18%, a reconsideration of the rise in petrol tax, the halting of plans for the *capitalisation* of YPFB, the state oil company, and the resolution of the coca growers claims. The government responded by promising to begin talks with union leaders on 29 January but made veiled threats that a State of Siege may again be imposed if the unrest continued (Associated Press 2.2.96). More recently, in April 2000, the ADN coalition government declared a state of emergency following riots beginning in Cochabamba and La Paz, and spreading throughout the country, over plans to impose steep increases in water charges. The Banzer Administration responded to the demonstrations by sending in the army with rubber bullets and tear gas, riots ensued, resulting in the death of 6 protesters and the injury of 175 civilians (*A-Infos News Service* 2.5.00).

Conclusions

This brief overview of key economic issues and political changes in recent Bolivian history can be in many ways summarised by highlighting several emerging broad themes. The chronic economic crisis is, for example, an enduring feature of Bolivian life, and is inevitably connected to the similarly chronic social and political unrest - unrest which constantly bubbles and regularly boils over to sweep the nation with vociferous civil protests, commonly met with equally vociferous governmental repression. A common feature within the political sphere are the personality politics at play. Prior to the advent of modern civil democracy during the 1980s, Bolivia experienced a series of military regimes and dictatorships headed by paternalistic, authoritarian, and often charismatic (not necessarily used in any positive sesne) men. Since elective government entered the contemporary arena, we have again seen a predomination of paternalistic, charismatic figureheads, several of whom were the same authoritarian figureheads repackaged in a new 'democratic' form.

There thus appears to be an almost cyclical feature to Bolivian politics, a cycle which was further evidenced by the re-emergence of a reforming *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR) in the 1980's and 1990's. The MNR Party, headed by Paz Estenssoro (1952-56, 1960-64, 1985-9) took power initially in 1952 and swept through Bolivia with a reforming zeal, extending citizenship rights and introducing elective democracy. The central focus of this work is the Law of Popular Participation - part of a package of decentralising reforms introduced by Sánchez de Lozada (1993-97), leading the 'new' MNR revolution in the mid 1990s.

A further key theme is that of the role of cocaine in the Bolivian economy. That the Bolivian economy and, purportedly, its political institutions, is unofficially significantly supported by narco-dollars, it is not without irony that successive governments engage in the US-backed 'war against drugs'. The majority of *cocaleros* continue to be indigenous families, who, though they themselves do not see the bulk of the profits from the sale of cocaine, are, through their labour, in a sense the backbone of the Bolivian economy. There thus exists a perpetual tension between the repression of the *cocaleros* and the eradication of their crops, and the continued need for narco-dollars in the black economy[10].

There is then the need for the continued labour of the growers who are simultaneously being forcefully encouraged to discontinue their activities. There can thus be seen to be several enduring themes, and inevitable ironies, which stand as markers throughout Bolivia's contemporary history, and hence, whilst the detail may be forgotten, these recurrent commonalities remain as a contextual backdrop to any focus on the nation. In this way, with this rapid sweep of contemporary Bolivian history in a sense setting the scene, we can now examine in greater detail the specificities of the LPP, and its implications for differing sectors of Bolivian society.

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[10] 'narco-dollars' refers to the money raised by the drugs trade and associated industries within Bolivia which is purportedly an essential component of the Bolivian economy but that which is officially unrecognised – hence the reference to the 'black economy'. For a fuller account of the drugs economy in Bolivia refer to Hargreaves (1992).

Chapter 3

The Law of Popular Participation:

Significance, Potentialities & Initial Concerns

Introduction

As initially outlined in the introduction, in 1994 a series of democratising measures were introduced across Bolivia by the centrist MNR administration of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, more popularly know as 'Goni'. One of these reforms was concerned with bi-lingual education, which required for the first time that children be taught in both their vernacular and Spanish at the primary level and another, the central focus of this work, was the Law of Popular Participation (LPP). These reforms were very much de Lozada's creations, but Goni has since been replaced, in the 1997 elections, by the right wing *Acción Democrática Nacionalista* Party (ADN), headed by former military dictator, General Hugo Banzer.

Although Banzer was elected with less than 30% of the vote and so had to form what has been termed the *megacoalición* with three other parties - all of which are more centrist than Banzer's ADN - he nevertheless exerts significant power and influence over both political and military institutions (*Los Tiempos*, Cochabamba, 6.8.97). The former military dictator re-presented himself as something of an elder statesman, committed to civilian democracy for the elections in 1997. His critics, however,

claim that since taking power the political atmosphere is not one conducive to the encouragement of democratisation and the extension of citizenship rights.

Indeed, according to the 1998 report of the *Comisión Andina de Juristas* (CAJ), democracy in the Andean region is being compromised by the 'subsistence [...] of authoritarian contents dressed up in democratic forms'. The report went onto to state that this, combined with the extreme levels of poverty, the economic crisis, and the lack of national resources to satisfy social needs, has led to institutional stability being threatened by strikes and protest actions (cited in *Latin American Weekly Report*, 23.3.99).

As if to support the CAJ's accusations of underlying authoritarianism, the ruling ADN arrested Otto Ritter in August 1999, the leader of a small leftist party, the *Falange Socialista Boliviana* (FSB), which until that point was a member of the *megacoalición*, on grounds of both insulting the President and sedition. Ritter had stated publicly that Banzer was unfit to rule (the insult) and had called for his resignation (sedition) (*Latin American Weekly Report* 31.8.99). Although a court subsequently ordered his release a few days later, that the ADN arrested the leader of a party for speaking against the President could be seen as demonstrating something of a lack of committment to democractic rights.

It would, nevertheless, be unfair to claim that this state of affairs is one which has been introduced since the advent of the new Banzer administration in 1997. As has been outlined in chapter 2, and which will be discussed further in chapter 5, there have been many serious problems of, for example, repressive policies, extreme levels

of poverty, and not least the low-intensity warfare between the coca-growers, or *cocaleros*, and the military both during and prior to Goni's MNR Administration (1993-7) which governed immediately prior to the current ADN government. Indeed, given Goni's somewhat repressive policies towards the largely indigenous *cocaleros* during his latest political emergence as President, this makes the introduction of such potentially far-reaching democratisation measures in 1994 seem somewhat incongruous when placed within the broader socio-economic and political context.

It is, then, with this context in mind that the following chapter will provide both an outline of the main tenets of the Law of Popular Participation and an initial examination of the potential implications of this reform for various sectors of Bolivian society.

The Law in Outline: From Inception to Implementation

The Law of Popular Participation (LPP), introduced in April 1994 by the then ruling MNR Administration headed by President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (1993-97), was part of a broader decentralisation package described as a programme for 'municipalisation plus popular vigilance'[1]. It involves a significant measure of administrative and fiscal decentralisation as a well as a novel attempt to conjoin conventional elective local administration with representation of community and indigenous peoples' organisations. The LPP was created and implemented by an enthusiastic legislative team drafted in by President Sánchez de Lozada. The legislative team significantly consisted of a diverse group of academics, independent

reform-minded intellectuals and former NGO activists, constituting a meeting of minds between neo-liberal reformism and a variety of democratising and indigenist tendencies - a mix reflected both in the text and initial implementation of the Law.

An interesting factor in the birth of the LPP was that it was very much regarded as Goni's creation, and his hand-picked legislative team were not 'Government people'. Indeed, the LPP caused something of a split between the President and his supporters and the 'Old Guard' MNR who wanted to use the LPP as a system of control - as a means of placing their own people at the local and municipal levels and to thus prepare the ground for the 1997 elections[2].

Goni and his team had other ideas for their reform. Together with the overall decentralisation effort, the LPP provides a comprehensive plan for a less top-heavy and more integrated national State, with greater scope for the representation of both regional interests and formerly disenfranchised rural and minority groups. The LPP is thus a highly significant reform with the potential to substantially change the way in which Bolivian society relates to itself, not least because it opens the way for an extension of citizenship throughout the country and provides a means by which regional communities are able to have greater participation in their own future development.

In brief, through the LPP, Bolivia has been divided into over 300 municipalities, creating a new layer of autonomous elective local government and thus significantly

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[1] Xavier Albó, CIPCA, interviewed La Paz, January 1996

reconstituting the exisitng system of municipal sub-divisions. At the same time it provides a core budget for these municipal governments in the form of a 20% share of national tax revenue distributed in proportion to the size of the local population. Together these provisions have the effect of driving down a significant proportion of government revenue to a level of local government where, from the point of view of significant public expenditure on basic services, the Bolivian State can barely be said to have existed before.

Within each of these municipalities a Territorial Base Organisation (OTB) should be created which is responsible for deciding upon, planning and implementing social programmes. These may include, for example, the upgrading of local infrastructure such as roads and clean water supplies, and facilities such as schools or health centres. Existing community organisations can apply to become their local OTB, which has meant that the majority of OTBs are made up of pre-existing community, union and indigenous groups who take on this additional function.

Alongside the OTBs, each municipality elects a Vigilance Committee (CV) whose role is to oversee the work of the OTBs and act as an interface between the community and the elected municipal government, primarily to guard against corruption and misuse of public funding provided through the LPP. Again the CVs are made up of locally elected representatives from the municipality, and often thus tend to be activists already representative of local union, community or indigenous groups.

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[2] Winston Moore, economist and consultant to Ministry of Capitalisation, interviewed La Paz, January 1996

According to the Law, the LPP funds, known as *coparticipción tributaria*, should be spent on social development as outlined in an Annual Development Plan (PAO). The PAO for each municipality should be formulated through 'participative decision-making' - the OTB calls together the local community and between them they should decide on their development priorities for that year. The OTB then writes these up into a PAO and submits it to the municipal councillors who should discuss any changes they wish to make, and confer with the OTB with regards the subsequent final PAO, before ensuring that their decisions, and the PAO itself, are made publicly available.

In an attempt to smooth the progress of the reform, the newly created Secretariat of Popular Participation, responsible for overseeing the implementation of the LPP, set about strengthening the municipalities through training and technical assistance, providing a series of workshops to inform people of the principles of the Law, and of the roles of the OTBs and CVs. Whilst there is no requirement for municipal governments to spend their funds on social projects such as, for example health, education or sanitation, they are advised that social investments are beneficial and viewed favourably. Indeed, funds channelled through the LPP are largely intended for social and infrastructal programmes rather than for running costs such as salaries and maintenance, which remain the responsibility of the central government[3].

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[3] José Durán Guillén, Asesor de Captaciones, Fondo de Inversión Social, interviewed La Paz, January 1996

These, then, form the central tenets of the LPP - the ways in which it should *ideally* function. The implementation and operation of the reform is, however, clearly open to varied interpretation, and it is this interpretation and ultimate implementation which subsequently affects people's opinions and experiences of Popular Participation. Even prior to its intitial implementation, this understanding of the intentions of the LPP gave rise to a number of concerns in several quarters.

Non-Governmental Concerns

There are, then, several aspects of the reform which have caused understandable disquiet amongst various sectors of society. There was some anxiety, for example, amongst the Non-Governmental Organisational (NGO) community that the LPP would both undermine their own attempts at social development in the regions and that the LPP would be a means of co-opting them into the State apparatus. Whilst such concerns do have a certain degree of legitimacy within Bolivia's historical context, according to the Secretariat of Popular Participation, it is government policy that NGOs be integrated into municipal planning under the LPP in an attempt to improve and consolidate the efficacy of the efforts of both. It is stressed that this plan is not an attempt to co-opt NGOs and compromise their non-governmental status, but merely that they coordinate their plans with the municipal governments - the stress made is upon the distinction between being *non-governmental* and *anti-state*[4]. It should ideally be the case that NGOs benefit from the LPP rather than see themselves being usurped or coopted by it as they are often in the best position to be awarded the

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[4] Ruben Ardaya Salinas, Director de Foralecimiento Municipal, Secretaria Nacional de Participación Popular, interviewed, La Paz, January 1996

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contracts to carry out any social programmes funded through the Law. Furthermore, there exist strong community organisations throughout Bolivia which have survived attempts throughout the post-war period to destroy them. Such community organisations have been largely responsible for implementing communal projects without central funding or recognition. The LPP is a way in which such community efforts are given official recognition and funding[5].

Initial Misunderstandings & Practical Shortcomings

The concerns of the NGO community extended, particularly during the initial stages of the implementation of the LPP, to widespread suspicion and some hostility amongst union, peasant and indigenous organisations across the country. There was resistance to the idea of the introduction of Territorial Base Organisations (OTBs) as instruments of decision-making within municipalities. It was initially believed that these OTBs were intended to be new creations which would run parallel to, and undermine the work and power of, existing community-based organisations, be they *sindicatos*, *campesino* groups or indigenous organisations. This was in fact a misunderstanding born of poor communcation, and a somewhat technocratic style of policy formulation, between the State and the regions as to the intention and workings of the LPP. Such suspicions are nevertheless understandable in the socio-political and historical context of Bolivia, in which the State, be it civilian or military, has repeatedly attempted to repress or co-opt groups and organisations perceived as potentially subversive.

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[5] Luis Ramirez Velarde, Asesor General, Secretaria Nacional de Participación Popular, interviewed La Paz, January 1996

The result of this misunderstanding concerning the principle of the LPP and, within that, of the OTBs led to its initial rejection by non-governmental groups, and consequently the slow registration of OTBs across the country. Through a widespread publicity campaign and training workshops, the Secretariat of Popular Participation gradually managed to persuade union, *campesino* and indigenous leaders that OTBs were supposed to be pre-existing territorial organisations - that, for example, the *sindicatos* could themselves register as the local OTB and thus extend their involvement and power within local decision-making. Once the realisation of the potential extension of political power dawned on local organisations, the various leaderships changed their messages of non-cooperation to their membership, and OTB registration began in earnest.

There do remain, however, significant issues regarding the Vigilance Committees (CVs) who are supposedly elected by the local population to oversee the working of the municipal councillors and the OTBs. The main problems are a lack of understanding of their role, largely through ineffective communication and a lack of training, and a lack of resources with which to enable the Committee members to carry out their duties. CV members do not receive a salary or funding for their work - deliberately so due to a fear by the Secretariat of Popular Participation that the role could become a potential source of corruption, the idea being that it should be a voluntary civic duty rather than a source of financial gain. Unfortunately this means that time taken off their own work to undertake their 'Vigilance' is not compensatable, neither are sufficient funds provided to enable the CV to meet on a regular basis. Meetings can involve members travelling long distances and in doing

so overcoming often substantial logistical problems. Without adequate reimbursement for their time and expenses, combined with a lack of complete understanding as to the actual role and extension of the power of the CVs, members, particularly those in more marginal, rural municipalities, feel little compunction, and often do not possess the fiscal ability, to embrace their new roles with enthusiasm.

A further issue which affects all three levels of formal LPP organisation - the newly elected municipal councillors, OTB and CV members, and ultimately the voting population who are supposed to participate in the formulation of the Annual Development Plans (PAOs) which determine how the LPP funds are to be spent - is the fact that the LPP is essentially a 'Spanish' reform. On a practical level this means that the guidelines, training and any interface between the municipality and the State are written or conducted in Spanish. In many regions Spanish is not the first language, and may even be a third rather than second language. This can inevitably lead to direct communication problems and engender misunderstandings. One example of this problem was found in Independencia, a municipality in the High Andes in which one of the elected councillors, a Quechuan *sindicato* leader, did not speak or read Spanish and so the reform itself and the related LPP workings had to be constantly translated[6].

That the LPP is a 'Spanish' reform has also been seen as an issue which goes beyond the purely linguistic and into the realms of ideology and perception. It has been argued that the LPP encapsulates a concept of participation and democratisation

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[6] Based on fieldwork in Independencia in 1996. The introduction of the LPP into this region will be examined in further detail in chapter 7.

which does not necessarily match concepts of social organisation and participation within the communities into which it has been introduced[7]. What consitutes participation is not a universally agreed phenomenon, but rather is one which can vary significantly between people, cultures and regions[8]. An element of this debate is illustrated in the following extract from an interview with Victor Hugo Causaya, an experienced Bolivian NGO worker and social researcher with a private research centre, the *Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social* (CERES) in Cochabamba:

'The law itself in many places, and many people who work with the issue of popular participation are always saying that the law is based on the participative tradition of Bolivian culture. It is in part, and in part not, but what they don't state clearly, these people and the law, and its history, is that the culture of Bolivian participation is a participative culture of an authoritarian type - vertical. So they say that Bolivia has a great cultural tradition of participation, and it has, but it has never been democratic. It has always been vertical, so there is this confusion when someone from outside reads that here in Bolivia there is a traditional participative tradition, it gives the idea that we're all democratic and this is not true.

People here in Cochabamba, for example, have not participated in the PAOs. Each one understands popular participation as they want, so if we're going to

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[7] From interviews with Luz Marie Calvo, Sub-Secretariat of Ethnic Affairs, Ministry of Human Development, January, 1996, Rosario León, an anthropologist and social researcher within CERES, June, 1996, , and Victor Hugo Causaya, social researcher, CERES, July, 1997.
[8] For a useful recent debate as to the potential problematics and dynamics of 'participation' within the field of development refer to Cooke and Kothari (2001).

look back to the traditional culture, the form in which the people know how to participate is by working, not taking decisions. Doing things to support participation, talking, working, participating in the sense of going to meetings, but even participating in a meeting means keeping quiet and saying "I participated in the meeting". That is why the tradition is important to understand, when the people say we have a participative culture, logically it is true, but their conception of what is participation is very limited - it means being present in a meeting but not decision-making [...] It is a form of participation but it is not the most important. But when we talk of decision-making, that is where the conflicts arise' (Victor Hugo Causaya, CERES, Cochabamba, July 1997).

In this way, there can be a distinct difference between *de jure* and *de facto* participation. In the case of the formulation of the PAOs, for example, under the LPP the whole community is supposed to be consulted and contribute to their development. It may, however, be the case that people are asked to attend a meeting at which they are informed of the contents of their development plan, but not given an opportunity to participate in any deeper sense. Thus, despite the stated intentions of the LPP amongst its creators, the ways in which it is actually implemented and the commitment towards or translation of the meaning of popular participation may vary significantly amongst individual gate-keepers throughout the municipalities.

Territorial Boundary Issues

A further aspect of the LPP which has caused some concern, not least amongst indigenous communities, is the issue of boundary change. Whilst this issue does not form a substantive focus of this thesis - because it did not feature in the regions within which the fieldwork for this study was based - I nevertheless wish to present an overview of these concerns as expressed by Indigenous/*Campesino* leaders, NGO workers, and the Sub-Sectratariat of Ethnic Affairs[9]. Bolivia is a nation divided politically and culturally and there exist strong hierarchic structures at community levels, with regional elites dominating local politics and power. These complex divisions are further exacerbated by ethnic divides and territorial claims. Indeed indigenous territorial disputes continue to periodically boil over into physical skirmishes in some regions[10]. It was into this context that the reform was introduced, and, under the LPP the country has been divided into 311 new municipalities which has inevitably involved the re-drawing of territorial boundaries[11].

That these new boundaries do not necessarily coincide with pre-existing territorial divisions leaves open the possibility of conflict over the municipal 'splitting' of old territorial claims. Furthermore, because the LPP revenue (termed *coparticipación tributaria*) is allocated according to population size, who is 'in' one municipal

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[9] Based on interviews with Xavier Albó, Luz Marie Calvo, Ricardo Catoira, Ivonne Farah, Marcial Fabricano, Ramiro Molina and Alejo Véliz, Jan-Feb, 1996 (refer to Appendix 1 for full details of persons interviewed).
[10] From interviews with Olivia Harris, Anthropologist at Goldsmith's College, Fernando Calderón, UNDP, and Luis Ramirez Velarde op.cit., La Paz, January 1996. Also, according to NGO worker, Juan Perico, there are recurrent frontier disputes in Northern Potosí, predating the LPP, which are often a pretext for cultural and religious divisions.
[11] Unfortunately I have been unable to procure a useful map which would demonstrate these boundary changes - at the time of the research no such map was publicly available.

boundary as opposed to another becomes far more important in terms of the funds that region receives. The potential for conflict over new official municipal boundaries versus older territorial allegiances is thus created. In this way, Luz Marie Calvo of *the Sub-Secretaria de Asuntos Etnicos*, thus sees potential serious problems in the LPP from an indigenous perspective. As she says:

'The Law has led to the cutting up of areas where indigenous groups have been working, and therefore weakening these groups. In this way it may be the case that some ethnic groups may lose more than they gain by the LPP, for example, the Guaraní are spread over three Departments, six different Provinces and twelve Municipalities. Similarly, the Chiquitanos live across the boundaries of five Provinces and fifteen Municipalities in one Department. This imposition of new boundaries which divide indigenous groups is a potential problem because within the current LPP, municipal governments are not required to coordinate on policy-making. In principle municipalities form autonomous governments who do not have to work with neighbouring areas even when developing policy effecting an ethnic grouping which spreads beyond the boundaries of the municipality' (Calvo, Sub-Secretariat of Ethnic Affairs, Ministry of Human Development, La Paz, January 1996).

That such existing indigenous territories were not explicitly taken into account when determining new municipal boundaries inevitably caused a certain degree of frustration and conflict between indigenous communities and the State. It must be acknowledged, however, that this atomisation of indigenous groups is by no means a new phenomenon - one only has to think of the Andean Quechuan and Aymaran

peoples who extend their territories across national borders of Bolivia and Peru - but one which has initially been exacerbated by the LPP process[12]. Thus, in an attempt to confront this issue, indigenous organisations and the *Sub-Secretaria de Asuntos Etnicos* are collaborating in a project to develop a new national 'map'.

Departmental boundaries are seen to be a key to this issue, but it is expected that there would be significant resistance to any suggestion of change in these boundaries[13], not least due to the fact that, as mentioned above, LPP monies are allocated according to population size in a given municipality. According to Rubén Ardaya, *Director de Fortalecimiento Municipal* within the *Sub-Secretaria de Participación Popular*, during 1995 there were over 80 boundary disputes, some of which are seen to be more serious than others. There was, for example a dispute between Cochabamba and Sacaba because the original boundary had been set by the route of a riverbed which has shifted over the years meaning that approximately 8,000 people have 'moved' Department[14].

Furthermore, according to Marcial Fabricano Noé, president of the *Confederación Indígena del Oriente, Chaco y Amazonia de Bolivia* (CIDOB), indigenous concepts of territory may differ from those imposed by the LPP, which has different ways of defining structures and areas. Similarly, Bigenho (2000) examines concepts of locality as expressed through rituals of carnival amongst the highland indigenous group in

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[12] The non-correspondence between modern and traditional boundaries is a phenomena which has of course affected indigenous peoples in many other regions throughout the world, a notable example being the re-mapping of Africa during the processes of colonisation in the 19th Century (Dumont (1988), Turok (1991), Binns (1994).

[13] Luz Marie Calvo, Sub-Secretaria de Asuntos Etnicos, Ministeria de Desarollo Humano, interview January 1996

Yura within the Department of Potosí. She argues that whilst the rituals associated with the LPP seek to map ethnic identities onto discrete territories, the ethnic identities which emerge from the rituals of carnival are more concerned with the movement of people through space, time and music.

Through the 'privileging of visually perceived representations' (Bigenho, 2000:957), in other words by physically dividing the nation into bounded regions via a map, the logic behind the LPP assumed populations were attached to bounded territories within a national grid, an assumption which misses the complexities and subtleties which make up the multi-layered nature of the ways in which people construct and identify with their local spaces. Thus, using the example of ritualised carnival in the Yura as one way in which the local Andean population defines its sense of spatial identity, Bigenho explains,

'Domain over place in the case of carnival depends on performing and listening individuals, a dependence on subjectivities that prioritizes people and centrepoints over margins or limits of territory. The rituals of the state, as viewed through the implementation of a law, attempt to establish domain over the same place through mapping activities that emphasize visually represented contiguous territorial unities and the limits of those territories' (Bigenho, 2000:957).

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[14] Rubén Ardaya Salinas, Director de Fortalecimiento Municipal, Secretaria de Participación Popular, interviewed January 1996

She suggests that the Yureños are both involved in, and simultaneously utilise, the 'ritual' of the state and the rituals of carnival as ways of constructing their sense of locality, and that whilst 'the rituals of carnival appear to be more open to the ambiguities of multiple belongings', nevertheless, 'the music of carnival and the language of bureaucracy both fix fluid processes of identification' (Bigenho, 2000:957).

The essential point here is that the ways in which people construct their sense of belonging within a socio-territorial context may both vary over time and place and be manifested through a plurality of 'ritual' performances which reflect the complex construction of identities. The LPP expresses identification with a locality through the fixed visual mapping of territorial boundaries, but this means of constructing spacial identification may be but one dimension of 'belonging' to a place. People's perceptions of an attachment to a locality may go beyond the purely geographical and enter the realms of the imagination, hence the ability to evoke a sense of place through music and dance[15]. The imposition of such boundaries may thus not coincide with or fully capture the sense of territory amongst a given population, and, although indigenous populations have necessarily worked with such external edicts and may integrate them into their existing practices and perceptions, the possibility of conflict and problematic insensitivity nevertheless arises which goes beyond the purely fiscal concerns of *coparticipación tributaria.*[16]

[15] Bruce Chatwin's novel 'The Songlines' (Picador 1987) which examines Aboriginal performance of belonging and identity through song and dance comes to mind here.
[16] For a detailed analysis of the distribution and socio-economic circumstances of indigenous peoples in Bolivia refer to CPIB/CIDDEBENI (1995), Rivero and Loayza (1995), and Ayllu Sartañäni, (1995)

Carnetización

A further issue which, although pre-dating the LPP, has been brought into the spotlight as a result of it, is that of official civilian registration or *carnetización*. There is an historic problem throughout Bolivia of the low registration of the population. Registration entitles people to an identity card or carnet, which enables them to vote and through which people gain formal access to citizenship rights. To play a part in the election of local municipal councillors under the LPP an individual needs a carnet. It is, however, estimated that approximately 60% of the population do not possess such documents, the majority of whom tend to be indigenous people, and more specifically women[17]. A significant factor in this gender imbalance is the tendency for young men to be given carnets through military service, an option not generally open to women[18].

Other factors affecting low registration are the widespread poverty amongst many sectors of the population, coupled with a sense of disenfranchisement from national politics, which means that buying a carnet is often regarded as an unnecessary luxury. Indeed, there are numerous reasons why people do not possess an identity card, and particularly why indigenous women are disproportionately effected - many such women, for example, tend to work in the informal sector, in the unofficial and unrecognised economy within which official documentation is not usually required. Furthermore, it has tended to be the case that politics is regarded (largely by men, but

[17] Luis Ramirez Velarde op.cit., La Paz, January 1996
[18] Sonia Montaño, formerly Sub-Secretaria de Asuntos de Género, Ministerio de Desarollo Humano, interviewed La Paz, January 1996

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also by many women) as an essentially 'male domain', so why would a woman want to be able to vote and thus need a carnet?

On the other hand, the majority of *comerciantes* or traders tend to be female and there are times when documentation is required at check points when travelling to market, and so those women who are engaged in commercial activities are more likely to possess a carnet than those who are not. Nevertheless, the problem of low registration exists, and whilst there is a programme to accelerate *carnetización* - the *Registro Unico Nacional* (RUN), supported by the Danish Aid Agency, DANIDA - this has been a rather slow process, dogged by the fact that RUN is based in the *Ministerio de Gobierno*, which is linked to immigration issues and thus tends to be viewed suspiciously as a police matter[19]. Thus, if there is to be a genuine commitment to popular participation, greater action must be taken to render suffrage a reality for all the eligible population.

More positively, the LPP is further significant in that it is not only the first piece of Bolivian legislation which countenances the recognition of traditional indigenous organisations such as *ayllus*[20], and peasant unions or *sindicatos*, but it is also the first law to include an explicit dimension of gender-awareness[21]. According to various political commentators, the LPP thus has the potential to redefine relations between

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[19] Juan Perico, NGO worker, interviewed La Paz, January 1996
[20] Ayllus are ancient Aymaran systems of socio-territorial organisation, originally kinship-based, which remain significant today, particularly on the Aymaran-dominated Altiplano
[21] The implications of the LPP in relation to both indigenous groups and gender dynamics will be examined in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

the central State and other levels of power, and particularly between the State and indigenous groups[22].

Issues arising from the concept and implementation of the LPP will be examined in greater detail in different contexts throughout this work. Initially, however, it is useful to outline three abstract 'scenarios' which seem in many ways to encapsulate the potentialities and possible longer term dynamics of the reform. The following hypotheses were developed as part of the study conducted for SIDA between 1995 and 1997[23] and may be usefully reproduced here in order to provide a framework within which subsequent analyses can be viewed.

Popular Participation: Predictions of Potential Implications

The majority of those questioned throughout the research believed that the LPP is a highly significant reform, one which, although the ultimate implications and effects will not be known for several years, nevertheless promises substantial change in the way Bolivian society relates to itself. This consensus arises partly from various specific features of the law and its initial implementation, discussed below, and partly from a shared appreciation of the socio-political context within which the legal changes are being made. The contextual factors include the historic centralism and ethnic exclusivism of the Bolivian state, the reality from which the law aims to make

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[22] Fernando Calderón and Luz Marie Calvo op.cit, La Paz, January 1996

[23] Study commissioned by SIDA and conducted by myself with David Booth, Charlottta Widmark, Xavier Albó, Oscar Bezoberry, Mónica Crespo, Benjo Alconz, Porfirio Alconz, Norka Aranibar, Blanca Huanacu, Mónica Herbas, Alberto Lizárraga, Karen Ruiz, Juan Torrico, Gonzalo Vargas, Humberto Vargas and David Vocal. The findings were written-up by myself and David Booth and submitted to SIDA in a report entitled 'Popular Participation: Democratising the State in Rural Bolivia' (June 1997).

a radical departure. They also include the fact that the country is the inheritor of several distinct traditions of non-authoritarian government, one based on Western concepts of representative democracy, the other(s) drawing on indigenous traditions of self-rule through community participation in collective decisions.

While there is some consensus on the importance of these factors, there is much less agreement on whether the likely outcomes of the LPP will make an unproblematically positive contribution to the democratisation of Bolivian society. These differences stem to some extent from different appreciations of the thrust of the law. They may also reflect to some degree varied understandings of the meaning of 'democratisation'. Within this, the term democratisation through this text should be taken to refer to processes of *'social and political change leading to a net increase in the ability of ordinary people to exercise control over the forces that affect their lives. Though democratisation implies new institutional arrangements and increasing scope for choice between alternative possibilities, it does not by definition entail any particular institutional form (e.g. parliaments or party competition)'*(Booth et al. 1997:7). However, theses differences of opinion regarding the potential `outcomes of the LPP are much more the result of the greater or lesser emphasis placed on certain additional contextual factors of outstanding importance.

Based on interviews and fieldwork conducted throughout Phases I, II and III, between 1995 and 1997, the more pessimistic or sceptical interpretations tend to emphasise one or more of the following factors[24]:

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[24] The following scenarios were developed by the research team as a result of findings of the SIDA study and are similarly outlined in Booth & Clisby et al. 'Popular Participation: Democratising the State in Rural Bolivia' 1997, op. cit. pp.7-10.

- *Bolivia's long tradition since Independence of 'modernising incorporation'.* This refers to processes which increase the unity and coherence of the national state by absorbing the culture and forms of organisation of the country's indigenous majorities and minorities, in a clearly subordinate position, into those of the dominant Western-Christian tradition.

- *The powerful role exercised since 1952 of prebendal[25] or clientelistic forms of politics.* This is important as the source of an effective mechanism of 'modernising incorporation' under contemporary conditions, because of the way it facilitates the co-optation of the leaders of formerly autonomous organisations. First, 'modern' forms of organisation are adopted by traditional communities in their desire to gain access to the benefits offered by the national state (peasant unions, mothers' clubs, indigenous peoples' movements, etc.). Then, these are incorporated into a dependent role as a result of the co-optation of their leaderships by the dominant political forces of the day (the military, political parties, etc.).

- *The fundamental disjunction between the political map of modern Bolivia and the contours and boundaries of the remaining organisation of precolumbian and native America.* The effect of the systematic non-correspondence between modern and traditional boundaries, it is argued, is to condemn to failure any effort towards empowerment of the marginalised

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[25] The expression is used to refer to arrangements in which public offices or leadership position gives access to 'spoils' or illegitimate income, and can come to be pursued primarily for that reason.

majorities - however well intended - which takes the existing political constitution of the country as its starting-point.

- *Attempts to facilitate the equal participation of men and women extend little further than the text of the Law itself.* This is due to the failure of the Law to address the underlying structural inequalities which dictate that the public/political sphere remains a predominantly male domain.

On the other hand, the more positive or sanguine view tends to stress one or more of the following:

- *The relatively rich social fabric and political culture that has been formed in Bolivia through the interaction between these efforts towards dependent incorporation, and the resistance and counter-strategies they have incited.* The process of 'incorporation', it is argued, has always been a two-sided game, with considerable scope for strategising and mutual deception on both sides. As a result, the organisations of the indigenous majorities and minorities have considerably greater real autonomy and capacity for self-determination than appears at first sight.

- *The significant possibilities that now exist within Bolivian politics for forms of 'reverse co-optation' in which traditional communities and mass organisations succeed in turning the tables on their 'patrons', the political parties.* In the competitive, neo-liberal political system now established in Bolivia, it is suggested, there are new - limited but important - opportunities for

oppressed groups, including potentially at least, gender-based movements, to impose their demands on political parties in a real and effective way.

- *The importance of what has already been achieved in this conjuncture towards the officialisation of demands of the mass movement for reconstitution of the state on plurinational/multicultural lines.* Recognition of the ethno-cultural diversity of Bolivia now has a significant place on the national political agenda. Against that background, it is argued, incremental efforts to adapt the political map to the requirements of ethnic self-determination have far greater chances of success than would have been conceivable in other times (Booth et.al. 1997:7-10).

The third scenario would be one which incorporated a combination of the above hypotheses. The resulting outcomes may include both negative and positive potentialities of the reform in regional variation, or else lead to little tangible or effective change in the *status quo.* These various contradictory, positive and negative scenarios, provide a framework within which the ideology behind and practical aims of the LPP may be evaluated.

It is then, within in this context that the following analysis of the implications of the LPP for various sectors of Bolivian society should be viewed. However, before focusing on the implication of the reform for indigenous peoples, *campesino* organisations and women's community groups, it is important to discuss the methodological contexts within which the research was conducted. The following

chapter will thus provide an outline and critical examination of the research process

itself.

Chapter 4

The Research Process: Participation, Ownership & Power Dynamics

The process of the research from which this thesis has arisen has, by the nature of the courses it has taken, encompassed a range of relatively complex and, at times, difficult epistemological and methodological issues. When looking back at the research process as a whole, an image of a meandering watercourse comes to mind, one which has many tributaries, one which both diverges and remerges, and one which has rather muddy banks and the odd rotting carcass being buffeted along in its eddies and currents. The process itself, then, has inevitably raised a number of issues worthy of critical analysis, but the focus of this analysis will be upon the nature and implications of feminist participatory methodologies. Initially, then, in this chapter, I will outline as clearly as possible the chronology of the research methodology and contexts, before moving on to critically analyse the nature of the processes themselves.

The research can best be viewed as a culmination of three relatively distinct phases. It began life as a study commissioned by the Departments for Latin America (Phase I), and Policy and Legal Issues (Phase II) at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and was completed following a third phase of independent doctoral research. Phases I and II were carried out in collaboration with the Development Studies Unit at the Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Hull University, and

the *Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económico y Social* (CERES) in Cochabamba, Bolivia. The research coordinator was Professor David Booth, then working at Hull University. Following Phases I and II, I returned to Bolivia and continued work alone, to conduct further, specifically doctoral, research in an urban context.

The study for SIDA (Phases I and II) involved a total of fifteen Bolivian researchers working in four teams, plus David Booth and myself from the University of Hull, and Charlotta Widmark from the University of Stockholm. Phase I, based largely on documentary research and interviews conducted between December 1995 and February 1996 by Booth, Clisby and Widmark, was completed on the production of the Phase I report in May 1996 (Booth et. al., 1996). Phase II, conducted between May and September 1996, involved team-based participatory fieldwork in four selected rural communities throughout Bolivia[1]. The final Phase II report was completed in March 1997 (Booth et al, 1997).

Throughout Phase I and II of the study I worked as research assistant to David Booth, being involved in both the field research and writing of the final reports. During Phase II, I worked within three of the four research teams over three different sites (Independencía and Puerto Villaroel in the Department of Cochabamba, and San Ignacio de Moxos in the Amazon region of Bení), but focusing particularly on Independencía and working with this team throughout the period of our research and writing-up.

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[1] The researchers were: David Booth & Suzanne Clisby (University of Hull), Xavier Albó, Oscar Bazoberry, Mónica Crespo (CIPCA), Benjo Alconz, Porfirio Alconz, Norka Aranibar, Blanca Huanacu (Ayllu Sartañäni), Mónica Herbas, Alberto Lizárraga, Karen Ruiz, Juan Torrico, Gonzalo Vargas, Humberto Vargas, David Vocal (CERES),Charlotta Widmark (University of Stockholm)

The study findings were disseminated by David Booth, Humberto Vargas (coordinator of the Cochabamba team), myself and Charlotta Widmark, at a series of consultative meetings attended by representatives from SIDA, the Bolivian Government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in Bolivia and the Bolivian academic and research community. These were held in La Paz and Cochabamba in February 1997 in order that any feedback could be incorporated into the final report submitted to SIDA in March 1997.

Following the dissemination of the Phase I and II research findings in February 1997, I stayed in Bolivia to conduct independent doctoral research until September 1997.

To summarise:

- **Phase I** was conducted between December 1995 and February 1996 in La Paz and Cochabamba and involved myself, David Booth, and Charlotta Widmark.

- **Phase II** was conducted between May and September 1996 in Corque on the Altiplano, Independencía in the High Andes, Puerto Villeroel in the Chapare region, and San Ignacio de Moxos in the Amazon region of Bení. This involved a total of seventeen researchers divided into four teams.

- **Phase III** was conducted between February and September 1997 in Cochabamba and was undertaken by myself, independently of the SIDA study.

Phases I & II: The *Ley de Participacion Popular* in Rural Contexts

The aims of the research were to examine and analyse the implications of the Law of

Popular Participation (LPP) in Bolivia for particular sectors of the population.

Emphasis was placed upon the implications of the LPP for poor and marginalised

groups, including members of traditional rural communities in Aymaran and

Quechuan speaking areas of the Altiplano and minority peoples in the Eastern and

Northern Amazonian lowlands. The initial research, commissioned by SIDA, also

aimed, within this, to pay attention to the gender dimensions of the Law, and the

gendered implications of the LPP became a particular focus of the subsequent

independent research undertaken in the urban context of Cochabamba.

Following several months of desk-based study in the UK, the first period of field-

research took place between December and February 1995-6 in La Paz and

Cochabamba. During this initial period a series of semi-structured interviews were

conducted with a selected range of approximately 30 key politicians, academics and

researchers either directly or indirectly involved in the creation, development, and

implementation of the Law itself. These commentators included representatives from

the National Secretariat of Popular Participation, Ministry of Human Development,

Sub-Secretariat of Ethnic Affairs, and Gender Sub-Secretariat. In addition a range of

perspectives were sought from various NGOs, trade union groups, political

organisations, academics, and the thriving indigenous research community concerned

with a wide range of social, economic, political and cultural issues[2].

Combined with secondary data analysis, this first phase of the research provided a broad grounding in the historical, political and socio-cultural contexts within which the LPP emerged. This collation of documentary evidence and informed opinion served as a foundation for subsequent research which focused more specifically upon the implications of the Law in selected communities within rural and urban Bolivian contexts.

The second phase of the study took place between May and August 1996, and involved four teams of researchers working in four distinct areas of Bolivia, chosen to reflect the cultural and ecological diversity of the region:

- Aymaran communities on the Altiplano (Corque);

- Quechuan communities in the High Andes (Independencía);

- Largely Quechuan communities within the coca growing region, and conflict zone, of El Chapare (Puerto Villeroel);

- Minority peoples in the Eastern and Northern Amazonian regions, specifically Ignacianos, Trinitatrios, Yuracares, Movimas and Chimanes (San Ignacio de Moxos).

I worked with three of the four teams, in the High Andes, the Amazonian regions, and in El Chapare. The latter area was however, a rather short-lived experience for me as,

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2 See appendix 1 for list of persons interviewed during Phase 1 of the study

being the only Western presence in the team, I was viewed with some suspicion by the local *cocaleros* in the union-dominated region. This was entirely understandable as the coca-growers have been involved in a prolonged conflict with a US-backed Bolivian government in their 'war against drugs'. As was more fully discussed in chapter 2, this conflict has led to harassment, displacement, and killings within numerous communities throughout the region, perpetrated by both the Bolivian and US armed forces. It was not surprising, then, that I was viewed as a representative of the 'Western Imperialist Oppressors', and thus, as will be discussed in due course, it was felt that my continued presence would compromise the research.

Prior to outlining the research aims and methodologies in more detail it is important here to make a note about language use. The research was primarily conducted in Spanish, with the use of Aymaran and Quechuan where necessary (for example in the High Andes, the Altiplano and El Chapare). The Bolivian teams were selected to include researchers with fluency in Ayamaran or Quechuan - the team working in Corque on the Altiplano, for example, were Ayamaran and from the region, similarly the teams in the Quechuan-speaking areas.

Where possible (without compromising the wishes or abilities of the participants) work was conducted in Spanish so as to allow the non-Bolivian researchers to understand the proceedings, otherwise team members translated both during the workshops where appropriate, and afterwards during the team's de-briefing sessions. This, on the whole, worked well, but one must not to discount the issue of translation itself – in effect in several instances information was translated from Quechuan or

Aymaran to Spanish, and subsequently to English. What was inevitably lost or changed during this process remains a matter for conjecture.

During the research I conducted alone in Cochabamba I clearly had to use purely Spanish, knowing only one rather rude phrase in Quechaun and no Aymaran. In the Cochabamban context this did not prove to be an obstacle in the sense that urban *Cochabambinos*, whether of Quechuan or Aymaran background, used Spanish as their language of public discourse. What should not be underestimated, however, is the often problematic nature of conducting research in a foreign language. Language is clearly full of subtleties and inflections which can be difficult for anyone attempting to work within it for whom it is not their birth tongue. As Chambers, talking about research in a rural context, states:

'[s]ome of the strengths and weaknesses of rural people's knowledge are embedded in their languages and concepts. What is perceived affects the language evolved to describe it; and language in turn provides concepts and categories which shape perception' (Chambers, 1983:93).

The methodological point here being that one should not underestimate the difficulties of conducting research in a foreign language, and the constraints that may then place upon your findings. Despite being relatively fluent in Spanish at the time of the research, in an attempt to minimize the problem of ideas or concepts being significantly altered during the process of translation, I recorded interviews where possible (as such, the majority of one-to-one interviews were recorded) and translated them alongside a Bolivian translator. Nevertheless, despite believing that I went to

significant lengths to overcome the practical and methodological problems pertaining to language use, I do not wish to appear to gloss over the difficulties and often frustrations (but sometimes amusement) for both the researcher and the participants of conducting research in a foreign language. Such potential linguistic difficulties should not, however, render the translated research material questionable beyond use.

Research Aims & Methodologies

Phases I and II, commissioned by SIDA, set out to provide information and analysis of the process of decentralisation and democratisation in Bolivia, as a basis for a policy dialogue concerning the orientation and contents of future development cooperation between Bolivia and Sweden. As such, similar to the actor-oriented paradigm adopted by Long and Long (1992:4-15) a basic focus of the study was the macro-micro linkages between local forces and processes of change as a basis for comprehending the implications of the implementation of a macro reform such as the LPP. On the one hand, there was a concern to avoid the potential failing of macro-studies which may make presumptuous statements and draw hasty conclusions as to the responses of indigenous inhabitants and the effects upon localised communities. On the other hand, there can be a narrow focus and slow pay off of anthropological community studies (Booth et al.,1996). It was felt that there was a need to explore combinations of method, bridging, but not displacing standard approaches, attempting to incorporate both 'reliability' and 'validity' through the use of a 'triangulated' combination of methodologies (Pratt & Loizos, 1992:71, Marshall & Rossman, 1995:144). We were also concerned that the research generated dynamic capacity

building, becoming a participatory, reciprocal learning process (Pratt & Loizos 1992:8-11, Holland & Blackburn, 1998).

The initial two phases thus focused upon the processes of democratisation through popular participation in the Bolivian context using a combination of desk study and specialist interviews plus rapid fieldwork using both traditional interviewing and participatory techniques amongst coca growers, union groups, indigenous peoples, women's groups, community-based organisations, and NGOs.

During the third phase of independent research, I placed a particular emphasis upon the gendered implications of the LPP in both urban and peri-urban contexts. The methodologies employed at this stage involved a similar approach as during the previous team-based research, employing semi-structured and unstructured interviewing, secondary data analysis, and Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA). I also drew upon women's oral histories, and placed greater emphasis on in-depth capacity-building, participatory workshops. The aim of PRA is to enable local analysis of existing realities and local ownership over what is deemed by local participants to be the most appropriate course of action in changing those realities (Holland and Blackburn, 1998). More than simply a means for extracting local knowledge and analysis of particular situations to feed into decision-making bodies, such as the impact and response of individuals to specific development policy, the emphasis of PRA is on facilitating and understanding the participatory process itself.

The methodological approach of PRA is 'open-ended, interactive, largely qualitative and interpretive' (Holland and Blackburn 1998: 1). As such PRA employs a broad

range of specific research methods or tools. These include a range of methods specifically developed and designed for use in Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), such as workshops, ranking and scaling excercises and a variety of mapping techniques. It also draws on other qualitative techniques commonly employed in sociology, anthropology and human geography, such as participant observation, focus group discussions and structured and semi-structured interviews (Pratt and Loizos,1992, Holland and Blackburn, 1998).

However, in keeping with the overall aims of PRA, the commitment to facilitating participation informs the way in which each of these specific research tools or techniques are employed in practice and continually seeks ways to redefine the relationship between the 'researcher' and the 'researched' into a more equitable and dialogical relationship. In this respect PRA shares much in common both with feminist methodological approaches and post-modern anthropology which emphasises the necessity of confronting the implicit and explicit power structures present in all research situations and finding new ways of creating genuinely reciprocal and transformative research relationships (Clifford and Marcuse, 1986, Caplan, 1998, Harding, 1987, and Schrijvers, 1997).

Despite their concern to develop more equitable means of producing research and exploring development impacts and implications, participatory methodologies have nevertheless come under inevitable critical scrutiny in recent years. Mosse (1994) examines the constraints of PRA, suggesting that this methodology be used in conjunction with other forms of participation which are increasingly sensitive to issues of gender and the construction of local knowledge. Cooke and Kothari (2001)

further critique the potential problems of PRA and provide in their collection a timely and thorough examination of participatory methodologies from their technical shortcomings to a critique of their fundamental underlying philosophy. Indeed they go as far as to term participation as 'the new tyranny', arguing, 'that tyranny is both a real and a potential consequence of participatory development, counter-intuitive and contrary to its rhetoric of empowerment though this may be' (Cooke and Kothari, 2001:3).

There is a concern that participatory methodologies can serve to merely mask the inequalities inherent within other 'top-down' approaches to development and research, placing a 'friendly face' over a process which in reality has changed little in terms of de facto power relations. Indeed, because the aim of PRA is ultimately the process of participation itself, a tension inevitably exists between the desire of various research funding bodies for 'product' and analysis to evaluate and feed into decision making processes and the processual ethos of PRA. As Nelson and Wright (1997:1) suggest it is a distinction between 'participation as a *means* (to accomplish the aims of a project more efficiently, effectively or cheaply) as opposed to participation as an *end* (where the community or group sets up a process to control its own development)'(emphasis in original).

This tension is evident in the research dealt with in this thesis. On the one hand, the agencies which sponsored the initial phases of the research were primarily concerned with examining and analysing the implications of the Law of Popular Participation for various sectors of the local populace. On the other hand, the researchers were concerned not simply with analysing local responses and evaluating the likely impact

and outcomes of the LPP, but also with providing new opportunities for groups and individuals to critically engage with and acquire ownership over - i.e. become participants in - the implementation of the LPP. Indeed, there is a particular poignancy to the tension between means and end, precisely because the research is focused on a law whose stated aim is, at least in theory, about creating popular participation.

With this emphasis upon participation and participatory methodologies throughout the research, both Phase I and II involved team research and used a *triangulation* or combination of methods. These included semi-structured interviews, secondary data collection, and focus groups/workshops in which we used a range of participatory techniques such as needs ranking and spatial mapping of community power-brokers. The intention was to gain a spectrum of perspectives and information using a range of methodological techniques. In this sense, then, the term *triangulation* is employed more as a means of describing the practical methodological approach, rather than as a reference to a theoretical perspective. Whilst it was perceived as important to engage in rigorous and relatively comprehensive methodology, it was not believed that such a 'triangulation' of methods would serve to 'prove' a certain epistemological 'truth' (Pratt & Loizos, 1992:71, Marshall & Rossman, 1995:144).

Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork, all the researchers spent several days together brainstorming, discussing and evaluating methodological techniques, clarifying and prioritising our aims, and finalising a myriad of practical details and dealing with complications inevitably involved in the organisation and implementation of team-based research in diverse and isolated communities. Each of

the regions upon which we were focusing were relatively difficult to access, some more so than others, and as such it was also necessary to be aware of seasonal weather patterns. Issues pertaining to timing and access to research sites have been the subject of methodological discourse, perhaps most notably that of Chambers (1983). He clearly highlights the potentially problematic nature of reasearch which purports to examine issues surrounding rural poverty, specifically pointing to a number of 'biases' which researchers may fall foul of during the course of their study (Chambers, 1983:13-27).

Of particular pertinence here is the issue of 'dry season bias', referring to the problem of researching in rural communities at the time when access is easiest, but which is also likely to be the same time that rural poverty is less extreme and when 'disease is diminishing, the harvest is in, food stocks adequate, body weights rising, ceremonies in full swing, and people at their least deprived' (Chambers,1983:21). Although it was not specifically issues of rural poverty in and of themselves which were the concern of our study, we were concerned to establish the extent to which relatively isolated rural, resource-poor communities were able to participate in and gain knowledge of the LPP.

The nature of this participation and access to political processes would inevitably be affected by issues of practical urban-rural access and communication networks. Thus, our study falls foul of Chambers' accusations of dry season bias, but the fact remained that a number of the selected communities, particularly in the Amazonian regions, were, whilst difficult to access during the dry season, completely inaccessible for several months during the wet season. Given the practical constraints of time and

resources our dry season bias became somewhat unavoidable, but did not prevent us spending the inevitable hours mired in mud whilst attempting to reach several isolated Amazonian communities in an old Toyota pick-up.

Figure 2. 'Dry Season Bias'. Travelling to Communidad San Fransico, San Ignacion de Moxos, El Bení

Each team spent a short period of between two and four weeks in their research area. Due to the staggered timing of this participatory rapid (and rural) appraisal (PRA), as outlined above, I was able to spend time in three of the four sites and thus gain a valuable overview of both the differing contexts of the diverse regions and range of issues arising from the research. At the end of the PRA process, the teams reassembled to discuss our findings, the subsequent structure and content of the final report to SIDA, and the ultimate method of dissemination. As with the first report, the second was written by David Booth and myself, in English back in the UK, and returned to Bolivia for translation into Spanish, Quechua and Aymara. Finally, due to a range of practical considerations, it was decided that the best way to disseminate the

findings to the particular fieldwork sites would be for a researcher to return and hold workshops in the relevant indigenous languages within each community.

Methodology in Focus: Independencía

The following methodological discussion is based upon fieldwork I conducted in the High Andes region in July 1996 in conjunction with Gonzalo Vargas, Mónica Herbas and David Vocal, all social researchers at the *Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social* (CERES). The study crucially benefited from both previous knowledge and contacts established in the area during a prior consultancy carried out on behalf of a German agency by Gonzalo Vargas, and from the presence in the team of an experienced Quechua speaker, David Vocal, without whom communication with many of those interviewed in various rural communities would not have been so readily possible. The methodology employed placed emphasis upon PRA techniques, such as needs ranking and 'spatial power-mapping' and other participatory meetings, combined with documentary data analysis, key informant interviews and focused group discussions.

Due to the participatory thrust of the research, it was clearly vital that the methodology should involve reciprocal exchanges of information and the opportunity for all participants to question and communicate as they saw fit. Hence, during individual and group meetings and workshops attempts were successfully made to encourage mutual dialogue and information exchange. During the course of such meetings and interviews any questions arising concerning the LPP, and any misunderstandings about communities' legal entitlements, rights, and responsibilities

under the reform were not allowed to pass uncorrected. Given that this mutual sharing of information formed an important baseline during the fieldwork, care also had to be taken to ensure that the meetings were not regarded as a further exercise in official briefing on the Law on behalf of the central government. As such, it was clearly necessary, particularly in light of some suspicion on the part of certain union leaders, to spend time initially explaining the reasons for the research, who we were working for, to what ends, and any other details participants required.

We found that, on the whole, and largely due to the nature of the team itself, as explained above, the response to requests for community workshops, interviews and meetings was very favourable. One problem faced, however, was the need to explain that, although working under the auspices of the SIDA, we were not able to make any promises of material resources in exchange for their cooperation. We went to significant lengths to attempt to make it clear that all we were able to offer was information concerning the reform, and the knowledge that information provided by the communities would contribute to a greater understanding of the effects and implications of the LPP, which would, in turn be used in negotiations between SIDA and the Bolivian Government.

Nevertheless, although I have no tangible evidence to cite as confirmation, I did on occasion feel that my presence there, as a perceived representative of a powerful Western donor agency, may have led to a certain belief amongst a number of individuals that they may gain financially or materially in some way as a result of their cooperation in the study. This raised an important but seemingly intractable problem and dilemma for me, one felt no doubt by numerous Western researchers,

particularly when working within rescource-poor communities. Apart from being as open and honest as possible about the reasons for my presence within the research team, including making it clear that cooperation within the study would not result in any financial gain, I did not see that there was a great deal more I could have done to surmount this perceived problem. Consequently, I found that despite the relatively participatory nature of the methodology, my feelings of unease about the differential researcher/researched relationship were by no means wholly allayed.

Phase III: The Cochabamba Study - Aims & Methods

Between February and September 1997 I engaged in a final phase of independent, specifically doctoral, fieldwork within Cochabamba city (see figure 3 below). During this phase I focused more specifically upon the gender dimensions of the LPP, spent much of the time working with women's groups and the *Instituto de Formacion Femenina Integral* (IFFI), an NGO working in Cochabamba city to promote women's rights and provide training for local women's community groups, offering a range of political awareness-raising and practical courses, projects and workshops. I also worked with male-dominated neighbourhood groups or *JuntasVecinales* and interviewed those involved in the implementation of the LPP at both municipal and local levels. The municipality itself is divided into districts, within which several *barrios* or neighbourhoods may be contained. The central municipality is represented through a number of sub-municipalities or *casas comunales* which are located within each district. The research, then, aimed to gain a range of perspectives, from community, district, and municipal levels, employing a range of qualitative and participatory methodologies.
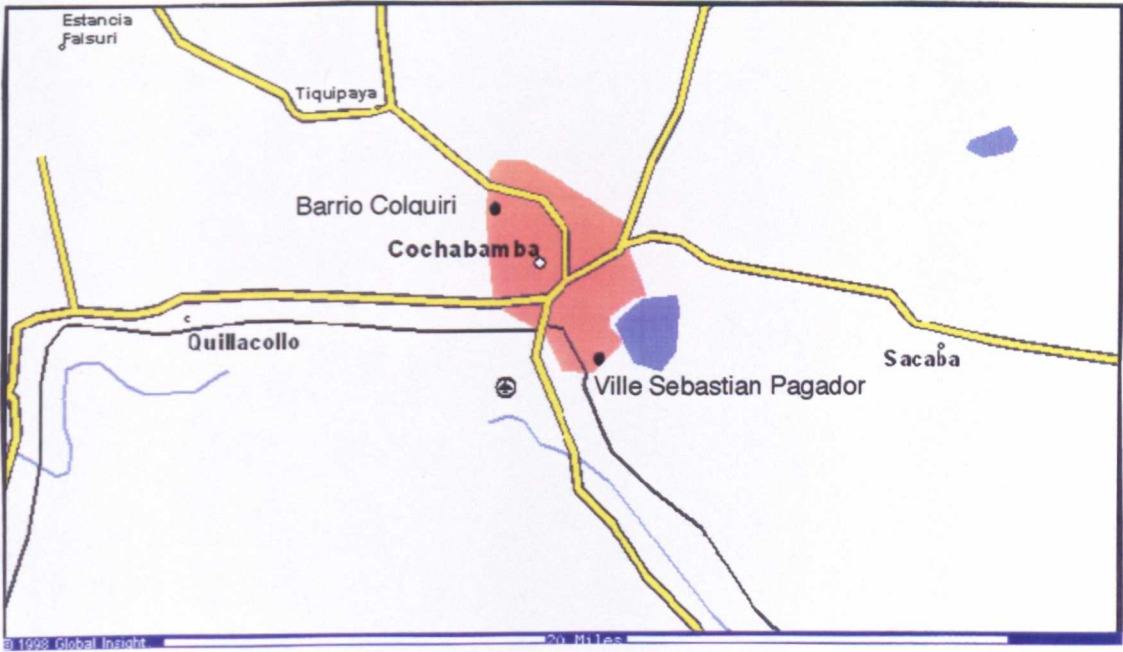
Figure 3. Cochabamba City and Surrounding area.

In addition to interviews with municipal and sub-municipal leaders involved with the implementation of the LPP, and interviews with members of, and participation in women's NGOs and other non-governmental political organisations, the primary focus of the Cochabamba study was upon two distinct *barrios* - Barrio Colquiri and Ville Sebastian Pagador. Barrio Colquiri is an urban community located approximately three miles from the centre of the city, or *cercado*. It has developed over the past three decades, largely through the resettling of mining families from the Altiplano regions of the country and its population is predominantly Quechua with Spanish as a second language. Although the majority of the local population are former mining families, there has been an increasing integration into the lifestyles of the city. Whilst remaining on the whole a lower-income working class

neighbourhood, its inhabitants now occupy a range of occupational roles, including a number of professional workers such as teachers and nurses.

Figure 4. Barrio Ville Sebastian Pagador, Cochabamba

Ville Sebastian Pagador, by contrast, is a peri-urban settlement on the outskirts of Cochabamba, approximately ten miles from the city centre. It is recognised as the poorest *barrio* in the city region and has a majoritively Aymara population, formed by the migration of both miners and farmers from the Altiplano (Vargas et al. 1994:50). Largely due to the dominance of petty trading within the *cercado*, it is also mainly, but not wholly, Spanish speaking, although Aymara remains the first language (Vargas et al., 1994:50).

Within Barrio Colquiri research focused upon the *Club de Madres, Junta Vecinal*, and the *Casa Comunal*, in addition to interviews with members of the community not directly involved in local organisations. Similarly, in Ville Sebastian Pagador, I

worked with both women's community-based organisations, the *Junta Vecinal*, and the *Casa Communal*. *Juntas vecinales*, as previously outlined, are neighbourhood committees responsible for representing a given *barrio* in terms of, for example, social and political development instigated by the regional or State governments. These are largely urban forms of socio-political organisation with formal links to local and regional political structures, and tend to be overwhelmingly male-dominated.

Within this, the *Casas Comunales* are the local offices of the Mayor or regional council and tend to be placed in the center of several neighbourhood districts as the regional governmental representative offices. The *Juntas Vecinales* thus have formal links with the *Casas Comunales* – the latter being the offices at which the *Juntas Vecinales* make their representations concerning their territorial concerns or needs.

Both the *Casas Comunales* and *Juntas Vecinales* hold formal political power to varying degrees and are overwhelmingly constituted by male elected representatives of a given *barrio* or regional government. *Clubes de Madres,* on the other hand, literally meaning 'Mothers' Clubs', are community-based groups open to women of all ages within a loosely defined area. They are thus, in a *de facto* sense, territorial rather than sectoral, but there are no formal rules barring entry to women from beyond particular community boundaries and it is not uncommon for women to travel to *Clubes de Madres* beyond their locality.

The instigation of these women's groups was originally supported by the State when they first emerged in the 1950's post-revolutionary Bolivia as a means of supporting community development. They were, for example, a site in which educational

workshops pertaining to craft-work, food, health, or education could be held and thus disseminated throughout the population of the *barrio* via the 'mothers'.

Today the *Clubes de Madres* continue to be a widespread and important phenomenon - largely urban but also commonly found in rural villages and towns - with similar roles and aims to their original creations, although the State no longer directly or formally supports them. They meet approximately once per week and, through their committee elected from and by the membership, may have organised a visit from a health worker or nutritionist, or they may meet to knit or sew clothing together, and so on. During these gatherings the women inevitably talk about neighbourhood politics and events, make plans pertaining to community development initiatives, decisions concerning local politics, and so on. In such ways, the *Clubes de Madres* are a crucial site of women's informal political networking across Bolivia – the emphasis here, however, being upon *informal politics* as they do not have formal structural representation within local or regional politics.

The essential aims of Phase III of the study were to some extent similar to those of Phase II in as much as I was concerned to examine the extent to which the LPP was being implemented in an urban context and the implications of this for specific communities or *barrios*. Within this, it was important to establish initial levels of awareness of the processes and effects of the Law, and knowledge as to both individual and collective community-based rights and obligations within the LPP process. However, as I was primarily concerned to examine the gender dimensions of any such levels of awareness and participation, it was also important to approach the research questions from a broader perspective and attempt to gain a wider

understanding of the gendered contexts of community organisation, social norms and expectations.

As such, I was not merely concerned to ask specific questions as to awareness of and participation in the LPP, but also to gain broader insights into, for example, the gendered divisions of labour within both private and public spheres and the norms and expectations of men and women within Bolivian society. Thus, methodologies included semi- and unstructured interviews, oral histories, and participatory techniques, specifically, needs ranking, daily life routines, capacity-building workshops, and spatial power mapping.

The emphasis was, thus, upon qualitative, rather than quantitative, methodologies which are better suited to researching individual women's lives and socio-cultural norms and expectations of a particular community or cultural group from a gendered perspective (Finch, 1984, Oakely, 1981). Furthermore, I was consciously approaching the research from the perspective of feminist, participatory, and, possibly, though not unproblematically, a *transformative approach* to research (Nelson & Wright, 1995, Schrijvers, 1995). As Schrivers explains:

> 'Based on a critical conception of knowledge a tranformative approach aims at bridging the gap between theory and practice, and supporting processes of change from the bottom up. The term 'bottom up' is complicated because the 'poor', the 'vulnerable', or the 'oppressed' comprise an extraordinary heterogenous category. As a researcher you have opted to be an intellectual

Figure 5. Barrio Ville Sebastian Pagador, Cochabamba.

Figure 6. Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba.

intermediary in this transformational process, by trying to enter the perspectives and the interests of those for whom you have chosen within the given context'(Schrivers, 1995:24).

In purely practical terms this entailed holding a series of meetings with women's community organisations, members of the *Junta Vecinal*, and local residents, these meetings or workshops comprising both single-sexed and mixed groups. The workshops involved participatory exercises and group discussion, followed by, if requested by the group, a final capacity-building workshop in which I outlined the principles of the LPP and discussed issues arising from the reform.

Participatory Methodologies: Needs Ranking, Spatial Power-Mapping & Daily Life Routines[3]

In the context of this study I held workshops with the men of the *Junta Vecinales* in both Barrio Colquiri and Ville Sebastian Pagador, both of which groups were the designated Territorial Base Organisations for their neighbourhoods. I held similar meetings with women's community-based organisations in each of the *barrios*, and then held a joint meeting for both men and women within each neighbourhood which also included both men and women who were not necessarily involved in any of the recognised community groups but lived within the *barrio*.

One of the participatory techniques used during these workshops was needs ranking. I found this process to be a simple but effective method of establishing the views of a group as to their existing resources and their future desires for their communities.

During these meetings I asked them to collectively list ten of the existing resources they already had in their neighbourhoods in order of priority, for example, water, sewerage, electricity, cobbled roads, schools, etc.. They were then asked to make a list of ten things they would like to see introducing into their barrios in the future, possibly by way of the Annual Development Plans they had to produce to be funded through the LPP. That the lists were the product of collective decision-making made for a useful study in itself as to the power dynamics and interaction within a particular group. When done within both single-sex and mixed groups these dynamics take on a further gendered dimension.

Figure 7. Club de Madres, Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba.

Figure 8. Quintatí Women's Knitting Group, Ville Sebastian Pagador, Cochabamba

Based on personal observations of the processes, within all-female groups, for example, the women were far more vocal than when the workshops were mixed. Single-sex groups also tended to encourage greater participation from all the women in the workshops rather than allowing only the perceived leaders to contribute. In the all-male groups there appeared to be greater formal hierarchy, with the acknowledged leaders being the final arbiters, and the views of those perceived to be less powerful not being given as much weight. In the mixed workshops, men, particularly those who were again perceived to be the leaders (for example the President of the *Junta Vecinal* or the man who had greater wealth) tended to be the ones who controlled the decision-making. Women were not encouraged to speak out and tended, unless specifically encouraged by myself or another female participant who was more confident than the others, to remain silent.

The reluctance of many women to vocally participate in meetings when men are present is a reflection of the public/private spatial dichotomy within the socio-cultural expectations of appropriate gender roles. This does not, however, mean that women do not feel they should participate, but, rather, that, based on numerous interviews and discussions with female community members in Cochabamba, they feel excluded from such participation.

Gaby, for example, is the President of the *Club de Madres* in Barrio Colquiri. She has lived in the *barrio* for almost twenty years but originally came from a tin mining family in Oruro on the Altiplano. Like many of the families living in the neigbourhood, they migrated specifically to Cochabamba, and to the Barrio, when the mining industry declined and the government were offering rented plots of land in the area for ex-miners. Her father had had to stop working when he became ill with 'black lung', a disease caused by the dust from the mines, and the family moved to Cochabamba shortly after he died. Gaby and her husband are both Quechuan but she perceives herself now as a '*Cochabambina*', or 'true Cochabamban'. Gaby is married with three children, her husband works in the city airport and she sews baby clothes from home whilst taking care of her children. She sells the clothes through another vendor in the *Cancha* or marketplace in the city centre. She has been involved in the *Club de Madres* for ten years and has been President for the past three. When questioned about the participation of women in the *Junta*, she explained:

"Women don't get involved in the Junta Vecinal because the male leaders don't think we have the ability or capacity to talk, to have opinions, to act, to make decisions - that's what they think. They don't let us get involved to be able to

know how we are [...], to be able to give our opinions. We can never meet with them because they are a few people who meet together between themselves. They delegate power between themselves so we don't know anything else about it. I have never seen a woman in the Junta Vecinal. There are no women in our Junta, pure men. Really it deceives me because really there are quite a few women who can be leaders, they can help to make the Junta progress, or together it could be men and women. But here it is not like that. It is because there is still machismo. Men think that only they can decide and act and hold opinions whereas we are not worth anything to them" (Gaby, *Club de Madres*, Barrio Colquiri, March 1997)

Thus, the gender-segregated and mixed workshops I held in each of the Barrios I worked within during the fieldwork in Cochabamba enabled me to observe such gendered dynamics, beliefs and attitudes at first hand. I cannot faithfully reproduce the lists of needs we produced during the workshops - I deliberately left all the original results of all the participatory exercises, including the power-mapping and daily life routines with the groups themselves as part of the participatory process, but the copies I made were rather upsettingly lost when I flew back from Bolivia. Nevertheless, I can recall much of their content, and one issue I noted was that the needs listed by the women's groups tended to place higher in priority such things as community centres, health care, education, nurseries, parks and playgrounds, whereas the lists produced by the male groups tended to prioritise football pitches, income generation schemes such as small business centres and cobbled roads. This appeared to reflect the gendered concerns of the participants - women, being those who were primarily responsible for childcare and spent more time within the neighbourhoods

than their male counterparts, wishing for spaces in which they and their children could meet and interact.

The value of the needs ranking exercises was to both observe and get to know the people with whom I was working (and, in the case of Barrio Colquiri, living), and establish baseline knowledge as to their current community resources and their additional development needs. The discussion of daily life routines involved the same people in further workshops, sub-divided into smaller groups based on gender (all-female/all-male), discussing their usual daily routines - what time they woke, their tasks and responsibilities etc., and what time they went to bed. The groups made lists of individual routines and then produced one 'average' plan which they shared with the rest of the workshop at the end. In the non-mixed gender groups, they were additionally asked to produce a routine for their male or female partners, on their perceptions of their daily routines.

The results of these were interesting, again as a means of establishing base-line knowledge of the communities, and the gender division of labour within them. It was also interesting for the participants themselves to set down their workdays and compare them with each other, particularly when men and women compared each other's daily rountines, and then when those produced as perceptions of their partners' routines were compared. On the whole men's routines tended to be presented as being less 'complex' in as much as they listed what time they rose, breakfasted, went to work, and returned home. The evenings were largely perceived as leisure time. The routines produced by women, on the other hand, tended to be filled with a multiplicity of tasks. They included their domestic and reproductive roles in addition

to their paid employment, and so the lists were somewhat longer and rather more 'complex' than the men's. The average daily routine for women tended to extend from 5.30am to between 10pm and 1am.

The men's days tended to begin slightly later at approximately 7am and, when they returned from their employment at approximately 6pm, as mentioned above, they tended to have what was perceived as 'leisure time' in the evenings. It was generally during these times that they were able to participate in meetings with the *Junta Vecinal*. (and hence Territorial Base Organisation). The daily life routine exercise thus raised an important issue pertaining to gender differences in political participation, and within this, for involvement in the LPP. Quite simply, women's multiple roles and responsibilities for domestic, reproductive and paid work led to their being largely time-poor. Furthermore, participation in the political sphere was perceived as male space, but nevertheless, women felt they had little or no time to spare to become involved regardless of their commitment to doing so. Women's additional roles as community mangers tended to be over-looked - this was not perceived by either men or women themselves as 'political' and was accorded little social status. As Moser states:

'The fact that men are more likely to be involved in community politics means that the participation of local women as community managers is frequently either invisible or not valued. However, there is also a negative side to women's participation. While their participation is often crucial for project success, this is based on the assumption that women have 'free time'. Lack of awareness of women's triple role, therefore, can be a cause of project failure.

When women fail to participate, it is not women who are the problem, as frequently identified. It is a lack of gender-awareness of planners about the different roles of men and women in society and the fact that women have to balance their time allocation in terms of three roles' (Moser 1993:103).

The LPP process is such that involvement in decision-making necessitates such 'free time'. Gendered equality of participation may be written into the text of the Law, but unless this participation is practically facilitated, women's involvement is made particularly difficult. Coupled with the socio-cultural expectations of differential gender roles, women's equal participation in the LPP appears to be a distant realisation, but, nevertheless, one which those women interviewed believed was their right and something to work towards regardless of the difficulties. The following extracts from interviews with women of various ages who live and work in either Barrio Colquiri or Ville Sebastian Pagador clearly illustrate these points.

Lourdes is Quechuan, originally from a mining family on the Altiplano but has lived in Barrio Colquiri for over ten years. She is a nurse by training but now spends her time looking after her four children, plus the two from her husband's previous marriage. She continues to provide unofficial healthcare within the community when needed - attending births and administering advice. Her husband is a car mechanic in a small garage near the centre of Cochabamba. Lourdes has been going to the *Club de Madres* for approximately three years for company and to learn new skills. She is now treasurer of the group:

"I know about the Junta Vecinal but I don't participate. I don't have time to go to the meetings. [...] There are more men in the Junta Vecinales because women are more inhibited, they inhibit themselves and they don't go to the meetings. They have to cook, wash, so many things to do in the house, whereas men dedicate themselves to their work outside, come home at about 5 or 6 pm and then they can go to the meetings, whereas women stay at home watching the kids. But it seems to me it doesn't have to be like that. We also have to participate. Little by little women will participate more. In the USA there are men who work in the house and women who go out to work. Why can't we do that here in Bolivia too? Generally the Latin American man is very machista, he prefers his wife not work. [...] But there is double work for women too, they often work outside and inside the home" (Lourdes, *Club de Madres*, Barrio Colquiri, March 1997).

Flor is Aymaran, a migrant from a farming family on the Altiplano. She has lived in Ville Sebastian Pagador for twenty years and earns money by producing knitwear at the *Quintati* Women's Knitting Group in the *barrio*. She is married and has three young children. Her husband works as a tailor in the centre of Cochabamba:

"We women have the disposition to do anything but the men don't take us into account. They don't value us women. We know we can do the same things as men but they think other things of us women. If it comes to having time, they have time - their work is not like ours, they can go to their work and come home at night and sleep or whatever. We women can't do that, at least I can't because my husband comes home from work and goes to sleep. I have to be

with my children, cooking, washing, and then at 7pm I begin to knit until about 1am so I don't rest a lot. I get up at 6.30 am to get the children and my husband off. Sometimes we rest on Sundays, but not even then because clothes have to be washed and other things, one just can't" (Flor, *Quintati* Women's Knitting Group, Ville Sebastian Pagador, June 1997).

Lidia is the President of the *Club de Madres* in Ville Sebastian Pagador and a juice seller in the *Cancha* or market in the *barrio*. She has lived in the neighbourhood for over ten years but is originally from Oruro on the Altiplano, as are many of the Aymaran migrants who have settled in Ville Sebastian Pagador. She continues to return to the family plots in Oruro to help plant "because we have no where to grow food in Ville Sebastian". Lidia does not participate in the *Junta Vecinal*, and has little knowledge of the LPP. Her daily routine again exemplifies the time-poverty many women experience. In spite of this she was the person who initially established and continues to run the neighbourhood *Club de Madres*:

"I leave the house to sell at 7am until 2pm. Before 7am I prepare the juices to sell. I wash clothes, clean the house, then I come to sell. I wake at 5.30am. At 2pm I wash the clothes, clean the house, then I return here to sell again at 4pm until night. At night I go home to cook dinner or sometimes we eat here in the market. I go to bed at 10pm. I have three sons, a daughter-in-law, grandchildren. Two of my sons are studying, we are six in all. [...] My husband works as a seller in the centre of town so he doesn't have time to work in the house. [...] I haven't participated in the Junta Vecinal. [The President] doesn't tell us when there are meetings unless it's very important. Those of my

neighbourhood, we know almost nothing - those who were elected must know.
We have heard about the Law [LPP] but I don't know very well what it is.
They say it is going to be good for us but I didn't find out a lot about it. I
haven't heard of the PAO [Plan Annual Operativo or Annual Development
Plan]. I haven't participated in anything like that" (Lidia, *Club de Madres*,
Ville Sebastian Pagador, June 1997).

These interview extracts illustrate the ways in which the gender division of labour and the differential uses and concepts of time effect women's participation in community politics, and hence the LPP. That the women, despite their 'time-poverty', are themselves actively involved in community organising - thus termed as opposed to the men's 'political' organising - is something which both the men and the women themselves overlook, or, rather, do not apportion significant value to, despite that fact that the work of the women's community groups is frequently both implicitly and explicity political.

As discussed above, for the LPP process itself to become gender-aware and promote equality of gendered particpation in more than merely theoretical intention, the processes themselves need to be designed to facilitate different people's participation. For example, in order to ensure the participation of both women and men within the research conducted for this study I had to meet people in places and at times to suit their routines and needs rather than demand they fit my schedule. Further to this I facilitated joint community meetings between men's and women's groups and wider members of the communities in order that, in addition to the participatory exercises we engaged in, the processes of popular participation within the LPP could be

discussed. Such meetings and workshops should theoretically have been held as part of the LPP implementation. That they were not, in the contexts of these *barrios* at least, is indicative of the problems of translation of a reform from well-intentioned theory to practice.

The third participatory technique I employed was that of 'spatial power-mapping'. I have thus termed this technique as it seems to portray the aims of the method. Although I am sure it has been developed and used, most likely under a different title, as part of PRA elsewhere, I have not found any explicit examples of it. It was a technique developed to suit our research needs by myself, Mónica Herbas, Gonzalo Vargas and David Vocal (all of CERES) when we were working in the municipality of Independencía during the summer of 1996. I subsequently adapted the technique to suit my research during fieldwork in the barrios of Cochabamba.

This was conducted within the *Junta Vecinales* and Women's Community-Based-Organisations during workshops[4] within the two *barrios*. This was a technique initially successfully used in Independencía, during fieldwork in Phase II of the SIDA study, and one which I subsequently developed further for my use in Cochabamba. Power-mapping provides a very useful baseline knowledge of interpersonal and community relations within a given area. I believe it also provided a useful 'relational map' for the groups themselves. It is, however, a technique which is far easier to explain visually and orally than textually and, as such, I reproduce one of the maps created by the *Club de Madres* in Barrio Colquiri (see figure 9 over page).

Using a large sheet of paper and different coloured pens, the group is asked to place themselves at the centre of the sheet. They then collectively make a list of the key organisations existent in their neighbourhood, plus those which are beyond their local territories but which have an impact on their community. They may also choose to include significant individuals or other key factors which impact upon their lives as a group.

The task is then to place these chosen factors or organisations etc. on the sheet in relation to themselves, writing the name in a circle. The proximity of the organisation to their group denotes the closeness of the relationship. When each of the chosen organisations etc. have been placed in a relational context, the nature of those relationships are then plotted onto the map. In my case I suggested, for clarity, three broad types: social, political or economic. The groups may decide on different forms of relationship depending on the context of the study - this technique could, for example, be used with individuals to plot kinship networks, and in this case the relational links may vary from those I selected.

Using a different coloured pen for each category, the group then connects the circles on the sheet. Although the proximity of the circle to the central group indicates the strength of the relationship, it is also useful to enhance this by the type of line used to connect them - the thicker the line, the stronger the link, a broken line clearly denoting a very weak or intermittent relationship. Arrows are then draw onto the lines to indicate the direction of the relationship. Finally, similar lines are plotted to reveal the perceived relationships between the selected organisations themselves.

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[4] The workshops involved between 12 and 24 men and women.

After explaining the process, the women in the *Club de Madres* (in the example used here) took over and produced the map between themselves whilst I became the audience. I did request, however, that different people take turns to be the scribe and that the decision-making be done as collectively as possible. That I wanted everyone to participate as fully as they felt able stems from the feminist epistemological perspective I was coming from, an approach which will be discussed in more detail below. Through the exercise, the participants quantified community power dynamics and thought about their relationships with other groups and individuals in ways which they may not have previously done.

After the exercise was completed in each of the groups with whom I was working, a number of participants expressed satisfaction with their 'map' and said they thought it would be useful to refer back to in the future. In terms of my own research, it allowed me to gain a rapid overview of the perceived (for each group or individual will produce a different relational map) significant individuals, organisations and establishments within the communities, and the differential relationships and power dynamics between them. This was invaluable for the research because I was able to gain insights not only into the power dynamics within the groups themselves, but also of their attitudes and connections with other groups with whom I could then subsequently focus upon.

Spatial Power Map
Club de Madres, Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba
March 1997

Key

▬	Political
▬	Economic
▬	Social

Direction of Relationship

| ❯ | (One Way) |
| ❬❭ | (Both Ways) |

Casa communal (sub-municipality)

Junta Vecinal (OTB)

Cancha (market)

Club de Madres

Church

Health Centre

Family/ Home

School

Alcaldia (municipality)
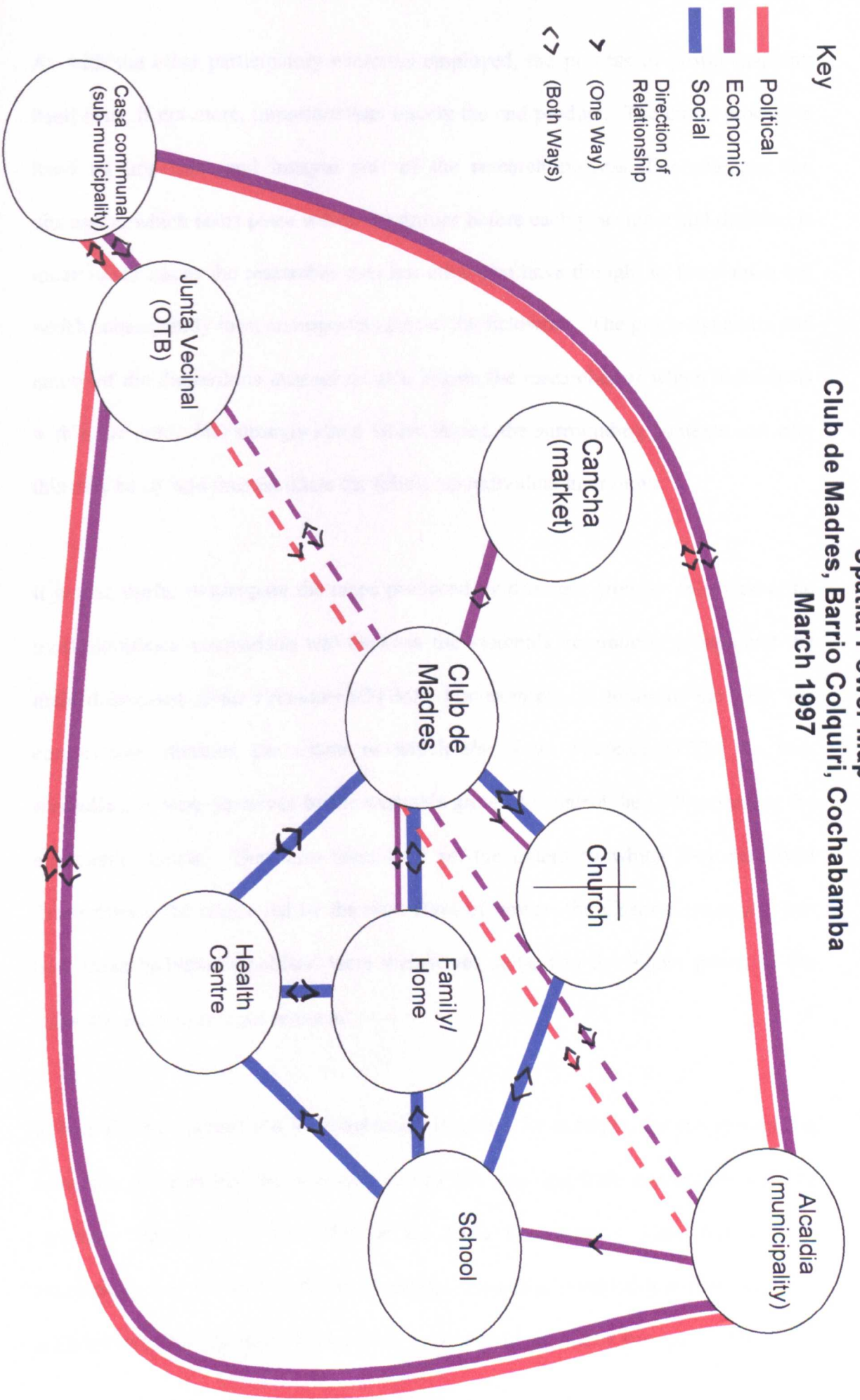
As with the other participatory exercises employed, the process of power-mapping itself is as, if not more, important than merely the end product. The entire process is itself an important and integral part of the research process. For example, the discussion which takes place within the groups before each placement and decision is made raises issues the researcher may not otherwise have thought to focus upon but which subsequently form an important part of the fieldwork. The group dynamics and nature of the discussions themselves also inform the researcher of which individuals within the group feel strongly about which issues, the surrounding contexts and why this may be so, and thus facilitate the follow-up individual interviews.

It is also useful to compare the maps produced by different groups. In my case the most significant comparison was between the women's community groups and the male dominated *Junta Vecinales* (OTBs). For example, in terms of the LPP, the comparisons revealed the extent to which *the Junta Vecinales*/OTBs felt they controlled, or were perceived by the women's groups to control the LPP process at the community levels. They also shed light on the extent to which they perceived themselves to be controlled by the next level of power, the *Casas Comunales*, and how these 'sub-municipalities' were themselves subject to the higher power of the *Alcaldía* or municipal government.

In both Barrio Colquiri and Ville Sebastian Pagador, for example, the power-mapping exercises revealed that the women's groups felt they had little connection with the 'political' processes of the OTB or the *Casa Communal.* They felt that the relationship was weak, and the surrounding discussion revealed that they were not satisfied with this situation. They felt the relationship should be stronger and that they

should be more involved in local decision-making. Furthermore, they believed that the blame for this lack of participation lay largely at the feet of the men in the *Juntas Vecinales*, a perspective then subsequently reiterated in the follow-up interviews. The maps produced by the *Juntas Vecinales*/OTBs similarly demonstrated that they felt that their connections with the women's groups were not as strong as they would like - although perceived as stronger than was represented by the women's groups themselves - but their interpretation was that it was the women, not they, who were largely at fault because they "didn't want to be involved" (Segundino, *Junta Vecinal*, Ville Sebastian Pagador, July 1997).

Thus, I found 'spatial power-mapping' to be an invaluable preliminary tool with which to uncover key issues for further investigation, the perceived nature of the significant relationships between the key actors within the community context, and as a way to become more familiar with the people I was asking to help me with my research - and vice-versa. Moreover, as with the other methods I employed, one of my key aims was to attempt to ensure that the research was not simply extractive but also dialogic. In this respect my research was fundamentally informed by my feminist epistemological standpoint and methodological approach. In the final part of this chapter, and by way of summary, I wish to critically evaluate the extent or not to which I was able to realise these methodological and theoretical aims.

Researching from a Feminist Perspective

Maynard states that 'no feminist study can be politically neutral, completely inductive or solely based in grounded theory' (Maynard, 1994:23). She argues that for

methodology to be feminist it should incorporate reflexivity or self critical reflection upon the research process, a concern for ethical considerations, and a view towards resulting emancipatory social change (Maynard, 1994). Indeed, from a feminist perspective, I was concerned with both personal and methodological reflexivity, and with participatory rather than purely extractive processes. That the research was itself transformative, attempting to facilitate social change, was intentional, but, as mentioned above, not unproblematic. Indeed the entire research process itself is mired in ethical considerations.

Within Barrio Colquiri, for example, following discussions with the community groups, I managed to set up joint meetings between the *Club de Madres* and both the *Junta Vecinal* and Director of the *Casa Comunal* with a view to facilitating dialogue between the groups, particularly, although not exclusively pertaining to the various views and expectations of the LPP within the community. As such, a group of women from a *Club de Madres* met with the Director of their *Casa Comunal* to find out more about their rights and obligations within the LPP.

The meeting proved to be quite lively, with the women present demanding to know why the sub-municipal director had not previously informed them of what the LPP process meant to them in their neigbourhood, what the LPP monies had thus far been spent on and why they had not been invited to participate in the PAO. The Director appeared to be rather uncomfortable, initially attempting to speak to the women in a way which I felt was patronising, suggesting they misunderstood the process before finally resorting to devolving responsibility to the local OTB when it became clear that they did understand the LPP.

Also within Barrio Colquiri, with the permission of the groups involved, I called a joint meeting between the members of the *Junta Vecinal* (predominantly male), the *Club de Madres* (all-female) and a mixed group of other local residents in order that the implications of the reform could be discussed amongst a wider section of the population of the *barrio*. I believe this was of some use to the groups and individuals involved in that it led both to greater awareness of the *Junta Vecinal's* involvement in the LPP and to the possibility of greater cooperation between community organisations working in the neighbourhood.

Similarly, the *Club de Madres* felt that my presence as an outsider facilitated the dialogue between the different groups, and, following the meeting with the Director of the *Casa Comunal*, the women from the *Club de Madres* said they had felt better able to question him about the implications of the LPP for their community due to the fact that I was present. They believed that the Director had felt he should agree to meet with them and answer their questions due to the fact that a Western researcher was present. Whilst I was pleased that the women had been able to learn more about the LPP processes, and make themselves heard within both the contexts of the OTB and *Casa Comunal*, I nevertheless felt that I was meddling in relationships, the outcome of which could be less positive than I would hope.

It may have been the case that, whilst I was present, the dialogue between the various groups was facilitated, that the women themselves felt they were gaining voice and knowledge with respect to the LPP, but what would be the nature of relations following my departure? For example, the Director of *Casa Comunal* - a man I did not feel was entirely trustworthy or honourable (especially after having to escape his

groping clutches during an interview) - may have been angry that he was subjected to public scrutiny, particularly the scrutiny of 'indigenous women'. His facilitation of 'popular participation' may have been subsequently less facilitating in Barrio Colquiri than it could have been. Would this have been my 'fault'? Did I do harm? Or am I arrogantly according myself with greater power over these processes than I had?

Feminist analyses have contributed to the problematisation of research practice, to the development of both reflexive and critical approaches to the methodology, asking such questions as 'whose voices, whose perspectives, whose theories?' examining the fields of research interactions and the objectives and implications of the research itself (Schrivers, 1995:21). For Harding, at the heart of feminist methodology is the belief in 'inquiry as comprising not just the mechanical observation of nature and others but the intervention of political and moral illumination' (Harding, 1986:241-2). Harding refers to a process of *envoicing*, of supporting through the research process the visibilisation and participation of the research subjects or participants (Harding, 1987 in Schrivers, 1995:21).

Within this Schrivers seeks to avoid terms such as 'the researched', 'respondents' or 'interviewees' when referring to the human locus of the research. Rather she calls for the avoidance of 'dichotomous, hierarchical' polarisations which encourage the oppositional categories of active research subject and passive research object (Schrivers, 1995:22). She posits the use of the term 'participants' as a means of expressing 'more egalitarian relations between researcher and those with whom the research takes place' (Schrivers, ibid.).

However, whilst this can be seen as a positive approach to the methodological perspective, and one which is used within this research, it is also important to be aware of the possible danger of merely linguistically masking, rather than genuinely transforming, dichotomous relations. The researcher may attempt to approach the research question from a feminist, transformative perspective, and subsequently use appropriate jargon with which to describe these processes; nevertheless, the lived reality of the process itself may be less truly participatory or transformative than the researcher themselves would wish. Thus, within my research, I approached the participants from such a feminist methodological perspective. The methodology would be participatory, the processes would involve the 'subjects' or 'participants' in dialogical discourse, discourse through which both researcher and participant knowledge would be enhanced and developed. Subsequently this knowledge could provide a framework through which the potentiality for participant transformation existed.

In practical terms, whilst, for example, gaining information as to the existing knowledge-base and perspectives of community members, I was able to disseminate knowledge of the rights, obligations, and entitlements of community members through the Law of Popular Participation. Furthermore, as discussed above, I was able to facilitate action through which community members were able to question and make demands of the local power-brokers and municipal leaders as to nature of the future implementation of the Law.

Nevertheless, it was I as a researcher who sought out the 'participants' and who, to a large extent, set the agenda. It was I who decided upon the methodological approach

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and techniques, and they who participated in that process. Ultimately, then, whilst my intentions were 'honourable' in the context of feminist epistemology, it was I who was setting the agenda and controlling the processes. It was I who held the perceived 'powerful' knowledge of the LPP, held the privileged position as Western outsider, and they were the 'other', from whom knowledge of a perceived lesser status was being extracted. They, for example, revealed information as to their domestic routines, exposed their relative ignorance of the political processes, and I who bestowed upon them my knowledge of these powerful processes. Differential status and dichotomous power relations remained despite my theoretical and methodological approaches aimed at counteracting and redefining such relations.

I am by no means alone in my concerns as to the truly participatory, non-hierarchical, and transformative nature of even the most well-meaning research process, because, as Maynard comments, 'it is not always so easy to reduce the power dynamics that are likely to be present in research and it is unlikely that they can ever be eradicated completely' (Maynard, 1994:16). Similarly, during the course of her own research, VanEvery, whilst rejecting the 'privileging of the sociologist's knowledge over that of the subjects of the research' (VanEvery, 1995:142), nevertheless comments that, 'I was still responsible for choosing what was relevant to my questions both during and after the actual interview' (VanEvery, 1995:151).

Glucksmann (1994) has also acknowledged that, regardless of the researcher's attempts at non-hierarchical, participatory research, such hierarchies remain and the researcher's knowledge and expertise continues to be perceived as superior to that of the research participants. Furthermore, 'however much the researcher aims to avoid

treating the people she is researching as 'objects' ... there can be no getting away from the fact that those being researched are the 'subjects' of the research' (Glucksmann, 1994:156).

As for the laudable aims for the facilitation of emancipatory social change, ethical questions must be raised as to the reality of that eventual transformation. As Maynard has acknowledged, 'it may be possible for participants in a study to have their consciousness raised without the corresponding channels for action being available' (Maynard, 1994:17). With respect to my study, I was questioning men and women as to their perceptions of the gendered division of labour in public and private spheres, raising their awareness of their rights within the LPP, asking them to consider and prioritise their community development needs, and facilitating their questioning of their lack of participation in the LPP decision-making processes and the lively confrontation of the Director of the *Casa Comunal*. In short, I potentially raised a whole hornet's nest of issues, frustrations, and desires for change, and then I left without attempting to ensure that the mechanisms for social change and action were subsequently effective.

Such then were the methodological processes from which the following research findings have gradually emerged, and it is with the problematic nature of the research processes in mind that the resulting analyses are formed. The following chapters are presented in three further sections: Section II will examine issues effecting indigenous peoples in the wider regional Latin American context before focusing specifically on the situation for indigenous peoples in Bolivia, the rise of the indigenist or *Katarista* movement, and finally the implications of the LPP for

indigenous-*campesinos,* one scenario illustrated by way of the example of the initial implementation of the LPP in the Amazonian region of Moxos. Section III will then provide a discussion of the place of gender analyses within theories and practices of development before focusing on an analysis of the implementation of the Law from a gendered perspective. The final section forms a summary of the research conclusions and hypotheses initially proposed in chapter 3. Within this, the final section, chapter 9 provides a second case-study example, that of Independencía in the Andean Highlands, which in many ways serves to encapsulate central themes which have emerged throughout the course of the study.

Chapter 5

Ethnic Minorities & Indigenous Peoples in Latin America

Introduction

Within any examination of issues affecting ethnic minority and indigenous[1] peoples throughout Latin America, as within regions worldwide, several common themes emerge which render certain generalisations useful. Hence, although Bolivia remains the primary geographical focus of this work, it is nevertheless useful to place the national within a broader regional context. The following chapter will thus initially attempt to draw together these commonalities of experience for both ethnic minority, but principally, indigenous populations throughout the Latin American region. Of course, there also, inevitably, exists significant cultural and ethnic diversity across the continent, largely the result of historical and demographic developments affecting changes in the region since European colonisation. As such, a selected number of country examples will be briefly examined in order that both the commonalities and differences of autochthonous experience within Latin America can be clearly

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[1] Throughout this chapter reference will be made to 'indigenous' or 'autochthonous' peoples. These terms are used largely for lack of adequate alternatives. It should be noted, however, that these terms in themselves are inextricably bound up with a whole host of connotations, assumptions and value judgements, judgements which have been used to both the advantage and disadvantage of indigenous peoples (see for example, Ramos, 1991). Such language use, including this terminology, is at the heart of the arena in which the war of identity politics is fought. Whilst it is not the intention of this work to fully engage with such discourses, it is nevertheless with acknowledgement of the highly politicised context in which these terms are employed that they are used throughout this text.

encapsulated before concluding with an overview of the socio-economic and political experiences of indigenous peoples in Bolivia.

Over the past 500 years numerous ethnic groupings have settled in the continent, resulting in the varied cross-racial unions which have led to the ethnic heterogeneity apparent today. The majority of people owe their identities to three most dominant, broad ethnic groups: the indigenous Andean and Amerindian populations, the *Mestizo* descendants of the European colonists, and the *Garifuna* or Black Africans who were initially introduced to the region as slaves during the period of European colonisation (Wade, 1997).

Latin America has a long history of unrest and resistance. It has been a region characterised by political instability and extreme social inequalities, and is notorious for its human rights violations. In recent years, however, the continent is witnessing the development of peace processes, civilian governments replacing military dictatorships, and economic liberalisation programmes attempting to tackle the debt crises. There also appears to be an increasing awareness of and interest - both within the region itself and amongst the rest of the global community - in the experiences of the indigenous populations throughout Central and South America (Rabben, 1998, Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Although the Amazonian regions have tended to be the focus of particular attention, the development of more enlightened policies towards indigenous rights has touched ethnic groupings throughout Latin America. In 1989, for example, several Latin American nations signed the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No.

169 which theoretically extends indigenous and tribal rights to self determination and citizenship (Diaz Polanco, 1997:99). However, despite the increased visibility of and debates surrounding the situation of indigenous people, there remain very serious and deep-rooted problems for which there appear no quick or easy solutions.

Indeed, the overall situation for the most disadvantaged ethnic groups in Latin American society continues in many instances to deteriorate. Problems faced by indigenous groups are frequently compounded by the social costs of structural adjustment programmes, commercial exploitation of natural resources, and large-scale development initiatives, all of which have too frequently been conducted with scant regard for the local populations they affect. The consequences of insensitive policies, activities and programmes for ethnic and indigenous populations continue to be severe, threatening the livelihoods of many communities and contributing to the extinction of several indigenous groups (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

World Bank president James Wolfensohn himself admitted at a meeting of Americas finance ministers in February 2000 that Latin America is 'no better off than [...] in the 1970's' despite the intervening three decades of neoliberal economic reforms promoted by the IMF and World Bank'. Wolfensohn continued to state that throughout Latin America 40 million more people live below the poverty line than 20 years ago, and 80% of Latin America's 30 million indigenous peoples continue to live in poverty (*Weekly News Update on the Americas*, 2.2000).

The World Bank itself is no stranger to allegations of inappropriate and damaging development policies in the region. Whilst Wolfensohn points to the fact that the socio-economic situation for many people throughout Latin America has not improved *despite* the efforts of the IMF and World bank, it could be argued that these very efforts may have in fact contributed to the continued levels of poverty and inequality in the region.

There are several examples of World Bank-funded initiatives which have attracted severe criticism. Caufield, for example, documents the human rights abuses associated with the World Bank-funded Chixoy River dam project in Guatemala (Caufield, 1996). Similarly, both Caufield and Cummings provide detailed accounts of environmental degradation and human rights violations incurred during the Balbina dam project in Brazil (Caufield, 1996, Cummings, 1990), and resistance to the construction of the Barbaquara and Kararao dams on the Xingu River in Brazil became international news in 1989 (Wearne, 1996).

The Xingu River dam project provoked criticisms similar to many such macro-development initiatives, but is perhaps especially notable in as much as it resulted in a rare victory for the indigenous people it affected. Implemented by the Brazilian power company, Electronorte, and funded by the World Bank, the Xingu dams would have flooded large tracts of indigenous territory and forest lands occupied by the Kayapó, and as such were the focus of significant resistance. Following intensive campaigning, the Kayapó called a meeting in February 1989 at Altamira, the site of the project and heart of their land. Their campaign had caught the attention of the world's press and the momentous showdown between the Kayapó and Electronorte

officials was watched over by four hundred foreign journalists. The extent to which the World Bank was influenced by the resulting negative publicity is a matter for conjecture; nevertheless, shortly after the Altamira meeting, the World Bank announced that it was withdrawing its funding from the project (Wearne, 1996, Cummings, 1990).

The role of the World Bank in Latin America may appear to be somewhat contradictory in the sense that its rhetoric has not always followed the same course as its practice, or, frequently, the practice of those governmental or non-governmental agencies with which it provides financial support. Over the past few decades the World Bank has produced numerous reports, documents, and working papers offering both detailed accounts of the socio-economic conditions experienced by indigenous peoples throughout Latin America, and policy recommendations aimed at improving these conditions. Connections between, for example, poverty and lack of educational attainment are commonly made, the general thrust of the arguments being that conditions for indigenous peoples in Latin America 'can be improved since policy-influence variables such as education are largely responsible for observed earnings differences' (World Bank Report No.17563, 1998:2).

Another key phrase in World Bank-speak throughout the 1990's has been 'human capital development', an increase in which 'will not only improve economic growth and social development, but also provide a fertile ground for profound and sustainable democracy' (World Bank Report No. 15796, 1996:1). Furthermore, it has been argued that development initiatives targeted at indigenous groups should at the same time aim to 'preserve' rather than assimilate autochthonous identities. It was in this

vein that, at the Second Annual Bank Conference on Development in Latin America held in Bogota in 1995, delegates recognised 'the need to build the capacity of indigenous communities while preserving their identity' (World Bank Report No. 17563, 1998:1).

There has also been an increasing awareness within the World Bank of the need to incorporate some level of participation between development planners and the peoples such initiatives affect. A 1993 report, for example, focusing on indigenous territories and tropical forest management in the region stated that autochthonous people should be given some control over their territories and resources, contending that:

'for successful management of tropical forests there must be a new type of partnership between indigenous peoples, the scientific community, national governments, and international development agencies. This relationship should be a contractual one, in which indigenous peoples are provided with juridical recognition and control over large areas of forest in exchange for a commitment to conserve the ecosystem and preserve biodiversity' (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. WPS1100, 1993:1).

Nevertheless, whilst it is the case that World Bank policy directives have developed and, indeed, become progressively enlightened in recent years, there continues to remain a certain 'unevenness' of application between the documented directives and actual policy implementation. In the case of, for example, continued funding throughout the 1980's for Brazil's macro-economic development projects, the World

Bank admitted that Brazil failed to comply with the environmental and social protection measures drawn up in its loan conditions (Cummings, 1990). More recently, Jonathan Fox (1997), exploring the correlations between World Bank policy, the concept of social capital, and indigenous peoples in Mexico, argued that:

'Only a tiny fraction of the Bank's vast indigenous-related Mexico portfolio can be considered to have applied its own Indigenous Peoples Policy (Operational Directive 4.20) key mandate for 'informed participation' by ostensible indigenous beneficiaries in all phases of the project cycle' (Fox, 1997:4).

Ironically, at a time when the World Bank is promoting Colombia as a country where a new legal and policy framework supports the participation of indigenous peoples (World Bank, 1996:252), the State continues to violently repress indigenous protests at the loss and degradation of their territories. In February 2000, Colombian National Police Agents reportedly attacked indigenous peoples protesting oil drilling on their lands. The police were flown in to the site of Occidental Petroleum's proposed oil well in North-Eastern Colombia to forcibly quash a protest staged by approximately 450 indigenous U'Wa (*Weekly News Update on the Americas*, 2.2000). Following the attack, unconfirmed reports claimed that several U'wa adults and children were missing, presumed dead (*U'Wa Defence Working Group* 11.2.00).

Also in 2000, after thirty years of campaigning by several indigenous groups, the Urra hydroelectric power station - supported by a US$18.2m loan from Canada's Export Development Corporation - began operating on Colombia's Atlantic Coast (*Alerta*, No.4. 1999). The Embera-Katio communities have lost the fight to prevent the

continued construction of the power plant, located in the heart of the Nudo de Paramillo reserve, home to an estimated 2,500 indigenous people.

As part of the project, the Sinu River was dammed in 1995 which, according to Embera-Katio leader, Kimy Pernia Domico, has caused significant loss of wildlife, habitat, and food stocks in the area, introduced malaria-carrying mosquitoes as a result of the creation of the large expanse of standing water, and which 'was built without ever consulting any of the indigenous communities living around it' (Pernia, cited in *Alerta*, 1999:4). Furthermore, as Pernia states, 'This failure to consult with those of us who ultimately will be affected violates Colombian law.

It also violates rights contained in the Colombian constitution, as well as international covenants' (Pernia, ibid.). And indeed, in 1998 the Colombian constitutional court ruled that Urra Multipropósito, the company responsible for the dam, had violated the rights of the indigenous peoples by failing to consult them, but this was not apparently sufficient to stop the continuation of the project. Government negotiators subsequently offered the communities 18,860 hectares in compensation for the 417 hectares flooded by the dam, to which the Embera-Katio responded by filing applications with the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (*Latin American Weekly Report*, 29.2.00).

Whilst the World Bank cannot ultimately control regional governments, it can certainly exert a significant degree of influence over them, not least by ensuring its policy directives are adhered to throughout the implementation of World Bank-funded development initiatives. It is, then, within the context of the continued

resistance to policies which negatively impact upon indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, that the following chapter will focus on an issue-based examination of the commonalities of experience effecting autochthonous peoples throughout Latin America. To further facilitate this contextual overview, a particular emphasis is then placed upon the impacts of regional governmental policies and development initiatives in recent years before examining current issues, experiences, and policy debates within Central and South American regions. The final section of this chapter will conclude with a specific focus upon the socio-economic and political experiences of indigenous peoples in Bolivia, and the initial implications of the Law of Popular Participation for such autochthonous groups.

Ethnic Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Latin America: Common Histories, Shared Experiences

Within contemporary Latin American society, the diverse cultural and ethnic groupings dispersed throughout the vast continent have long suffered the devastating effects of disempowerment, disenfranchisement and policies of enforced assimilation. Their cultural norms and beliefs have been the target of suspicion, scorn, and abuse at the hands of contemporary mainstream societies, societies which are overwhelmingly dominated by the *Mestizo* descendants of the European colonists. They have been subject to both officially and unofficially sanctioned 'ethnocide' or 'ethnic cleansing' long before this resonant if somewhat incongruous phrase was coined. Within this context it is notable and rather remarkable that indigenous communities continue to survive and retain diverse traditions, knowledge, and systems of social organisation to any significant extent. That they do is perhaps indicative of a power and resilience to

be both admired, celebrated, and examined.

The development of capitalist economic and political structures throughout the region has occurred somewhat at odds with traditional indigenous forms of social organisation, commonly based on joint property rights and subsistence agriculture. A central tenet of capitalism is the commmodification of land and labour, a tenet which has meant the appropriation of indigenous lands for development, along with the appropriation of indigenous labour into capitalist production. Thus, as Wignaraja argues:

'Capitalist expansion [...] results in the eviction of indigenous populations from communal land, reducing them to the status of wage workers, increasing the reserve army of labour and linking communal land to the circuit of capitalist production. Capitalism's advance, while robbing indigenous communities of their land, also destroys their cultures, particularly the collectivist elements of traditional cultures' (Wignaraja, 1993:42).

In this way, the modernising project, the concern of successive Latin American regimes, has sought to promote racial homogenisation and 'to 'reform' communal indigenous socioeconomic practices based upon exchange and reciprocity in favour of a liberal economic enterprise that endorses participation in market systems as individual producers and consumers' (Stephenson, 1999:2).

In the light of the dominance of capitalist structures throughout the region, a pervading attitude towards indigenous groups has frequently been one characterised by the view that their cultural survival outside such dominant global social and economic structures is either impossible and/or undesirable (Rance, 1991:30). However, as Corry argues, 'It is too easy to assume that tribal peoples will inevitably be absorbed into our own consumer society. While some tribal people do undoubtedly seek conformity and material prosperity, many of them have no wish to adopt the way of life and the ambitions of the 'civilisation' they see around them' (Corry, 1994:1).

The belief that indigenous communities and traditions can be both viable and valuable within the wider social context of contemporary society is a perspective which has gained broader support in recent years. Indeed, the perspectives of indigenous peoples are increasingly being voiced, documented, and published throughout the world, and the fact that there are alternative values, ideologies, and concepts of what constitutes modernisation and development has become increasingly difficult to ignore (Wearne, 1996, Fernandez, 1998a, 1998b and Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Nevertheless, the view that indigenous peoples represent fading residues of a by-gone era of human existence, one which has progressed and developed beyond such beliefs and forms of social organisation, is a view which has by no means been consigned to history. From this perspective it remains inconceivable that indigenous peoples could have anything to contribute to modern society, and attitudes have all too frequently tended to sway between those who advocate their preservation and protection almost as 'museum pieces' within some romanticised notion of a harmonious traditional

community, and those who would wish to assimilate indigenous cultures into the dominant system of socio-economic and political organisation (Green, 1991:159).

Ramos (1991), for example, explores approaches to indigenism in Brazil, although her comments could similarly apply in a broader geographical context. She points to the ways in which the 'Indian' has been and continues to be viewed from a plurality of both complementary and contradictory perspectives by both the national non-indigenous community and international 'whites'. Within her analysis, Ramos explains how these mulifarious positionalities can be categorised into several broad images, including, for example, 'the backward Indian'. 'the Pagan Indian' and the 'Indian as exotic' or 'the romantic view of the Indian', in which indigenous peoples are perceived as 'noble savages being threatened by the barbaric expansion of ruthless capitalism' (Ramos, 1991:158).

The image of the 'noble savage' is, however, doubly useful to the *Mestizo* elites in the way it can alternately be employed to justify both the exclusion of indigenous groups from mainstream society for fear they lose their traditional customs - and their use to the developing tourist trade - and repression of autochthonous groups in the defence of the 'civilising project'. This seemingly schizophrenic but convenient imagery is clearly highlighted by the cases of both the Xingu and Yanomami peoples in Brazil:

'For decades the Xingu Indians have had the dubious privilege of being visited and profusely photographed by diplomats, royalty and VIPs of all kinds. This showcase status has in no way kept the Indians from being deprived of some basic rights, such as adequate medical care, a proper

educational system or guarantees against land invaders [...] As exotic Indians, they are set aside, preserved as in a cage, denied access to institutional participation at the regional and national levels' (Ramos, 1991:158).

At the same time, the image of the 'noble savage' has been used against the Yanomami to portray them as violent and dangerous peoples who pose a threat to modern civilian democracy and national security. This has provided the Brazilian government with some apparent justification for the repression of the Yanomami people and the seizure and control of their lands which happen to be rich in mineral and gold reserves (Ramos, 1991).

Thus it is that indigenous identities become somewhat fractured and temporal, alternative perspectives being promoted by differing interest groups to suit differing objectives at a given time. This is not to suggest, however, that these multiple personas can not and are not co-opted and transfigured by autochthonous organisations themselves to support their own political goals. To again return to the Yanomami, they have, for example, used their 'exotic image' to their advantage to gain international publicity and support for their campaign against both acculturation and destruction of their territories:

'Chief Raoni's highly conspicuous lip-plug then became an emblem of indigenous courage and wisdom and has since received a great deal of national and international publicity. It has turned into a symbol of

indigenous resistance against ethnic disrespect and ecological devastation'
(Ramos, 1991:158)

Thus it is the case that in some cases national indigenous groups have become exoticised and perceived as symbolic of a more innocent and purer world than that which the developed nations have become. As discussed above, such imagery lends itself to policies of preservation, which can be used to both the advantage and disadvatage of autochthonous communities. However, it has frequently tended to be the case that in the drive towards modernisation and capitalist development, there can be no place in this new global market place for 'backward' traditions. Indigenous peoples can thus become perceived as relics of a dark and primitive era who pose obstacles to national development and so must be dragged into the new age and join the march towards modernity.

Such policies of assimilation or acculturation which do not consider ethnic identities and cultures of value contribute to the denigration of, and can lead to the ultimate eradication of minority and indigenous groups. Since European colonisation, many native languages and customs have been lost and continue to be under threat. The processes of enforced acculturation can be particularly pernicious amongst younger generations of indigenous groups, who are perhaps more prone to the both explicit and implicit encouragement to deride and reject their native culture (Green, 1991:161).

Political marginalisation, legal discrimination, and violations of human rights similarly remain key factors affecting indigenous groupings throughout the region.

Unlawful and arbitrary arrests, beatings, torture and murder are all too common occurrences - incidents which are frequently linked to disputes over land following encroachment by, for example, colonists, timber cutters, miners, and oil companies. Access to a landbase from which to practice subsistence farming is vital for indigenous communities, however, the rights of indigenous peoples to their territories are being constantly violated. Indeed, disputes over land are a major factor in the killings of indigenous peoples, and the subsequent lack of an adequate landbase frequently leads to extreme impoverishment for both ethnic minority and indigenous communities.

Characteristically, racial discrimination is a widely recognised phenomenon throughout the region. Negative and racist attitudes towards indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities inevitably contribute to the tendency of such groupings to be disproportionately affected by social and economic marginalisation. Resulting problems include the lack of, or inadequate access to basic services such as clean water supplies and sanitation. Other factors affecting indigenous and ethnic groups include poor housing conditions, and the lack of, or inadequate access to health care and educational provision. Furthermore, little formal educational attainment, discrimination and lack of understanding of employment rights are all factors which contribute to the over-representation of indigenous and ethnic minority communities in the most poorly-paid and undesirable employment sectors.

The impacts on ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples of environmental degradation, caused by, for example, industrial pollution, deforestation, and insensitive tourist developments, can be particularly severe as the regions affected

frequently lie within traditional territories. A significant consequence of the above factors is the migration of ethnic and indigenous populations away from their traditional homelands in search of improved living conditions. Many members of ethnic minority and indigenous groups migrate to urban centres, joining the ranks of the urban poor, living in appalling conditions in the over-crowded shanty towns which surround all major cities throughout Latin America.

Indigenous resistance to policies and developments which negatively effect their livelihoods and attack their culture and traditions have a long history in Latin America. In recent years, however, there have been a number of notable developments in indigenous organising and resistance, with both positive and less positive outcomes. One such development has been the strengthening of international links between both indigenous groups within Latin America, and between indigenous networks and global indigenous, environmental, and political organisations.

In 1999, for example, the Coordinating Body for the Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), the Amazon Alliance for Indigenous and Traditional Peoples (AAITP), and lawyers at the Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL) worked together to block an attempt by a Californian pharmaceutical corporation to patent *banisteriopsis caapi*, a variety of the *ayahuasca* vine, native to the Amazonian rainforest and used by over four hundred indigenous tribes in traditional healing and religious ceremonies. However, whilst celebrating its victory, the indigenous alliance remains concerned that the US Patent and Trademark Office based its rejection on a technicality rather than dealing directly with the issue of whether it is ethical to apply to patent a plant, knowledge, or genetic material of an

indigenous or ethnic group (*Weekly News Updates of the Americas*, 5.1999).

A further development in recent years has been the increased interest in and awareness of issues effecting indigenous peoples within the international community and throughout the international press. That indigenous issues have periodically been placed in the international spotlight has in no small way assisted indigenous rights campaigns throughout the region, often in spite of what national governments may be 'minded' to do. In Nicaragua in 1995, the Mayagna (Sumo) indigenous community of Awas Tingni on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast filed a petition for emergency relief in the Nicaraguan courts to prevent the government granting the Korean-based logging company, Sol de Caribe (SOLCARSA), a thirty year concession on tropical rainforest in Mayagna territory.

The Nicaraguan courts responded by dismissing the case without considering the merits of the claim and the government granted the SOLCARSA concession in violation of the community's property rights. Nevertheless, following sustained political pressure, the logging concession was subsequently cancelled (*Weekly News Updates on the Americas*, 2.2000). At the same time the Pehuenches (people of the pine forest) in the Alto Bío Bío region of Chile have successfully suspended the development of the Ralco hydroelectric project on their lands. The community's resistance attracted international attention and the support of a number of Chilean legislators when they took their protests to the company's headquarters in Spain. The Spanish-owned power company, Endesa, finally decided to suspend operations in February 2000 for reasons of 'business prudence' following the Pehuenches' campaign (*Latin American Weekly Report*, 29.2.00).

There have also been some positive developments in terms of extending citizenship rights and increasing the national enfranchisement of indigenous and ethnic groupings in the region. In Bolivia, for example, as initially mentioned in chapter 3, the 1994 Education Reform formally recognises the multi-lingual nature of its population, and established the principle of bilingual education at primary school level (Booth, Clisby & Widmark, 1996, Booth & Clisby et. al., 1997). However, conversely, in Central America, the majority Mayan population of Guatemala, a country in which the indigenous peoples have long suffered genocide, poverty, and disempowerment, failed in 1999 to pass proposed amendments to the constitution which would have granted equal status to indigenous languages, customs and religions (*International Herald Tribune* 18/5/99).

Perhaps some of the most notable contemporary examples of indigenous resistance in the region can be found in Mexico with the Zapatista rebellion in January 1994[2], and in Ecuador with the indigenous uprising in January 2000 which led to the ousting of President Jamil Mahuad Witt. As World Bank president Wolfensohn rather understated, 'What happened in Ecuador was an expression by a group of [indigenous people] that they were upset' (*Weekly News Update on the Americas*, 2.2000). The Ecuadorian coup was led by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), together with the Patriotic Front (which groups unions, campesino, student and grassroot organisations) who were somewhat 'upset' by a severe economic crisis and government's IMF-backed plans to 'dollarize' the economy - to replace the sucre with the US dollar, a move which would lead to significant devaluation of the local currency (*Weekly News Update on the Americas*, 1.2000).

Thus, any arguments that indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities are the 'passive victims' of, for example, insensitive development, policies of assimilation, political marginalisation, social exclusion, and human rights violations, are not sustained by the reality of indigenous resistance and organising. Nevertheless, that indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities do disproportionately experience and are the targets of such phenomena cannot be ignored. Indeed, such factors tend to be common threads running through any analysis of the recurring experiences of indigenous peoples and ethnic groups throughout Latin America. In order to both better illustrate these common experiences and to highlight regional diversity the following sections will focus upon the specific experiences of autochthonous groups and ethnic minorities in Brazil, Honduras, and Mexico before concluding with an overview of contemporary indigenous experience in Bolivia.

Latin American Area Reports: Contemporary Issues & Experiences

Brazil

From an estimate of over 5 million indigenous peoples prior to the onset of colonisation, Brazil is now home to roughly 300,000 indigenous peoples, belonging to approximately 200 tribal groupings, and speaking over 170 languages. The majority of the indigenous peoples live in the Amazonian and central regions of the country, and several groups have had very little contact with the outside world. Ethnic minority groups include significant Japanese and Jewish populations of approximately 1.7 million and 100,000 people respectively (Rocha, 1997).

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[2] The *Zapatista* Rebellion is discussed in further detail below.

The largest 'minority' ethnic grouping is that of the Afro-Brazilians who, according to the official 1991 census, are estimated to number 65 million, or approximately 40% of the nation's total population, although unofficial estimates suggest that this figure could be as high as 120 million, or 75% of the total population (Minority Rights Group, 1997:69). To suggest, however, that Afro-Brazilians form the majority grouping would not be politically expedient or acceptable to the descendants of the Portuguese colonists who continue to dominate the upper echelons of society.

The descendants of over 3 million Africans who were imported as slaves during the 17th century, contemporary Afro-Brazilians continue to experience problems of discrimination and racism. Although *de jure* equality exists between Brazilians of all ethnic backgrounds, and indeed the notion of a racial democracy is one which tends to be publicly promoted, the *de facto* experiences of 'non-whites' are far from equal. There remains a tangible correlation between socio-economic status and skin colour - the paler the skin, the higher the status - indeed, according to the 1980 census, 'Brazilians had coined 136 terms to define themselves and avoid categorisation with those of a darker skin colour' (Minority Rights Group, 1997:70).

Despite existing rhetoric of diversity and difference being accepted and indeed celebrated, the national policy tends towards assimilation, with the *Mestizo* elite deemed the ideal type towards which all should aspire. Although the *Frente Negra Brasileira*, the nation's first civil rights organisation, was formed in 1930, given the extent of the Afro-Brazilian population it seems surprising that the influence of the Black civil rights movement has historically been relatively limited. Nevertheless,

Black consciousness and anti-racist organisations have proliferated in recent years, and a push towards encouraging Afro-Brazilians to stand for political election culminated with Benedita da Silva becoming the country's the first Black female senator in 1994 (Minority Rights Group, 1997:70).

Despite the fact that the ethnic minority Afro-Brazilian population quite possibly constitutes an ethnic majority, when considering Brazil it tends, rather, to be the plight of the minority indigenous peoples in the Amazonian regions which initially come to mind. Over the past couple of decades there has been a proliferation of campaigning and international publicity surrounding both the Amazon rainforest and the tribal groups within it. This global attention was due in no small part to the work of the Brazilian rights activist and environmentalist, Chico Mendes, whose notoriety and political success led to his eventual assassination in 1988 (Mendes, 1989).

Under Article 198 of the 1988 Constitution, the nation's indigenous peoples are granted legal rights to both inhabit their traditional territories, and use rights to natural resources within them (Treece, 1987:6). However, the reality remains rather less positive. Over the course of this century, almost 90 indigenous groups have died out and several surviving groups are under threat of extinction (Ramos, 1979:7). The Waimiri-Atroari who live deep in the Brazilian Amazon are believed to have declined in number from 3500 in 1974 to 374 in 1986, a decline caused primarily by disease and exacerbated by the armed forces bombing their villages (Monbiot, 1992:165).

Similarly, the Uru Eu Wau Wau of the western Amazon are estimated to have lost approximately half of their population following initial contact with the outside world

in the 1980's, and since 1990 they have been under increased threat of extinction following the deregulation of their reserve after a large deposit of iron ore tin was discovered on their territory (*The Guardian*, 29.9.93, Monbiot, 1992:165).

Control over land and natural resources lies at the heart of these conflicts and the human rights abuses suffered by Brazil's indigenous population. The territories inhabited by tribal groups tend to be those rich in exploitable resources such as iron ore, gold, oil and timber. Ancestral lands have been encroached upon, largely with the support of successive Brazilian governments, by opportunists ranging from goldminers to powerful transnational oil and timber concerns. For the indigenous inhabitants this encroachment has consistently led to loss of territory, habitat and livelihoods, environmental degradation, the introduction of diseases, human rights abuses, and even murder.

The Indian Missionary Council (CIMI), a Catholic organisation working in Brazil, conducted a survey in 1993 which concluded that there are 108,000 cases of illness reported amongst the Amerindian population. The report also documented over 50 murders of Indian people since 1991, 75% of which are attributed to conflicts over lands. CIMI also blame lack of prospects caused by insufficient land, alcohol, and disruption of community value systems for an increasing suicide rate amongst the indigenous population (*Latin American News Briefs*, 8.3.93). Whilst CIMI's perspective may be critiqued for making stereotypical cultural and ethnic assumptions as to the needs and traditions of indigenous groups, their findings nevertheless indicate that significant problems exist for the Amerindian populations of the region.

In the South-West of Brazil 72 young Guaraní men committed suicide in 1989 and 1990, deaths which are considered to be a response to the reduction of their traditional territory, and the appalling working conditions they face in plantations and sugar mills (Monbiot, 1992:166). In 1993, an NGO Commission discovered 1370 Amerindians, including 500 minors, working in conditions akin to slavery on a sugar plantation owned by Brazilian Distilleries Incorporated in southern Brazil. The Indians from the Terena, Kaiova and Guaraní tribes, were said to be living in 'sub-human conditions', being paid very low wages and working long hours. According to the Commission, indigenous peoples provide a very cheap labour force because they are 'relatively unfamiliar with salaried labour and know little or nothing about 'normal' working conditions' (*The Guardian*, 19.8.93). Whilst again this statement strikes the reader as somewhat patronising and laden with cultural stereotyping, the fact remains that, regardless of the underlying reasons, there appears to exists a situation in which Brazilian indigenous groups are facing significant exploitation.

The autochthonous peoples of Brazil, then, experience familiar problems concerning territorial disputes and access to their land-base, poor socio-economic conditions, and the destruction and pollution of their local environments. Officially the Brazilian government recognise traditional indigenous lands and pledged in the 1988 Constitution to protect these territories. FUNAI, the official State protection agency for indigenous groups, were given the task of doing so by October 1993. In reality, by 1995 less than half of the indigenous lands had been demarcated, and with the knowledge of FUNAI, mineral concessions have been made on 58% of all demarcated indigenous lands, 13% are allocated to hydro-electric projects, and logging in the reserves continues (*Servicio Brasileiro de Justica*, No.173, 5.4.95).

Human rights groups became extremely alarmed when, in 1990, the armed forces published a document advocating war against indigenous and environmental organisations as a means of achieving national objectives in the Amazon (Monbiot, 1992:164). Human Rights-Americas claim in a study conducted between 1988 and 1994, that the Mathe, Macuxi and Wapixana Indians of northern Roraima have been victims of an intense campaign of violence at the hands of goldminers, ranchers and police. The violence has taken the form of violent evictions, beatings, destruction of homes and property, illegal arrests, rape, torture and murder. During the same period, four hundred Macuxi Indians were evicted from their lands to make way for the Coitings River hydro-electric dam project in the State of Roraima (*Weekly News Update on the Americas*, 8.10.93).

Estimated to number approximately 9000, the Yanomami are one of the largest indigenous groups in Brazil (Minority Rights Group, 1997:70). As a result of campaigns by international indigenous rights organisations such as *Survival*, their plight attracted international attention in the early 1990's. Their lands were being illegally encroached upon by thousands of gold prospectors or *Garimpeiros* with devastating effect. The miners invaded the area in 1987 and in 3 years caused the deaths of over 10% of the Yanomami, largely through the introduction of diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, against which the Yanomami had little or no resistance (*Latin American Newsline*, 12.1992). The *Garimpeiros* have also introduced alcoholism and prostitution amongst the indigenous group and, in August 1993, there was an international outcry when authorities were alerted to the killing of between 17 and 73 Yanomamis at the hands of the goldminers (*The Guardian*,

24.4.93). In addition, the pollution caused by the goldmining has severely affected the local environment, poisoning water supplies and scaring away wildlife (*Survival International*, 1992).

Following pressure from the international community, the Collor Administration granted approximately 9000 Yanomami Indians rights to their traditional territory in 1991, and, in a project entitled 'Operation Free Jungle', deployed army and police to expel thirty thousand goldminers from the area. The miners, however, returned and, despite 'Operation Free Jungle II' launched the following year, in which the army were again deployed in an attempt to evict the *Garimpeiros*, the Yanomami population has continued to decline (*Latin American Newsline*, 4.1993).

In recent years indigenous organisations have developed rapidly and have managed to draw the world's attention to their situation and the plight of the Amazon as a whole. In 1985 indigenous spokesperson, Chico Mendes, wrote to the World Bank protesting about the damage they were suffering as a result of a US$300m World Bank loan. He claimed that World Bank funding for a main road through the Amazon region of Rondonia had led to both the widespread destruction of indigenous communities and large-scale clearance of the rainforest. The letter led to the cancellation, for the first time, of a World Bank loan and led to the re-negotiation of a further loan in 1992 to correct the damage caused by the earlier project (*The Guardian*, 28.9.93).

Unfortunately the second project, Planafloro, ran into similar problems and in its 1993 report *The World Bank and the Environment*, the World Bank recognises that for many of its projects its consultation with affected populations and local NGO's has

been 'limited at best'. In its action plan published in July, 1993, the World Bank stated, 'To succeed, the design of an operation should be based on a sound understanding of the problems, needs and interests of the people who are meant to benefit from it', adding that it would be 'experimenting with new approaches in participatory development' (World Bank 1993:3).

The conflicts between the politicians, the army, the settlers, and the indigenous communities, however, continue. According to the International Organisation Against Torture (OMTC), there were a series of assaults and murders of members of the Macuxi people by local police and settlers in Brazil's north-western Roraima state between January and February 1999. The killings and assaults followed an administrative order in December 1998 authorising the demarcation of indigenous lands within Roraima. Witnesses claimed that those responsible were both settlers and members of the local police force, reportedly supported by a number of local politicians (*OMTC Alert*, 18.2.99).

In 1996, CIMI recorded an increase of 122% in cases of violence against indigenous people, and, in 1998, a 78% reduction in the Federal budget earmarked for land demarcation and regularisation. Based on their monitoring of indigenous policy and conflict over recent years, CIMI conclude that Brazil's official indigenous policy supports 'land invaders and any business groups interested in indigenous lands', and that the government's claimed concern with indigenous peoples is a 'false image' (*Brazil Network*, Sept.-Dec.1998:12). Such allegations appeared to be further supported when, in February 1999, the incumbent president of FUNAI, José Márcio Panoff Lacerda, in his inaugural speech, rather than focusing on indigenous rights,

indicated his intention to allow mineral and timber companies to operate in indigenous areas and the biodiversity exploited (ibid.:10).

Honduras

Honduras is, to a large extent, an ethnically homogeneous society. There exist few pure-blooded Indians and fewer of pure Spanish ancestry, with 90% of the population being *Mestizo* or mixed-race (Barry and Norsworthy, 1990:94). The largest indigenous population is found from Santa-Rosa de Copan Westwards to the border with Guatemala, where Chorti continues to be spoken. In the Bay Islands, La Ceiba, and other areas along the Atlantic Coast there is a small Black Garífuna or Afro-Carib population which speaks English Creole. The Bay Islands are also home to a small number of Antillean Whites who migrated from the Caribbean Islands in the 1830's, some of whom claim to be descendants of Henry Morgan and other English pirates. Small communities of Arabs and Lebanese also exist in the country and play an important role in Honduran business and industry (Minority Rights Group, 1997:97, Barry and Norsworthy, 1990:95).

The Miskito communities of Honduras are racially mixed, incorporating both Black and European elements, but they nevertheless retain a strong sense of their indigenous identity. The Miskito language, for example, both spoken and written, continues to be widely used. Nevertheless, whilst retaining some fundamental cultural characteristics, most of the indigenous peoples participate in the main-stream market economy (Barry and Norsworthy, 1997:95).

Honduras has two Black ethnic groups: the Antillean Blacks and the Garífuna or Black Caribs. The former, living on the North Coast and the Bay Islands, are descendants of labourers imported to work on the banana plantations. The latter live along the Atlantic Coast and in the Bay Islands and are descendants of African slaves and Carib Indians. There are some 70,000 Garífuna living in Honduras, the majority of whom live in conditions of relative poverty. Subsistence farming and fishing are the mainstays of the Garífuna economy, and official unemployment rates are high, as are levels of periodic male migration in search of paid work (Minority Rights Group, 1997:97).

The autochthonous population at the time of the Spanish colonisation has been calculated at between eight hundred thousand and 1.4 million. Estimates of the current Amerindian population range from one hundred and fifty seven thousand to four hundred thousand, or just over 11% of the total population. The decline in the native population can be attributed to a number of factors, including disease, massacres, the slave trade and harsh working conditions (Minority Rights Group, 1997:98).

The Pipil Indians, sometimes called the Forest Indians - related to the South American rainforest peoples - include the Miskito, Pech, Sumo, and Jicaque tribes. These groups tend to live in the more isolated regions of La Mosquitia, Orlancho and Yoro and so are less acculturated than those living in western Honduras. Of the Forest Indians, the Miskitos living within Honduras are the largest group, numbering over 25 thousand. There continues to exist the common problems of marginalisation, discrimination and alienation from the land-base, with non-indigenous farmers

acquiring tribal lands, often with the support and assistance of the Honduran security forces. Indigenous groups, particularly the Pech, have attempted to resist 'land-grabbing' by *Mestizo* colonists and the National Agrarian Institute (INA) but tend to have little effective power in the face of well-equipped security forces (Barry and Norsworthy, 1997:97).

All indigenous groups within Honduras were severely affected by the Contra war in Nicaragua, with the remaining small indigenous communities suffering displacement and subsequent hopelessness. During the conflict, Honduras was used as a strategic military staging post and training ground by the US Army and the Contra Rebels, and it was from Honduras that much of the Nicaraguan conflict was conducted. Many indigenous and peasant communities displaced by the formation of the military bases were forced to live in temporary camps in Honduras and Nicaragua, and it is feared that several tribes may not survive as distinct groups.

The Chortí, a lowland Mayan people, are almost extinct, and there are now fewer than 1000 ethnic Sumos, who, in order to avoid harassment, have abandoned their language. They exist largely as subsistence farmers living along the Patuca River, and none have more than a 6th grade education. The Pech, believed to have inhabited as much as one-fourth of Honduras at the time of the European conquest, now number between 700 and 1,800. Nevertheless, they have remained a largely cohesive grouping and have fought against the imposition of the national education curriculum with the result that they now have Pech language courses and Pech teachers (Barry and Norsworthy, 1997:97).

Indigenous peoples in Honduras have been organising on a national level for several decades. The National Federation of Tribes for the Liberation of the Honduran Indian (FENATRILIH), founded in 1978, aims to improve the economic, political, and social conditions of the indigenous population. They particularly focus on attempting to protect tribal lands and secure agricultural credit and technical assistance.

In 1988, many of the issues that concern the indigenous groups and other ethnic minorities were discussed at the 'Third National Encounter of Ethnic Peoples', a national conference which brought together representatives from most Indian tribes and Garífuna communities. Amongst issues discussed were the need for the government to provide greater assistance to ethnic communities, particularly in areas of health care, education, and the provision of rural infrastructure. Stress was also placed on the importance of retaining cultural identities and language whilst at the same time enabling the integration of ethnic groups into national life. There were also calls for laws which would protect all ethnic groups from discrimination and exploitation on racial, political, religious, and socio-economic grounds. In 1990, the government established a *Consejo de las Etnias* or Indigenous Council whose primary responsibility was to draft legislation to protect the rights of autochthonous communities (*Central America Monitor*, 8.90).

The impact of the Council has, however, remained relatively limited, and in 1993, indigenous communities across the region boycotted the November elections in protest at their economic conditions and the failure of the government to fulfil agreements on land rights (*Latin America Newsline*, 9.93). Then, in 1994, indigenous groups marched on the capital, Tegucigalpa, on three separate occasions to demand

that the Reina Government fulfil its promise to help their peoples. Primary concerns included land tenancy rights, the continued deforestation of homelands and the need for basic services.

The President responded by producing an Accord, signed on 15 July 1994, which called for the construction of schools, roads and health centres in indigenous regions. The agreement also contained provisions for the creation of the first indigenous municipality in Honduras, and promised to reopen investigations into the deaths of 23 Indian leaders killed in land disputes. The Accord represents the first agreement between the government and the indigenous community in the last 50 years, and nominally settled 42 of the 76 ethnic complaints pending against the government (*Interpress*, 1.8.95). A second Accord was then agreed in May 1997 which granted 2000 hectares of land to the Chortí people in Copán and 7000 hectares to several indigenous groups in Octopeque (*MesoAmerica*, 11/1998).

The disputes over territorial and social issues have not, however, dissipated in recent years, and a series of indigenous protests were staged over 1998 and 1999. In October 1998, on the 506th anniversary of Colombus' arrival in the Americas, approximately 5000 indigenous and Afro-Carib peoples associated with the Coordinating Council of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras (CONPAH) descended on the capital to demonstrate over land rights and other social issues. At the time of the protests, for example, only 524 hectares of the 9000 hectares promised in the 1997 Accord had been turned over (*MesoAmerica*, 11.1998).

Four indigenous leaders went on hunger strike outside the Vatican Embassy in an attempt to draw attention from Europe to their protests. At the same time other indigenous and Garífuna groups staged protests elsewhere throughout the region, including the Copán Ruins, an important Mayan archaeological site, where between two thousand and three thousand members of the Chortí Indigenous Council (CONICH) blocked the entrances to the site demanding four thousand hectares of land for farming (*La Prensa*, 13.10.98, *El Diario*, 13.10.98).

As a result of these protests, the Foreign Minister agreed to meet with indigenous leaders who presented him with a list of demands, which included the fulfilment of earlier negotiations between indigenous organisations and the government. The settlement finally reached provides for the creation of a joint commission focusing on solving health, education, land and security issues. The establishment of a special fund was also proposed which would be earmarked specifically to resource indigenous programmes, and the investigation into the murders of two indigenous leaders was promised. The agreement also pledges compliance with Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which sets out guarantees for the respect of indigenous rights (*MesoAmerica*, 11.1998).

Further protests were then staged throughout 1999 when approximately three thousand indigenous peoples led by CONPAH and the Civic Committee of Grassroots and Indigenous Organisations (COPIN) marched on the legislative offices in Tegucigalpa. These demonstrations were held to again demand that agreements made in the previous Accords be fulfilled as promised, including that the murders of 42 indigenous leaders be investigated (*Hoy*, 26.1.99). However, government

commitment to indigenous rights remains highly suspect and human rights violations continue to be documented. Following the indigenous protests in Tegucigalpa 1999, witnesses reported that police agents seized and beat COPIN leader José Ofelio López before taking him away in an unmarked car. López' abduction did not subsequently show up in police records and COPIN called for an urgent investigation into his disappearance (*Nicaragua Solidarity Network*, 23.5.99: 486).

And so the cycle of violations, protests, and promises continues, and the socio-economic situation faced by the nation's indigenous peoples has improved little in recent years. The situation was, of course, further effected by Hurricane Mitch, which hit in 1998 and wiped out an estimated 70% of country's infrastructure, wreaking a devastation which cut across ethnic and class lines (*MesoAmerica*, 11.1998). The slow process of reconstruction following this disaster inevitably made the socio-economic situation faced by the poorest sectors of the nation critical, and moved indigenous rights even further down the government's agenda.

Mexico

The 56 indigenous groups within Mexico constitute almost 25% of the nation's total population of over 92 million and speak over 50 languages. Afro-Mexicans make up approximately 5% of the population and are the main ethnic minority group in the country (Minority Rights Group, 1997:24).

Similar to that of the Afro-Brazilians, despite being such a significant minority, Afro-Mexicans' experience the common problems of discrimination and cultural denial. The nation's African community played an important part in Mexico's history,

particularly during the colonial and subsequent revolutionary periods; indeed, General Vincente Guerrero, a Black revolutionary, became the second President following Mexico's independence, an independence the Afro-Mexicans helped secure. Nevertheless, their heritage and cultural traditions are often trivialised or ridiculed, and as a group they are vastly over-represented amongst the disenfranchised poor, lacking access to basic services, health care, sanitation and educational opportunities (Minority Rights Group, 1997:24). Although Mexico's African heritage is increasingly being recognised by Afro-Mexicans themselves, and Black civil rights organisations have made important strides in organising for change they remain, as yet, relatively limited in power and influence.

Standing at between 10 and 20 million, Mexico is significant in that it has the largest population of autochthonous peoples of any Latin American country (Minority Rights Group, 1997:22). Indigenous groups largely inhabit the regions to the south of the country, the most notorious of which is Chiapas state, the birth place of the Zapatista Uprising in 1994 (Holloway and Peláez, 1998:1). Indigenous human rights are protected under Mexican law, and the government's National Indigenous Institute's remit is to facilitate consultation with indigenous people. The Mexican government has also ratified the International Labour Organisation (ILO) 1989 Convention No. 169 on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples (ibid.:22). Nevertheless, similar to the experiences of Afro-Mexicans, the day to day reality faced by the majority of Mexico's indigenous population falls far short of anything which could be considered a state of egalitarian citizenship.

Indigenous communities are significantly over-represented in statistics indicating levels of unemployment, poverty, infant mortality and illiteracy. For example, an estimated 60% of indigenous people over the age of 12 are officially unemployed, although they may work in the informal economy, and of those in paid employment, the majority earn less than the minimum wage. Overall illiteracy rates are higher than the national average, and within this, illiteracy rates amongst indigenous women are 20% higher than those of their male counterparts (op.cit:22).

As elsewhere, conflicts over access to and rights over the occupation and exploitation of land lies at the heart of many problems faced by indigenous communities throughout the country. During the past 6 decades the Mexican government has confiscated 100 million hectares of tribal lands. In addition to this official land appropriation, the indigenous population has had further traditional territory illegally expropriated by non-indigenous farmers, timber companies and developers (Monbiot, 1992:150). Those indigenous groups who resist the process of land-grabbing, such as the Mixe, Nahua and Tzotzil, continue to suffer arrest, torture and even murder. In the Chimalapas forest of southern Mexico, the 12,000 Zoque Indians have been deprived of one-third of their community woodlands by timber poachers. This is now being further exacerbated by drug traders who are forcibly pressurising them to convert much of their remaining land to opium and marijuana fields (op.cit:150).

Police brutality and human rights violations are commonly reported, but with little apparent effect, largely due to the fact that the repression is not uncommonly unofficially sanctioned by local officials and politicians. The Lacandón have been driven from their entire forest territory by colonists and logging interests, and, having

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been reduced to living in conditions of extreme poverty, alcoholism is becoming an increasing problem. Other groups are having their lands appropriated to serve the needs of tourism (Monbiot, 1992:150). The Tarascan Indians of the Western Highlands and the coastal Zapotec are losing their traditional livelihoods as their lands are being taken over by hotel and leisure complexes, and their environment is being destroyed by pollution largely generated by that same tourist industry, such as, for example, sewage discharge which is destroying fish stocks.

Urban migration is one result of indigenous dispossession, with several million indigenous people having swelled the ranks of urban poor living in the shanty towns surrounding Mexico City. For the majority of indigenous peoples, social change and mobility are only possible by ceasing to be 'Indian', rejecting their indigenous culture and community (Monbiot, 1992:150).

Autochthonous organisations in the region have campaigned for improvements in living standards, access to basic services, health care and education, land rights, increased political representation and environmental protection. Working closely with and within peasant organisations, there were estimated to be between 500-600 indigenous organisations working within the country (Minority Rights Group, 1997:23). These groups have managed to secure certain improvements in recent years, for example, in 1988 the Triquil Indians were granted title to 16 million hectares of their lands in Oaxaca State, and various groups, including the Triquil, were allowed to establish a radio network to broadcast in the vernacular (Monbiot, 1992:151).

In the early 1990's, the Nahua in Guerrero state successfully prevented the construction of a hydro-electric dam which would have flooded vast areas of land, including a number of significant archaeological sites, and affected seventeen communities (Minority Rights Group, 1997:23). Such advances have, however, been tempered by the continuing reports of repression, human rights violations and harassment, for example, shortly after the president promised a commission of indigenous representatives that he would tackle their problems of land, food, health and legal protection in 1989, several leaders were imprisoned for defending their lands in Chiapas State (Monbiot, 1992:151).

The Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas

Chiapas is a state characterised by extreme levels of poverty and social inequalities. Approximately 50% of the population are estimated to suffer from malnutrition and between 35% and 45% of homes do not benefit from water, electricity or basic sanitation. Human rights abuses are common, including well-documented assassinations, disappearances, unlawful detentions and torture of leaders and members of indigenous peasant organisations (Human Rights Watch Americas, 1994).

It was within this context that a surprise rebellion was launched on January 1st, 1994 by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), an organisation largely composed of young Indians and indigenous peasants. The EZLN were calling for improvements in socio-economic conditions, greater representation and power for peasants at federal state and municipal levels, and for the granting and enforcement of

peasant's land rights. The government deployed 12,000 troops to put down the uprising and fighting continued, the death toll rising to an estimated 627 people, until the government agreed to the majority of rebel demands in principle, and approved an amnesty for EZLN members on January 21, 1994 (*Reuters, Associated Press, Latin America Weekly Reports*, 1.1994). Following two years of rebel-government talks, the San Andreas Accord on autochthonous rights and culture was signed in February 1996, marking the first step towards recognising indigenous autonomy. An uneasy 'truce' was reached, and several initial EZLN-backed 'autonomous' indigenous councils were subsequently established throughout Chiapas, whilst the state military presence continued to be felt.

However, talks broke down in January 1997 when President Zedillo stepped up the aggressive military presence in Chiapas. By January 1999 there was estimated to be one soldier per family in a region which, according to official statistics, has just one doctor per 18,900 people. Since the initial uprising in 1994, government troops have maintained a heavy presence in Chiapas and have been responsible for destroying buildings and crops, and allegedly raping and torturing 'rebel sympathisers' (*The Guardian*, 1.1.99).

In this way a state of perpetual sabre-rattling has been played out between the state government and the EZLN since the initial uprising, with the authorities, according to the EZLN, attempting to force further armed confrontations and break the tenuous peace accord. State and federal governments mounted significant military operations in 1998 to recapture three autonomous municipalities, during which 9 indigenous peasants and 2 police officers were killed. Then, in 1999, the state government sent in

police to oust the autonomous council established by the Zapatistas at San Andrés Larráinzar, the site of the 1995 peace negotiations. The EZLN-backed council put up no resistance, but the Zapatistas responded the following day by reoccupying the council buildings with approximately 3000 indigenous peoples. A tense stand-off followed, with gathered police awaiting the order to attack, until Chiapas governor, Roberto Albores Guillén backed down and ordered their retreat (*Latin America Weekly Report*, 13.4.99).

The degree to which indigenous peoples have managed to mobilise popular support throughout the country, both at the time of the Zapatista Rebellion and in subsequent years, is a significant indication that the power of the political elite has been shaken. It may prove to be the case that the calls for change, and support for the indigenous movement will reach the point when a return to the old order seems untenable. Although it remains to be seen whether the situation for indigenous peoples will significantly improve in the longer term, it seems that the Chiapas Uprising has proved to be a watershed for both the indigenous and African Mexican calls for reform.

Conclusions

From these brief overviews of contemporary indigenous and ethnic minority (and majority) experiences within Latin America, common threads of experience running through the vast continent can be clearly traced. Despite contemporary institutional and state rhetoric pertaining to respect for indigenous and minority rights, and despite the increasing propensity of Latin American governments to ratify indigenous rights

Accords and Conventions, such as that of the 1989 ILO Convention No. 169, it remains the case that the lived reality of autochthonous peoples and ethnic communities throughout the continent remains highly problematic.

Ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples are disproportionately affected by, and over-represented in, statistics pertaining to, for example, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, and infant mortality. They suffer both overt and more insidious forms of discrimination and harassment ranging from human rights violations, disappearances and killings, to marginalisation, acculturation, and social exclusion from notions and processes of national citizenship.

Possibly the most significant factor affecting and contributing to the alienation, disenfranchisement and violations experienced by minority (and in some cases majority) ethnic, but particularly autochthonous communities, is the exploitation of and encroachment on their traditional territories by both individual settlers and national and transnational companies seeking to exploit the natural resource base. The effects of such commercial exploitation and development within their homelands also directly contributes to the common but serious problems of environmental degradation, loss of wildlife and habitat, the introduction of disease, and the increasing issues of disillusionment, depression and alcoholism contributing to community breakdown.

Faced with such apparently insurmountable problems, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities have nevertheless managed to organise and execute effective strategies of resistance, and have made important advances in the fight towards greater equality

and recognition of both territorial and human rights. From the numerous national organisations such as the Indigenous Regional Council of Colombia (CRIC), the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), or the Frente Negra Brasileira, to the internationally renowned indigenous spokespeople such as Chico Mendes and Rigoberto Menchu, autochthonous and ethnic minority communities continue to persistently resist such violations and are increasingly making their voices heard both throughout Latin America and at international levels.

Indigenous Peoples in Bolivia

It is within this wider regional context that both the history and contemporary experiences of Bolivia's indigenous peoples finds resonance. As initially highlighted in chapter 2, Bolivia is distinct within the South American context in that its indigenous peoples constitute the majority of the population. Estimates as to the extent of the nation's autochthonous population tend to vary between approximately 54% (Monbiot, 1992:161) and 60-65% of the total population of over 6 million (Rance, 1991:31, UNICEF, 1994). The Aymaran and Quechuan peoples, who dominate the Highland regions, constitute by far the largest indigenous groups in the country, however, within the Lowland regions over 40 ethnic minority and indigenous groups coexist and form a further 2.5% of the overall population (Rance, 1993:31). Nevertheless, despite comprising the majority of the population, the indigenous peoples of Bolivia have long experienced common problems of discrimination and social exclusion, with political and economic power being concentrated within a small, largely non-indigenous elite.

Following the National Revolution in 1952, the incumbent MNR Administration led by Paz Estenssoro implemented a series of radical land reforms between 1952-3 which granted peasants individual land titles. However, even these radical reforms failed to recognise the communal ownership central to the indigenous traditions, and were instrumental in breaking up thousands of communities throughout the highlands. These same reforms also contributed to the reduction of indigenous territories in the eastern lowlands by opening the way for both timber concessions and the development of vast cattle ranches (Monbiot, 1992:161).

Bolivia is estimated to be the poorest nation within South America, and within this, it is the indigenous people of Bolivia who have been particularly severely affected by the chronic national economic situation. The worst economic crisis in the nation's history climaxed between 1980 and 1985 when the GNP dropped by 20%, hyper-inflation rocketed out of control to an astonishing 24,000%, and the official unemployment rate tripled (Hargreaves, 1992:34). Furthermore, 1992 estimates calculated that as much as 97% of the country's rural population were living in extreme poverty, a situation which has not radically improved in recent years (van Lindert and Verkoren, 1994:31).

That the majority of indigenous groups live in rural areas inevitably means that they are thus disproportionately affected by rural poverty. Aymaran and Quechuan peasant farmers in the Andean Highlands, for example, 'constitute the bulk of the extremely poor in the country' (World Bank, 1996:183). The main problems faced by rural (indigenous) communities, and the significant factors in their high levels of poverty and malnourishment, are the lack of access to a productive land-base, lack of local

infrastructure, such as roads, clean water, and electricity, and highly restricted access to basic services such as health care and educational provision (op.cit:182).

As a consequence of Bolivia's IMF-backed structural adjustment programme, initiated in 1985, there has been reduced spending on health and education and a diversion of agriculture towards the production of export crops, moves which have tended to place greater socio-economic pressures on the poorer sectors of the population, including autochthonous groups. Such economic pressures are driving indigenous peasants from their homelands to the cities in search of waged work, contributing to the breakdown of traditional community organisation, and placing increasing pressures on the already overcrowded urban shanty towns (van Lindert and Verkoren, 1994). Another effect of the economic crisis has been a surge in the mass migration of peasant families into the coca-growing regions of El Chapare and Las Yungas in search of a new livelihood.

The Bolivian economy, its social and political structures, and even much of its cultural tradition, are inextricably tied up with its historically most prolific crop - coca. To re-iterate and develop the discussion initiated in chapter 2, although production has decreased significantly in recent years, largely due to US-backed eradication measures, Bolivia continues to be the world's third largest producer of cocaine (*Hoy* (NY) 1.18.00). At the beginning of 1999, approximately 40,000 hectares of land was dedicated to coca production (around three quarters going to illegal trafficking), and although widespread forceful eradication programmes cut this by up to half over the course of the year, it is still estimated that approximately 300,000 people are economically dependent on coca and cocaine production - about 10% of

the working population of the country (*Los Tiempos* 5.1.99, *CNN*, 18.1.00, *Hoy* 18.1.00).

Thus, despite, President Banzer's vow to completely eradicate illegal coca production by 2002, this sector continues to provide Bolivia's most important product, with estimates of the value of annual cocaine exports varying between US$300 and US$700 million - or between 23% and 43% of the total value of exports (CNN, op. cit., van Lindert and Verkoren, 1994:33).

Cocaine production and export is, then, crucial to the national economy, however 'informally'. Furthermore, although the manufacture and export of cocaine tends not to be in the hands of indigenous peoples, the overwhelming majority of coca growers or *cocaleros* are indigenous families. Coca has been grown by indigenous communities for centuries, long before it was used as a base ingredient in the production of cocaine, and the coca leaf plays an important part in indigenous ceremonies and traditions. Ingestion of the juice of the coca leaf also has a range of health-related benefits, particularly useful for the Highland peasant. It is, for example, used as both prevention and cure for altitude sickness, and it acts as both an appetite suppressant and mild tonic. In recent years, however, the cocaine cartels have moved in and, as a result coca cultivation for sale to the cocaine trade yields by far the largest profit for the peasant farmer. Since the economic crisis and collapse of tin mining in 1985, peasants families, many from the Aymaran-dominated Altiplano, have flooded into the coca-growing regions in search of new livelihoods.

The extent of cocaine production in Bolivia has inevitably been a cause of grave concern for the US Government, and Bolivia has become a prime target of their 'war on drugs'. The Coca Eradication Act of 1989, developed in conjunction with and supported by the US Government, was meant to severely restrict coca production throughout the country and involves the forcible eradication of crops by the Bolivian army, and in some cases the US military. This 'war' has inevitably hit the indigenous *cocaleros* particularly hard, leading to the loss of their homes and livelihoods, and subsequent battles have led to violence against, the arrest, and even deaths, of numerous indigenous *cocaleros* and their leaders. In response the *cocaleros* have in recent years staged a series of demonstrations and protests, including a thousand-strong march on the capital between December 1995 and January 1996, followed by a hunger strike in protest at the government's refusal to discuss their demands (Booth et al. 1996).

Since the advent of the Banzer Administration in 1997, eradication targets have become increasingly stringent, with the ultimate aim to destroy all illegal coca crops by the end of Banzer's term of office in 2002 (*Latin American Weekly Report*, 6.1999). According to the 1998 report of the *Comisión Andina de Juristas* (CAJ), democracy in the Andes, including within Bolivia, is being compromised by the 'subsistence [...] of authoritarian contents dressed up in democratic forms'. The CAJ report continues on to state that, this, combined with the extreme levels of poverty, the economic crisis, and the lack of national resources to satisfy social needs, has led to institutional stability being threatened by strikes and protest actions (cited in *Latin American Weekly Report*, 23.3.99).

The Bolivian 'war on drugs' has led to continued violent clashes between security forces and coca-growers throughout the 1990's and into the 21st Century. In 2000, as forced eradication of coca crops continued to escalate in El Chapare, there were continued clashes between *cocaleros* and government troops. In one incident a US helicopter on loan to the Bolivian government for use by their Joint Task Force responsible for implementing the coca eradication programme came under rifle fire. Evo Morales, *cocalero* leader and national legislative deputy, admitted that an isolated group of *cocaleros* may have carried out the attack, stating that, 'Faced with the eradication, militarization and sense of powerlessness, some of the comrades could be making use of weapons they have in their homes' (cited in *Los Tiempos*, Cochabamba, 16.5.00).

Campesino communities, largely made up of indigenous families, throughout the coca growing regions have not only faced severe socio-economic hardship, but there have also been numerous allegations of both human rights violations and deaths at the hands of security forces. In May, 2000, the government closed the Chapare region to journalists as tensions continued to rise, and *cocalero* leader Eleuterio Colque claimed that government troops were firing at the *campesino cocaleros*, looting their homes and violating their human rights (*Los Tiempos*, Cochabamba 17.5.00).

Allegations of systematic human rights violations led, for example, to the resignation in 1999 of Interior Minister Guido Náyar, prominent member of the ruling right-wing Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN) and leader of recent coca eradication programmes. Náyar's resignation followed scandal over the death in June 1999 of Peruvian, Freddy Cano López, who was burned alive in a La Paz police cell. Náyar

was also implicated in an attempt to seize a magazine published by the Centre of Documentation and Information (CEDOIN) which documented evidence of President Banzer's role in human rights violations. Banzer, in his former role as Bolivia's military dictator during the 1970's, has been linked, alongside former Chilean dictator Pinochet, to 'Operation Condor', a South American intelligence network which provided cooperation between dictatorships in repression against alleged dissidents (*Bolivian Times* Vol. VI:14, 4.8.99). Bolivia's anti-drugs campaign is particularly significant in the context of indigenous rights in as much as it has effectively meant that for over a decade a low intensity war has been waged between both the Bolivian and US governments against the coca growers, the majority of whom are indigenous peoples.

Allegations of torture of indigenous peoples, especially members of the *Katarista*[3], or Indigenist Movement, remain widespread and many indigenous people have been killed in riots and attempted coups over the course of Bolivia's tempestuous contemporary history. In the Amazonian regions it is estimated that over the past decade 4 indigenous groups have died out - the Simonianos, Toromanas, Bororo and Jorva, while others - the Chimanes, Mofos and Movima - are under threat of extinction. To the East of the country, the Yuqui, the last remaining group of Bolivian nomads, are being forced from their territory by *Mestizo* settlers taking advantage of new roads and railways. Settlers have literally hunted down the Indians as they have encroached on the area - following one massacre in 1989, for example, settlers hung 11 bodies from a tree to warn surviving Yuqui not to return to their lands (Monbiot, 1992:162).

As elsewhere throughout Latin America, Bolivia's indigenous peoples have not passively accepted the inequalities and human rights violations they disproportionately experience, and, through their organised and widespread strategies of resistance, have consistently been a thorn in the side of both the succession of military dictatorships and civilian governments throughout the region's turbulent history. Indeed, it can been seen that indigenous groups are gradually gaining in political power and prominence, to the extent that, for example, the former Vice-President, Victor Hugo Cardenas, a pure-blooded Aymaran, became the first indigenous person elected to high political office in 1994. More recently, upon the death of party head Carlos Palenque, Remedios Loza became the first Aymaran woman to lead CONDEPA, a major political party, into Bolivia's 1997 general elections (*Presencia*, Cochabamba, 9.2.97).

Indeed, Bolivia has a long history of indigenous organising, with the *Katarista* Movement staging mass demonstrations and lobbying for change over the course of several decades. In more recent years, however, indigenous political organisations have, faced with internal conflict and division, declined in cohesion and subsequent influence. Nevertheless, there has been a growth and strengthening of grassroots indigenous groups throughout the Andes with the goals of maintaining and protecting indigenous language, culture, identity, and territory. Monbiot (1994), for example, reported that in 1990 approximately 800 indigenous peoples from the northern Bolivian Amazon marched on the capital in protest both at the government's failure to demarcate indigenous territory and at logging operations in their forest homelands. Their protest met with widespread popular support to the extent that, faced with such strength of feeling, the government agreed to recognise their ownership of traditional

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[3] The rise of the *Katarista* Movement will be examined in greater detail in chapter 6

lands and serve the timber companies with one year's notice of expulsion (Monbiot, 1994:162).

In 1994 the then MNR Government led by Sánchez de Lozada announced a series of reforms which were intended to increase levels of democratisation and citizenship throughout the country, the implications of which form a central concern of this work. Two central initiatives particularly affecting indigenous groups were the Education Reform and the Law of Popular Participation. The former recognised, for the first time in the nation's history, and as established in the ILO Convention No. 169, the right of indigenous peoples to bilingual education. The latter provided the first legal recognition of the territorial authority of a variety of indigenous and popular organisations (Booth, Clisby and Widmark, 1996, Booth and Clisby et. al., 1997).

Both reforms have important implications for Bolivia's indigenous majority. The Education Reform seeks to modernise the school system, taking into official account for the first time the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country. The legislation itself is, of course, merely a first step, which, without the necessary accompanying resources and continued pressure for change, may remain largely rhetorical. Nevertheless, the formal acknowledgement within the State education sector that both Aymaran, Quechuan, and the minority indigenous languages have an important part to play alongside Spanish in children's education sends a clear, if somewhat overdue, message that Bolivia's diverse non-*Mestizo* cultures are valued in contemporary Bolivian society. Indeed, prior to the Education Reform it was not unheard of for indigenous children to be beaten in the classroom for failing to adhere to the Spanish

only language rule[4].

As outlined in greater detail in chapter 3, the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) is a decentralising measure which may be seen as 'an attempt to marry the Western representative democracy with indigenous community traditions of self-government in a new hybrid form at the municipal level' (Booth and Clisby et al. 1997:vi). The LPP has created a new layer of elective local government, funded by the redistribution of tax revenues, and has thus created a potentially significant extension of citizenship rights to local, including indigenous, populations. Within these new municipalities, existing popular and indigenous forms of community organisation, including traditional Aymaran *ayllus,* have been registered as Territorial Base Organisations (OTBs), and charged with the task of assisting the locally-elected municipal government to produce annual development plans. These plans for socio-economic and infrastructural projects should be, under the LPP, created with the full participation of the local population.

Again, as initially proposed in chapter 3, one criticism of the LPP may be that, despite the progressive rhetoric, in reality it remains a further tool of 'incorporative modernisation', working towards the subordination of the remaining Andean and indigenous forms of social organisation into the central State apparatus. On the other hand, through the LPP, there now exist autochthonous regions in which indigenous leaders and traditional community organisations have, for the first time, gained formal recognition of their roles, and potentially the relative power and resources with which to instigate positive, participatory initiatives in their localities (Booth and Clisby et al., 1997).

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[4] Based on interviews collated in Bolivia in 1997

Since these potentially radical reforms, however, their author and instigator, President Sánchez de Lozada, was replaced by General Hugo Banzer in the 1997 elections. As documented above, Banzer, a former military dictator (1971-8) during whose rule human rights abuses, imprisonment and disappearances were well documented, re-presented himself as something of an elder statesman and convert to civilian democracy, and was re-elected by an electorate purportedly convinced of the need for 'strong government'[5]. Although during his campaign Banzer claimed he would not attempt to roll back the democratising measures instigated by his more liberal predecessor, he has done little to encourage their smooth passage since taking power. Indeed, there were widespread strikes and protests during 1999 against the introduction of a new employment law which is seen to restrict workers rights, banning, for example, strikes by employees of the public education system, and making it easier to sack workers.

This legislation was claimed by union leaders to demonstrate a lack of commitment to people's rights and participatory democracy (*Agencia Informativa Púlsar* 11.9.99). Unrest continued into 2000, with protests beginning in Cochabamba over plans to significantly increase water charges and sparking wider protests amongst the economically marginalised sectors of Bolivian society. The government responded by declaring a State of Seige in April 2000, an act which the Permanent Human Rights Assembly of Bolivia called 'arbitrary and illegal', but as a result of which public protests were banned, curfews imposed, 22 union leaders were arrested and taken into 'confinement' in a jungle location, and troops were deployed to break up road blocks.

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[5] Such was the apparent feeling at the time of the elections, based on interviews, discussions, and news reports collated in Bolivia during this period.

The protests nevertheless continued, and in subsequent protests several protestors and an army captain were killed (*Weekly News Update on the Americas*, 9.4.00, *Latin American Weekly Report*, 11.4.00). In the light of the continued unrest sweeping the country, and the government's response to civil protest, it thus remains to be seen to what extent human rights, including the extension of indigenous rights, will be respected in coming years.

It nevertheless remains the case that the Law of Popular Participation continues to exist and continues to have an impact upon Bolivian society. However, the implications of the recent democratising measures for Bolivia's indigenous peoples cannot be fully appreciated unless placed within the context of the rise of Bolivia's *Katarista* Movement since the National Revolution led by the 'old' MNR Government in 1952. The following chapter will thus examine the development of Bolivia's indigenous peoples, from derisively being perceived and referred to as '*los indios*', to their current self-definition as '*indigenous campesinos*', before continuing with an examination of the implications of the introduction of the 1994 reforms, with special reference to the LPP, for indigenous groups across the region.

Chapter 6

Indigenous Peoples, Las Kataristas & Popular Participation

Introduction

The following chapter focuses upon Bolivia's majority indigenous peoples, their place within, and relationship with the national political scene, and the rise of the indigenist or *Katarista* movement. It thus examines the process of indigenous evolution from being derisively referred to as '*los indios*', to their emergence as '*campesinos*' in the years following the National Revolution in 1952, to their current manifestation as 'indigenous-*campesinos*'. The latter half of this chapter will expand upon the discussion and overviews provided in chapters 3 and 5 and further outline the recent political reforms instigated in Bolivia during the 1990s which have impacted upon the indigenous populations. The final section of this chapter will then focus specifically on the implications of the LPP for indigenous peoples and examine the initial experiences of popular participation in the Amazonian region of Moxos.

The Rise of *Katarismo*: the Indigenous Movement in Historical Context

In 1952, Bolivia experienced its historic National Revolution, led by the National Bolivian Movement (MNR), with Victor Paz Estenssoro at its head, and bringing in its wake widespread structural and social change. Significant changes included universal suffrage for men and women, agrarian reform, nationalisation of major

industries, and the creation of the Central Bolivian Worker's Union (COB), the national trade union organisation (Emmerij 1998:7). During this period '*los indios*' were already beginning to be renamed '*campesinos*' and formed the *Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CNTCB), a national peasant workers union, which was especially strong amongst both Quechuans and Aymarans. At this time the CNTCB was closely alligned to the MNR government, and its leadership was in the hands of the Cochabamban Quechuan *campesinos* who had initiated the expulsion of the old landowners, and thus the decline in the importance of their haciendas, even before the signing of agrarian reform legislation in August 1953 (Ticona et al., 1995:35-6).

However, following the reconquest of their land-base, the *campesino* unions, whilst maintaining their adherence to the goals and rhetoric proclaimed by the powerful miners and workers organisations (which had formed COB), were in reality a modernised version of traditional communal organisations. In this way the *campesino* unions maintained traditional affiliations to their territorial community leaders, including those of the recaptured former *haciendos*. Nevertheless, despite the fact that little had changed in terms of hierachical social organisation, the '*indios/campesinos*' had at least facilitated a more equitable access to the land-base (Ticona et al., 1995:37-9).

During the 1950's, the MNR, led by Victor Paz Estenssoro, also initiated the 'March towards the Oriente', the process of colonisation of the rich subtropical lowlands which until then had been largely isolated from the rest of the country. The opening up of this new territory had two main outcomes: the first was the opening of the

agricultural frontier to small colonisers stemming from the impoverished Andean region, for whom the Oriente provided a valuable escape; and the second was the development of capitalist agro-industries which led to the creation of a new Oriental bourgeoisie (van Lindert and Verkoren, 1994:19).

When, at the end of 1964, the MNR was overthrown by General Barrientos (1964-1969), the ties between the *campesino* union and the new regime were further tightened through the *Pacto Militar-Campesino* (PM-C). This Pact was particularly efficient in the Quechuan valleys of Cochabamba from where General Barrientos became the highest leader of the *campesinos* until his death in 1969. The General's death precipitated the demise of the powerful alliance between the military, the government, and the *campesino* unions, and during subsequent regimes, and the rise of successive military dictatorships, this mutual relationship continued to deteriorate. The relationship became progressively strained following the regime of General Banzer (1971-1978) which was responsible for the '*Masacre del Valle*' in 1974 - the violent repression of a Quechuan *campesino* protest in Cochabamba. After the masacre little legitimacy remained to the partnership between the military and *campesinos*, and finally in 1978 this pact was completely severed (Ticona et al., 1995:39).

In effect, since 1970, an Indigenist or *Katarista* Movement had emerged amongst the Ayamaras of La Paz and Oruro, which, without questioning the union codes and practices of the 1950s, again foregrounded an 'ethnic plan' (Albó, 1993). The name had already emerged, inspired by Tupaj Katari, the great anti colonial hero of 1781, but it expressed itself in other symbols and demands, such as the use of their own

flag, the Aymaran '*Wiphala*', or the importance given to the Aymaran language and culture in the popular indigenous radio programmes. In 1971 the *Kataristas* were gaining in strength and popularity, but were almost immediately practically destroyed when Banzer took power, although they remained active, albeit in more clandestine forms (Albó, 1993).

Since the end of 1977, the indigenist movement had gained public recognition and soon gained support throughout the lower Andean region. In 1978 Banzer called elections but was then overthrown by his former interior minister, beginning a confusing period of elections, coups and counter-coups which finally, in 1982, resulted in the first period of civilian democracy, under Hernán Siles Zuazo, UDP, 1982-1985. Siles Zuazo was then himself forced to call elections a year early as a result of a severe economic crisis and a country crippled by galloping inflation (Van Lindert and Verkoren, 1994:23-5).

The following democratic government was headed by veteran politician Victor Paz Estenssoro (1985-89) and his 'new' MNR. Under advisement of the American economist Jeffrey Sachs, the new regime embarked upon its neo-liberal reformism under the banner of the New Economic Policy (NEP), which, along lines similar to the key themes of structural adjustment policies the world over, involved establishing major currency devaluation and opening the country to transnational capital, dismantling the numerous State-owned enterprises, sacking millions of miners and liberalising the system of hiring and firing (van Lindert and Verkoren, 1994:28). All this produced a shock - felt all the more as a result of the accumulated frustrations of the previous years - which set in motion the neo-liberal model already in force in

other Latin American countries, and which, with some adjustments, continues to this day.

During this time (1978-85), the *Katarista* Movement, and with it the Andean indigenous *campesino* movement as a whole, reached its objective of smashing the *Campesino*-Military Pact, PM-C, and maintained themselves at the head of the national organisation, now restructured as the *Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB). The CSUTCB which was far more autonomous than its predecessor, the CNTCB, joined with the COB, and a combination of these leaderships formed to create the first indigenous or indigenist politicians, who reached parliament as the first indigenous Deputies. This new breed of indigenist politicians were the protagonists of numerous actions against the state development institutions. The *Katarista* Movement organised national blockades and protests across the country until the formulation, with the participation of grass-root organisations, of an innovative proposal - the Fundamental Agrarian Law, something the parliament had never wanted to consider (Ticona et al., 1995:39-42).

In this way, the indigenist movement, with its diverse strands and expressions, generated a new conciousness of Bolivia's multi-ethnic identity. The new indigenism saw the necessity of overcoming its neocolonial structures, creating new concepts and focusing on the need to see socio-economic issues from the dual perspective of the exploited *campesino* class and of the oppressed indigenous peoples, and forge the new utopia of shaping a 'multinational state'. This period between 1978 and 1985 was thus regarded as the golden age of the Andean *campesino*-indigenous movement (Ticona et al., 1995:40-2).

In 1982 the *Confederación Indígena del Oriente Boliviano* (CIDOB) was born, an umbrella indigenist organisation which began to bring together the numerous but minority indigenous groups in the tropical Lowlands. Then, in 1987, the Guaraní peoples created *the Asamblea del Pueblo Guaraní* (APG) and soon joined CIDOB. The new confederation made the historic 'march for territory and dignity' in 1990, in which various indigenous groups walked for 70 days from the jungle, and, joined by Andean indigenous groups along the Andean cordillero in a process rich in symbolic and ritual exchange, arrived in La Paz and roused the then government, under Jaime Paz, with the MIR and ADN, 1989-1993, to make the first official recognition of indigenous territories (Albó, 1993). The fact that Bolivia was one of the first Latin American countries to subscribe to the ILO Convention 169 concerning the rights of indigenous peoples did not seem to have made an impact on *de facto* governmental attitudes until this point.

Interchanges between the 'indigenous' peoples of the Oriente and the Andean *'campesinos'* also generated an intense theoretical discussion about their common identity from which there developed an explicit recognition that both the indigenous Andean *'campesinos'* and the indigenous 'native' peoples of the Amazonian and Lowland regions had common links and goals (Calla et al., 1989).

The indigenous movement of the Lowlands, the most recent, began to grow in the following years. The change in the Andean region, initiated for over a decade, was losing impetus during the first democratic regime. In the context of the major economic crisis, which dominated socio-economic and political thinking of the time,

the government did not demonstrate great commitment to, or empathy with, the indigenous cause and any policies they did announce were seen as somewhat flimsy and lacking in conviction or demonstrable effect. In the words of Albó (1996), they were little more than *'decretos de papel mojado'*[1], which were never subsequently realised. The *Katarista* Movement then had difficulties in adapting itself to the new political and economic situation initiated in 1985 and became fragmented. There was, however, something of a resurgence in *Katarismo* in 1994 which has seen the re-emergence of a more coherent indigenist movement, but one which is more willing to work with the political machine, tending towards proposing and negotiating rather than automatically opposing (Ticona et al., 1995:45-6).

The 1994 'Reformation'

It was into this context that there arrived a new electoral period whose principal candidate and eventual winner was the mining boss Gonzalez Sánchez de Lozada (1993-97) of the MNR. 'Goni', as he came to be known, who never lost his 'gringo' accent, the fruit of his many years spent in the US, had already been the principal architect of the changes in economic direction initiated in the country in 1985. He surprised both Bolivians and overseas commentators alike with his choice of Vice-President - the Ayamaran Victor Hugo Cardeñas, *Katarista* leader since the 1970s, who was not even a member of the MNR. The notorious cultural, social and ideological differences between the two created some conflicts, which were in a sense synergised in the seeking to bring together of a new political order and social

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[1] Translated as 'Decrees made of wet paper'. From an interview with Xavier Albó, La Paz, January 1996)

expression in a series of laws which were more humane that the neo-liberal model, without actually questioning the root of neo-liberalism[2].

These legal changes were not suggested solely by the new governors, but part of the destiny of, until now, an inconclusive process of the modernisation of the State, helped by the international organisations and in part initiated during the previous governments. But there is no doubt that the laws approved in the years between 1993-97 also brought with them personal touches of their creators. The least questioned - and most consolidated with the processes of 'capitalisation' (read privatisation) of the state enterprises - was the economic model which followed its implacable course. But at the social and political levels they introduced a raft of innovations which were as much legal as administrative, amongst which the following:

• In 1994 a series of amendments to the State's Political Constitution were passed, crowning a process already initiated during the previous regime. As in other Latin American countries, a substantial change, already introduced in Article 1, recognised the 'multi-ethnic and pluri-cultural' character of the country. This was made more concrete in Article 171, which recognises 'indigenous community lands' and indigenous culture, language, authorities, norms and customs. The main point which was not changed in the new 'Magna Carta' was that the legislators did not want

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[2] From conversations with Xavier Albó, Cochabamba, July 1996.

to make more flexible the monopoly of the political parties in the presentation of candidates for election at any level of state power[3].

• A further key change in 1994 was the initiation of the Law of Popular Participation (LPP), which drove home this last point within a reconstitution of the system of municipalities, above all in the rural sector which until now had been practically ignored by the State. As has been outlined in chapter 3, the Law recognised traditional (typically rural) organisations (for example, *sindicatos, ayllu[4]s* and *cabildo[5]s*) and the predominantly urban *Juntas Vecinales* (neighbourhood committees), and to all these it gave a generic title of Territorial Base Organisation (OTB) which were to play a significant organising role under the LPP. There was a consolidation of a total of 311 municipalities, most of which were rural, which were assigned new responsibilities and granted significant resources from the national taxes according to population size. The municipal councillors and the mayors should be elected every five years by the municipal population, and the OTB of each municipality should elect from the municipal population a *'comité de vigilancia'* (CV) on an annual basis. The CV was to be the point between the OTBs and the municipal authorities, responsible for fiscal supervision of the Law (República de Bolivia, Ley No. 1551, April, 1994).

• A little earlier in 1994, the Law of Educational Reform had already been approved, alongside which several other pedagogical and structural reforms emerged.

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[3] From an interview with Luz Marie Calvo Carmona, Sub-Secretariat de Asuntos Etnicos, Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, La Paz, January 1996.
[4] The *ayllu* is "the basic Andean social unit, comprised of kinship groups and communal landholdings which include multiple lots located in a variety of ecosystems" (Stephenson, 1999:208).

Two central ideas were introduced into the reforms: the generalisation of an intercultural and bi-lingual education, and a whole system of participation of grass roots organisations in the design, execution and control of the education system. This widening participation and extension of citizenship rights were the prelude to the more global focus of the LPP, then not yet approved[6].

- The Law of INRA, a policy of national agrarian reform, was introduced in October 1996, which put a brake on the accumulation of unproductive lands for agro-business, and demarcated indigenous lands. This meant that small rural properties gained some legal protection, and became the indivisible and permanent property of indigenous groups, except in the case of 'works of public use'[7].

- In order to implement these and other measures, the government established the National Sub-Secretariat of Ethnic Affairs. Together with the Sub-Secratariats of Gender and Generational Affairs, they began by ensuring that there was a positive intercultural and ethnic focus in all government legislation, but little by little they also took responsibility for a diverse range of activities and projects with the country's indigenous populations, and particularly with the minorities in the Lowlands, who had captured the most international financial support[8].

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[5] *Cabildos* are similarly basic Andean social units directly above the *Ayllu* in the indigenous social hierarchy.
[6] From an interview with Luz Marie Calvo Carmona, Sub-Secretariat de Asuntos Etnicos, Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, La Paz, January 1996.
[7] From an interview with Luz Marie Calvo Carmona, Sub-Secretariat de Asuntos Etnicos, Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, La Paz, January 1996.
[8] From an interview with Luz Marie Calvo Carmona, Sub-Secretariat de Asuntos Etnicos, Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, La Paz, January 1996.

All these developments continue to this day, although with differing levels of application, and they have not been substantially modified with the advent of the new government of General Banzer in 1997, although the extent to which the same levels of commitment to their reforming principles remains unchanged is a matter of some debate.

This, then, provides a brief overview of key policies and political developments which have affected Bolivia's indigenous peoples, and charts the emergence of an indigenist identity and political force known as *Katarismo*. The central focus of this work is of course the Law of Popular Participation, and as such, the following section will focus specifically upon the potential contained within the text of the LPP for Bolivian indigenous peoples before examining the initial impact of the LPP in the Amazonian region of Moxos. The experiences of the indigenous populations in Moxos is being used here as an illustration not of the positive benefits of the LPP but, rather, of the ways in which it can be subverted by the existing power-brokers in order to ensure that the status quo is not rocked by any such extension of participatory citizenship as the LPP invites. Initially, however, it may be useful to re-cap on some of the central tenets, potential benefits and initial concerns raised by the LPP as previously outlined in chapter 3.

The New Municipal Power: The Implications of Popular Participation for Indigenous Peoples

The LPP has created a new layer of elective local government, funded by the redistribution of tax revenues, and has thus created a potentially significant extension of citizenship rights to local, including indigenous, populations. Within these new municipalities, existing popular and indigenous forms of community organisation, including traditional Aymaran *ayllus,* have been registered as Territorial Base Organisations (OTB's), and charged with the task of assisting the locally-elected municipal government to produce annual development plans. These plans for socio-economic and infrastructural projects should be, under the LPP, created with the full participation of the local population.

In the beginning, many organisations, more so rural than urban, received the LPP with a certain amount of suspicion, and many included it as one of the *'tres leyes malditas'*[9] imposed by the World Bank (the others were the Education Reform and the Law of *Capitalisation* which transferred 50% of the State industries into private hands). In particular in the countryside there was a strong opposition to the OTBs, for fear that it was intended to impose a new level of organisation by the State in place of those which already existed in each region. These suspicions were undertsandable in the context of the indigenous organisations' long history and experience of deceit and manipulation suffered at the hands of a series of governments. Thus, in order to overcome these suspicions, there followed several governmental declarations,

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[9] Translated as the 'the three bad (naughty) laws'. From an interview with Xavier Albó, La Paz, January, 1996

explanations, and a change to the initial text of the Law to explain that the OTBs were merely a recognition of existing organisations.

Nevertheless, this did not stop, in some cases, the local authorities, against the spirit of the law, being intent on creating parallel and more docile organisations with the title of OTB. Finally the *campesino*-indigenous organisations changed their attitude to the point that some leaders who had previously staunchly combated the reform came to call it '*la ley bendita*'[10]. The Law had less effect in the large towns, and even led to the loss of some monies which they had previously controlled, due to the previous rural-urban inequality and urban bias in the division of resources[11].

The factor which was most influential in this indigenous change of attitude was the availability of 'funds of co-participation', approximately 20% of national tax revenue, which before had been largely dedicated to Departmental development corporations. Now this was being repatriated in a more equitable manner to all the municipalities largely according to population size. Other criterion applied, such as absence of vital infrastructure, size of territory, or poverty and human development indices, all of which meant that, under the LPP, these resources were now to be more equitably distributed. Thus there were finally created numerous viable rural municipalities which in the past had never had their own resources, or if they did exist, they were purely nominal. Before the law, 183 municipalities (59% of the total) did not receive any funds at all, and then in 1995 these same municipalities received together almost

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[10] Translated as 'the good/beneficial law'. From an interview with Xavier Albó, La Paz, January, 1996
[11] From conversations with Xavier Albó, Cochabamba, July 1996

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160 million bolivianos, approximately 1000 bolivianos per inhabitant (Ramirez, 1996:70).

Naturally, the only official instrument which was allowed to determine the population of each municipality was the last national census of 1992. In 1992, various *campesino* organisations had opposed the census, and had instructed their members not to complete the forms for fear that these would be used to impose higher taxes on individuals, as had happened during the colonial period (Ramirez, 1996:71). With the new law, this classic opposition had a boomerang effect, in that they were now receiving less co-participation funds. The next census is due in 2001, and it is expected to reveal a large 'explosion' in the rural population.

With all these changes there have certainly been some modifications in the tendency until then towards a much lower voter turn out in the municipal elections as compared to the presidential elections. The significantly low rates of voter participation, especially in rural areas, has also been affected by other factors, for example, the electoral lists are not regularly up-dated according to the numbers of dead or those who have emigrated. There are also a number of immense municipalities which are poorly articulated and do not facilitate the participation of marginal sectors. On the other hand, many men, and especially women, do not have the registration documents necessary to enable them to vote. According to the last 1992 census, in the rural sector only 53% of men and 35% of women over 15 years of age had identity carnets (Ramirez, 1996:72).

Nevertheless, the general interest of all communities in deciding who should be their municipal authorities, and also the interest in taking an active part as candidates themselves, is now much more noticable. In the 1993 municipal elections, prior to the LPP, the absenteeism of voters in rural areas stood at approximately 55%, but two years later, in the first municipal elections under the new Law in December 1995, this had dropped to 40% (Rojas and Zuazo, 1996:22).

Indigenous *Campesinos* Enter the New Political Arena

In 1997, for the first time in history, at least 464 indigenous and *campesino* authorities were elected to the new local municipal leadership positions (National Secretariat of Popular Participation, 1997). This was 29% of all councillors then elected, a proportion which reached a maximum of 62% in the department of Oruro, on the majoritively Aymaran and Quechuan Altiplano. The figures are nevertheless low if you take into account the rural population of the country was then approximately 43% of the total and that 85% of the municipalities had a higher rural than urban population, many of them without having a central urban nucleus (Vargas y Vargas, 1997). However, there was already a noticeable increase in the numbers of indigenous councillors in comparison to the previous years.

Various strategies were thus put in place by which some indigenous *campesinos* were able to obtain local power. The main political parties, who had already established their party apparatus throughout the country, were looking more than anything for secure candidates for their party, mostly from the local '*vecinos*' in the central town or village, or resident emigrants already in the town. By contrast, other minority parties,

whose party apparatus was not so well distributed throughout the national territory, had another tactic. Without doubt they favoured party sympathisers, where they had them, to stand for their party, but in many areas they offered the mediation of their party in order to facilitate access by local personalities to the lists, who, according to the LPP, could only be nominated through a formally recognised party.

There was a third mechanism, already more significant. In various areas there existed grass roots organisations, as much *campesino* as indigenous, who in their grand assembly decided whom they wanted to present as their own candidates. In some cases, the person named already had some sympathy for a determined party, who then easily accepted them as their candidate. But in other cases, once nominated by their members, the candidates negotiated with various parties in order to see which of them would impose the fewest conditions. Again it was largely the minority or medium-sized parties who were more willing to meet these proposals (Vargas y Vargas, 1997).

By whichever of these three mechanisms, there followed the negotiation to enter into a position on the list which, according to the forecasts, were more likely to lead to the candidate becoming elected. Waiting until the last possible moment before they could no longer make changes to their lists, the parties presented changes to the Electoral Court in order to give preference to their militants. It was thus through such mechanisms and negotiations that finally, representing a range of parties, 500 indigenous *campesinos* were presented as candidates for municipal council, and a quarter were subsequently elected to the highest office, that of mayor of the municipality (Vargas and Vargas, 1997).

The LPP did thus appear to have had a positive impact upon the participation of indigenous peoples - albeit the male leadership of indigenous organisations - in the political sphere. However, perhaps unsurprisingly, the effects of the initial implementation of the LPP were regionally variant and did not, in some cases, prove the major force for social change and catalyst for indigenous enfranchisment it promised. This may best be illustrated by examining the initial experiences of the LPP process in the Municipality of Moxos within the Department of Bení in the Amazonian region of Bolivia[12]. Five distinct indigenous groups live within this municipality - the Ignacianos, Trinitarios, Yuracarés, Movimas, and Chimanes.
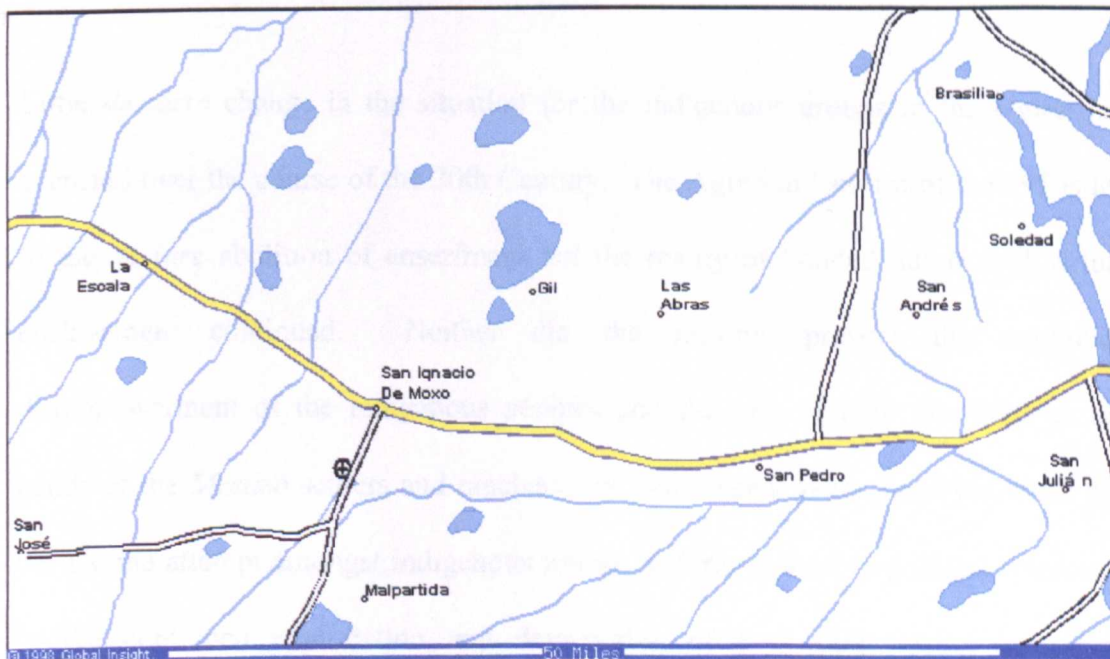

Figure 10. San Ignacio de Moxos, El Bení

Indigenous groups in this region have been heavily influenced over the course of the past 300 years by both the introduction of Jesuit missions and Spanish or *Mestizo* colonists. The Jesuits have been responsible for encouraging the resettlement of scattered indigenous groups into larger sedentary centres. Once resettled the distinct groups became nominally homogenised, with the Jesuits encouraging the merging of languages and the redefinition of indigenous identities into larger collective groupings (Equipo Pastoral, 1989). Following the expulsion of the Jesuits from the region by the colonial state in 1765, indigenous populations came increasingly under the control initially of the Spanish colonists, and gradually the *Mestizo* elite. As the indigenous territory became increasingly appropriated by waves of settlers, ranchers and colonists, the indigenous communities were conscripted into bonded labour on the large haciendas (ibid, 1989).

Little *de facto* change in the situation for the indigenous groups in the region has occurred over the course of the 20th Century. The Agrarian Reform of the 1950s led to the *de jure* abolition of enserfment but the reality of bonded labour and virtual enslavement continued. Neither did the reforms prevent the continued disempowerment of the indigenous peoples and the loss of their land-base at the hands of the *Mestizo* settlers and ranchers. In more recent years, however, there has been some attempt amongst indigenous groups to form collective political resistance to the continued exploitation and degredation of both their labour and their environment. In 1990 the *Central Indigenous de Pueblos del Beni* (CPIB) formed and organised a 'March for Territory & Dignity' to La Paz. As a result of their campaign, the MNR government of Sánchez de Lozada recognised some indigenous rights and demarcated indigenous territories within the municipality.

The region, however, continues to experience significant social and territorial conflict. Struggles over land and power between ranchers, land owners, and indigenous communities continue, as do increasing problems caused by both legal and illicit logging, all of which have been exacerbated by the construction of a main road through the rainforest between San Ignacio, the municipal capital, and the Chapare region to the Southwest.

Figure 11. Main Street, San Ignacio de Moxos, El Bení

It was into this contested environment that the LPP was introduced in 1994. We conducted research as to the initial effects of the reform in the region in 1996, and found that the LPP had done relatively little to shift local power dynamics and encourage the enfranchisment and empowerment of the majority indigenous population. The municipal council of Moxos remained firmly in the hands of the

Mestizo elite, and, if anything, local elections and the introduction of increased revenue through the LPP had exacerbated rivalry between existing political factions, namely the political representatives of the MNR and ADN political parties.

No indigenous candidates stood for the 1995 municipal elections; indeed there were no candidates from beyond the boundaries of the urban centres. All the candidates were in actual fact members of the urban *Mestizo* elite, all male, and all powerful employers, ranchers and loggers in the area. Furthermore, the majority of the municipality's indigenous population (hence the majority of the overall population) were not eligible to vote in the first instance due to the fact that they did not possess a carnet and were not formally registered. The introduction of the LPP went some way to extending *carnetización* in the region, but not in a necessarily pro-active, positive manner. According to the local priest (and member of the nominal *Comité de Vigiliancia* - which was not functioning at the time of the research), the candidates trucked in a number of their indigenous employees, registered them with a carnet and suggested they vote for them[13]. Members of the San Francisco rainforest community in the municipality confirmed that this had occurred and said they did not know why they were voting, other than that they imagined it was another local election, and were unaware of the LPP[14].

Participatory planning was similarly somewhat limited, although, following initial confusion and suspicion as to the role of the Territorial Base Organisations, *cabildos indigenales* or indigenous collectives were gradually registering as OTBs. The

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[13] From an interview with Enrique Jordá, priest, San Ignacio de Moxos, July 1996.
[14] From a workshop and community meeting held in the village of San Francisco, July 1996.

production of the annual development plan (PAO) was also slow and problematic in both 1995 and 1996. The mayor, a *Mestizo*, land-owning *MNRista*, called the *corregidores*, the highest authorities of the indigenous *cabildoes* in Moxos, to the town hall and asked them to complete a form outlining their community's key development priorities without recourse to the prior participation or consultation of these communities.

Without this consultation process, and also inevitably affected by the fact that no women were included in this 'participatory planning', their resulting development priorities could not necessarily reflect the needs or concerns of all, and particularly of the non-dominant, sectors of the population. The final 1995 PAO was then drawn up without further consultation beyond the municipal offices. Thus the process of participatory planning as outlined in the LPP was seriously flawed, but even this dereliction was then surpassed by the subsequent process of implementation when, by the end of 1995, no projects had been instigated.

The following year there were no attempts at participatory planning, however notional, and neither were any of the previous year's community projects implemented. Furthermore, the LPP budget was calculated and massaged, through a process of clever machinations, until the largely non-indigenous urban population, standing at less than 30% of the overall population of the municipality, were assigned 91% of LPP funding (Booth and Clisby et al., 1997:74). As such, early indications revealed a pronounced ineffectuality of the democratisation measures envisioned within the LPP, and the promise of participatory planning never progressed further than the level of unrealised rhetoric.

The initial problems experienced within the implementation process do not necessarily mean, however, that the LPP does not have the continued potentiality for positive change. There were signs, for example, that the indigenous movement in the region was 'waking up' to the potential opportunities for indigenous participation and decision-making following these somewhat disappointing beginnings, though it remains to be seen how effective their efforts will be in future municipal elections.

Indeed, steps towards the future realisation of LPP rhetoric may not find themselves placed within an entirely favourable wider political context. Since these potentially radical reforms were instigated in April 1994, their author and instigator, President Sánchez de Lozada, was replaced by General Hugo Banzer in the 1997 elections. As mentioned above, Banzer, a former military dictator (1971-8) during whose rule human rights abuses, imprisonment and disappearances were well documented, re-presented himself as something of an elder statesman and convert to civilian democracy, and was re-elected by an electorate purportedly convinced of the need for 'strong government'[15]. Although during his campaign Banzer claimed he would not attempt to roll back the democratising measures instigated by his more liberal predecessor, he has done little to encourage their smooth passage since taking power. Indeed, there were widespread strikes and protests during 1999 against the introduction of a new employment law which is seen to restrict workers rights, banning, for example, strikes by employees of the public education system, and making it easier to sack workers. This legislation was claimed by union leaders to

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[15] Such was the apparent feeling at the time of the elections, based on conversations, discussions, and news reports collated in Cochabamba during the- period leading up to the July 1997 elections.

demonstrate a lack of commitment to people's rights and participatory democracy (*Agencia Informativa Púlsar* 11.9.99).

It thus remains to be seen to what extent human rights, including the extension of indigenous rights, will be respected in coming years. Nevertheless, Popular Participation has begun to impact - generally positively - upon formerly largely disenfranchised sectors of Bolivian society. However, as the case of Moxos serves to illustrate, the processes of implementation and initial experiences of the Law have not been wholly unproblematic. The next section, section III, will focus more specifically upon the gender dimensions of the Law, illustrating the ways in which the reform has not only been problematic in terms of the ability of sectors of the indigenous-*campesino* population to capitalise on the opportunities arising from the legislation, but also how, in particular, women and men are differentially situated within the actual processes of its implementation.

Section III

Chapter 7

Gender Analyses of Development Theory & Practice

The Law of Popular Participation might best be understood as a process of development. In doing so, whilst the LPP can be placed within the broader context of governmental policy and legislative reform, it should also be analysed within the framework of discourses which examine the implications and implementation of specific development initiatives. Thus categorised, gendered analyses of development may be invoked as a lens, as a theoretical discourse, through which the Law can be effectively examined and critiqued. This chapter will thus explore central concepts and ideas within gender and development discourses, providing a brief overview of both practical considerations and theoretical developments. I will conclude by initiating a preliminary critique of the gendered implications of the LPP, a theme further developed in chapter 8 in the context of gender relations in Bolivia.

The term 'development' is one which is in itself complex and often controversial. For many it is taken to refer to policies and initiatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations, be those agencies regional, national or international (Pearson and Jackson, 1998:14). Within this it is interesting that when one examines one's national, indigenous 'development' initiatives or policies, particularly if one lives in a so-called 'developed'

nation, the term 'development' may not be incurred. Rather, the term 'social policy' will

be used. However, that same initiative, if implemented in an overseas, especially

'developing', nation, would likely be perceived as a 'development project'[1]. Throughout

this work, the LPP is perceived as both governmental policy and legislature, whilst

similarly being a 'development' project or initiative. Thus the term 'development' should

be viewed as both policy and, in a broader sense, wider socio-political and economic

change which has far-reaching implications, both spatially and historically, for the diverse

individuals and groups it directly, and indirectly, effects.

Development projects succeed and fail in different measures – the perception of

development projects, and in a broader sense policies, as processes (Wuyts, 1992:279-

285). To this extent we can see that development initiatives ultimately and inevitably

have differentiated outcomes, the task then being to weigh up the costs and gains. As

such, it cannot be assumed that *development* as a concept is automatically positive,

nevertheless, whilst there may be problematic elements within a given project, if it has,

for example, provided a clean water supply or low-cost housing, it can be said to have

been beneficial for some people, to some extent. In this way cost-benefit analyses of

development initiatives which ask basic questions such as 'development for whom?' can

provide an invaluable basis upon which projects can be built. Further, in order to more

fully appreciate for whom the development programme may be positive, it is imperative

for gender analyses to be considered as central to development planning.

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[1] The continuing use of the term 'development' to refer to various political and social initiatives and
interventions in so-called Third World countries is an example of the ways in which the West uses selective

By employing a gendered focus it is possible to identify circumstances in which both men and women, and within this, different men and different women, may be differentially affected by and experience differential outcomes as a result of development initiatives (Cleves Mosse, 1993).

Gender analyses facilitate both an understanding of the origins of vulnerability and the development of strategies to combat vulnerability. Through such analyses it becomes clear, for example, that women as a broad category may be specifically vulnerable as a result of structural frameworks which result in their disproportionate socio-economic and political marginalisation (Sen and Grown, 1987:26). Within this there is a danger, however, of perceiving 'Third World Women' as an homogenous category, as passive victims, universally vulnerable and exploited (Parpart, 1995:236). It is thus crucial that the diversity and difference which makes up the 'category woman' be disaggregated, that the multiplicity and subtleties of women's and men's experiences of power across the world be recognised, and within this, that gender analysts do not themselves fall into the perceptual trap of equating the 'other'/women as agentless victims of (mal)development (Parpart and Marchand, 1995:1-41).

As such there is a need to deal with the perpetual tensions which exist between the global structural frameworks within which women (and specifically located men) experience problematic commonalities of exploitation, disenfranchisement, and unequal status, and

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discourse both to symbolically and practically reproduce their hegemony. See, for example, Escobar

the need to recognise the multifarious power differentials which exist between women. Such differentials, it could be argued, render any generalisations as to the nature of a 'female' global experience so ultimately diverse and subject to endless caveats as to become worthless. There is, however, a danger in losing those macro experiential linkages which nevertheless continue to bind the 'category woman' within the increasing widening web of globalisation. Thus, I would argue that whilst it is necessary to acknowledge the diversity of lived experience between women in order to understand their diverse needs, an exclusive focus on the micro differentials can all too easily allow a veil to be drawn over those macro structures which continue to disadvantage women as a global category or class. As Pearson and Jackson state:

'Recovering the female subject risks essentialism; refusing a female subject risks erasing gender difference. If gender identity always coexists with other identities then it cannot be assumed to propel resistance, and nor do mobilised women necessarily express gender interests; where women's power is dramatically fractured by age and life cycle, the connections between gender as relations of power and actually existing women become potentially rather tenuous. If gender, however, is conceptually disconnected from actually sexed bodies then the political consequences for feminism as a movement, and for [Gender and Development's] concern for social transformation in a world of 'target groups', are paralysing. From this perspective the constant slippage from gender to women [...] appears less

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(1997).

a regrettable habit and more a 'tactical essentialism' [...]' (Pearson and Jackson, 1998:8-9)

Simply put, if you are so busy trying to stop water pouring on your head, fiddling with your umbrella, you may fail to look up see that someone is standing above you with a watering can. Thus, with this in mind, gender analyses of development which examine the specificities and mulitiplicities of men's and women's roles may help to prevent mistakes being made which may ultimately result in development failure. In this way, it is important to ask who will benefit from interventions and policy initiatives, and in what ways. Where the benefits are largely felt by men in a given region or context, for example, it may be that women will 'opt out', unwilling to expand their labour time further when they do not perceive themselves to be within the beneficiary group.

As such, within development planning it is important to understand gender divisions of labour, decision-making and control over resources and income. The intention of a project may be, for example, to increase the incomes of poor farmers by boosting their harvest. However, if it assumed that the farmers are male, extension workers may thus focus on male members of a given community to the exclusion of women when it may be the case that the farmers in question are overwhelmingly female. The development initiative is thus likely to fail in the longer term purely due to a lack of understanding as to the regional specificities of the gendered division of labour (Brett, 1991:3-6).

Unequal relations between women and men, as well as forms of women's subordination, are by no means specific to any geographical time or place, but their particular characteristics are nevertheless affected by local histories and cultures, as well as the material context in which women and men live their lives. In the Third World, a critical aspect of life for many people is poverty and the daily struggles over livelihoods in both urban and rural areas. Thus gender differences in access to resources such as land, credit, technology and training, or inequalities in wages paid to women and men, affect women's capacities to provide livelihoods for themselves and their families.

Yet women play a fundamental role in all societies, in the wage economy as well as subsistence production, and they are almost invariably responsible for tasks in households, such as domestic work, care of children, food provision and preparation. While there are many differences between classes, other social groupings and, of course, cultural contexts, the multiple roles that women perform often results in long working hours and considerable social and domestic responsibility, but rarely in commensurate access to resources, income or social status (Afshar, 1991).

There are several key dimensions to women's and men's lives which affect how they relate to each other, their relative status' in families and within a given society, and their perceptions of their own positionalities. How children are nurtured, how they are fed, nursed, educated, socialised into different roles (including those associated with their families' social status such as class or ethnic group) are all affected by gender relations and in turn reinforce gender differences. Similarly, expectations in marriage and family

life in particular play an important part in characterising gender differences, as do attitudes towards or controls over women's and men's sexuality.

Often domestic and social processes which embody gender divisions and inequalities are further reinforced by legal codes as well as accepted customs and values. Even where women and men are equal before the law, or where the law seeks to protect women, adequate implementation can be constrained by social attitudes. Particular groups of women - and groups of men - themselves may feel that their relative structural disempowerment prevents them having adequate recourse to a law which may protect them, particularly over domestic problems or conditions of work. The law is a contentious area in as much as it can be used to establish *de jure* equality between the sexes as well as to maintain inequalities. Within this, laws are intimately linked to the power structures of societies which in turn tend to both reflect and serve to reinforce gender divisions. In this way there may be wide disparities between the *de jure* legislation and the *de facto* impact of the legal system and the protection it affords women. Mukhopadhay provides a clear example of the ways in which this may be the case in relation to her work in India:

'the processes by which gender inequalities are socially constructed are not confined purely to household and family relationships but are reproduced across a range of institutions [...] This includes institutions whose stated aim is to address inequalities within their societies. The state is one such institution which is seen as the just and final arbiter between the contending interests of groups in civil society.

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In fact the post-colonial state in India [...] has proven ability in restructuring social relations and introducing social reform measures aimed at addressing class, casts and gender inequalities. Certainly the law is seen to be a neutral instrument which confers rights based not on the gender, class and casts identity of individuals but rather on the human essence that individuals are seen to enjoy' (Mukhopadhay, 1999:147).

She goes on, however, to cite an example of the ways in which changes in the law to protect women are constrained by social attitudes:

'legal activism by women's groups in India in the 1980s faced a specific set of constraints. Whereas new laws entered the statute book in this decade to redress gender inequalities particularly in the arena of family and household equalities, the outcomes of legal battles seemed to point to the fact that legal processes articulate and reproduce gender and other forms of inequality which seemingly belong to the arena of family/kinship and community. It was very difficult, we found, to separate the identity of women litigants as wives, sisters,daughters and widows from that of their identity as subject/citizen imbued with rights' (Mukhopadhay, 1999:147-8).

Power and control over decision-making operates at many levels, from the government forces of law and order, to development plans, to local communities, to relations within families and households. It is, however, important to recognise that power relations are not a given: they are often contested, and women and men can exert different kinds of

power in different ways. Changing power structures and their accompanying ideologies and social attitudes are as much a part of development as production and economic change. How different women can become increasingly envoiced in such changes and how a gender perspective can be brought into social development is one of the challenges.

Thus, if we consider why 'gender is a development issue' (Brett, 1991:4, Cleeves Mosse, 1993:9); if a concern with development means a concern with the distribution of resources and opportunities, and we recognise the ways in which, within a global structural, patriarchal framework, women as a group tend to fare worse than men as a group in terms of socio-economic opportunities, political freedoms, and livelihood chances, then development policies and practices will need to be on the look out for gender differentiated outcomes.

Eade and Williams (1989) usefully identify several principles for development and relief work which serve to attempt to ensure a sustainable and gender-aware approach. For Eade and Williams (1989), interventions must be conceived on the basis of locally expressed needs, and their success must be measured according to their effect on people's lives, in ways meaningful to those concerned. However, the concept of 'people' must be disaggregated to prevent the equation of 'people' with 'men' and in recognition of inequalities between women and men. The voices of those who lack the power or authority to speak must be sought out, listened to and supported - the old, the sick, women, children. Cultural sensitivity is important, as is a gender analysis specific to the local context rather than one based on ideas about gender imported from elsewhere which

may be inappropriate. A concern to understand the different roles of men and women in society will bring an appreciation of their different needs, whilst being aware of gender differentiation by multiple variables such as age, ethnicity, and class.

Human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights should be actively promoted. Women have a basic right to be equal to men in respect to their level of material welfare (food, income, medicine); their access to resources (land, labour, credit, training, marketing facilities); their participation in decision-making; and their control of resources and the distribution of products. Extending from this, for Eade and Williams (1989) and Kabeer (1999), it is important to make the distinction between biological sex and gender as a social construction which can thus change over time and space. As Kabeer asserts:

'One of the major reasons for the 'gender-blindness' of past policy relates to assumptions and ways of thinking which have allowed the relationships between women and men to be invested with the appearance of an eternal, unchanging and unchangeable aspect of the human condition. One such assumption relates to a widespread tendency to conflate sex and gender' (Kabeer, 1999:4).

A central goal must be that the women and men involved in development practices in the broadest sense gain the strength, confidence and vision to work for change in their own lives. A useful distinction can be made between meeting practical and strategic gender needs: a concept initially developed by Maxine Molyneux (1985), although she talks

about gender interests rather than needs, and adopted by Caroline Moser (1993) whose model has become central in gender and development planning literature.

Practical gender needs refer to that which people require to fulfil their current role as producers and reproducers, such as land, income, basic services etc. - and strategic gender needs are what people require to achieve greater structural equality. This might include changes to or the abolition of the sexual division of labour; the alleviation of the burden of domestic labour and child care for women; the removal of institutionalised forms of discrimination such as rights to own land or property or access to credit; the establishment of political equality; freedom of choice over childbearing; and the adoption of adequate measures against male violence and control over women.

People should have the right and capacity to shape decisions which affect their lives, and development must actively promote these. There is also a need to recognise that women may not automatically be able to participate on the same basis as men - before castigating them as lazy, ignorant or uninterested, there is a need for a base-line gender analysis - to enquire about the gender division of labour, restriction on women's mobility and so on. It must similarly be recognised that all social groups are interdependent, so it is not possible to 'target' one group and have no effect on others. It is still assumed by some development planners that women's development can be catered for by 'add-on' special projects, all too often revolving around income generation on the basis of women's 'natural skills' in handicrafts, cooking etc., and that women can be adequately catered for by a special

welfare division of a development agency. However, there can be no projects, regardless of who they are initially targeted at, which do not affect both men and women.

Incompatibilities may be perceived by these objectives. For example, what happens to the commitment to meeting women's strategic gender needs (SGNs) if these are not identified as needs by women in the community concerned, or if they are identified by women only but not also by men? Surely it is not appropriate for the development agent to put women's SGNs onto the agenda unilaterally? Such a top-down approach might clash with local cultural beliefs about women's 'proper' and 'traditional' role in society. This kind of anxiety is often expressed and there may be a real dilemma here, but it can also be the case that by tackling practical gender needs within a development project, over time strategic gender needs may be articulated through growing awareness, activism and a sense of empowerment.

Power, Households and the Gendered Divisions of Labour

The household has been an important area for analysis within gender and development work. Gender and development theorists have been keen to unpack and examine the household and have found it to be both a theoretically and methodologically problematic concept with wide-ranging implications for development policy and planning[2].

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[2] See for example, Chant, 1997:155-162, Koopman, 1997:132-141 and Kabeer, 1998:91-107.

The initial problem is how we actually define it. Definitions usually operate around co-residence, eating from one pot, pooled resources or common production (Young, 1992). These can all be difficult to define, and may not necessarily coincide - migrants are not co-resident and they are not eating from the same pot, but they often have (some) pooled resources with those left in rural areas, who they consider to be in their household. Similarly, household members could be spread over a large geographical area and only visit the base household periodically, but they are still considered part of that household. There may also be important productive activities which the group does outside the household. With such complexities in mind, Karen Young defined the household as:

'A system of resource allocation between individuals who may or may not be permanently co-resident in which individual members share some goals, benefits and resources and are independent on some and in conflict on others ' (Young, 1992:136).

This notion of conflict is important - we cannot assume shared interests, harmony, that the household speaks as one voice, that there is consensus. We tend to make the household a pseudo individual, speaking of the household strategy, or household behaviour, but we must remember that the final behaviour or outcome may have been disagreed over among members. Within this it is important to acknowledge intra-familial power differentials - whose voice counts for the most? Who has the most power, and what strategies are they able to use to ensure their power is maintained?

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Sen (1990) talks of 'cooperative conflict' within the household, seeing it as one of the major battlegrounds between the sexes. That conflict may be overt, or covert, for example, women may not express any dissatisfaction with their share of resources in the household, such as food, and in fact they may play their part in distinguishing between male and female household members when it comes to the distribution of food. But the very fact that they do this, and that there is no space in which to question the distribution, tells us something about the power relationships involved.

Understanding the way household resources are distributed is very important in the context of poverty. It is not enough just to talk of poverty in the abstract, or of poor societies, or poor households - there is a need to disaggregate and see exactly how poverty affects people in differing circumstances. It remains the case, however, that poverty generally impacts harder on women as a group than it does on men as a group. To understand why this is so, it is useful to make the distinction between endowments and entitlements (Sen, 1985).

Endowments are those qualities we possess as humans which can be used in order to provide for our needs, such as, for example, labour power. Such an endowment may be assumed to be gender neutral - that both men and women have labour power and can both sell it in exchange for cash or reward in kind which enables them to meet their needs for food, shelter, housing, health and so on. However, having labour power is not the same as being able to use it in exchange for a wage, and there exists great variation in the extent to which individual people are able to use their labour power. Within this, it tends to be

the case that women are generally more constrained in realising their labour power in the world of paid work than are men. Socio-cultural expectations and constraints may restrict women's access to the public sphere and waged labour, such as, a woman's reproductive role - childcare and familial responsibilities - cultural or religious rules (or patriarchal rules which are legitimated through recourse to religion and tradition) prohibiting women's entry into the public sphere - the situation with the Taliban in Afghanistan being a good example[3].

Similarly women may have less opportunity for developing skills that command the highest wages, or find that their skills are essentialised, designated 'natural' and so perceived as being less skilled and so not able to demand the premium wage (Pearson, 1998). Other endowments may be unevenly distributed - women may not be able to own land, or their property may pass to their husband upon marriage. Hence, in summary, women as a group tend to be particularly vulnerable because their endowments are less realisable than those of men as a group.

Sen (1985) uses the concept of entitlements to refer to those resources received by virtue of formal or informal rights or norms. Formal entitlements are frequently much less common in developing countries than in the 'North' - in the UK, for example, everybody has a right, in principle, to welfare provision provided by the State. Such welfare systems are relatively rare in developing countries, so when analysing development (social policy)

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[3] For further information concerning the treatment of women in Afghanistan by the Taliban refer to the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA):
http://rawa.fancymarketing.net/women/html

issues in the 'South', the focus tends to be upon informal entitlements. However, the problem of being reliant on informal entitlements is that they are normative, depending on a certain set of shared assumptions about people's responsibilities to each other rather than on any legal right.

For example, taking the case of a household in which reside a heterosexual married couple, where a husband has paid work, cashing in an endowment, and his wife (and their children) receive a share of the income he generates by way of normative entitlement, her share may seem automatic and inevitable but may in fact be reduced or even denied altogether by the husband if that is his wish - as is typical in the case of serious disagreement, separation or divorce. Obviously it also ceases on his death, at which point, lacking endowments to cash in, the woman may be particularly vulnerable and at the whim of her husband's family for support (Mukhopadhyay, 1999, Palriwala, 1999).

The crux of the problem for many women is lack of access to cash incomes that are theirs by right. Such incomes are not lacking because women do not work, their hours of work in the home, in agriculture, in paid employment are long, but because domestic work is unremunerated, agricultural production may be sold in the husband's name because the land is in his name, wages may be claimed by him on the grounds that it was only with his permission that she could go to work in the first place (Brydon, 1989:69-93). In such ways, having to fall back on normative entitlements means an insecurity, and a dependence on the goodwill of others that cannot be guaranteed. When the concept of work is expanded to include this it becomes clear that any idea that women are an under-

used labour resource is incorrect - in fact the opposite is frequently true, in that they are often overburdened, with their work being unrecognised, or even unremunerated, within an informal economy (Kabeer, 1999).

Gendered Critiques of Development Theories: from *WID* to *WAD* to *GAD*

Modernisation theories of development made no distinction between the impact on males and females. Productivity was equated with the cash economy and so much of women's work, which dominates the informal sector, was ignored (Momsen, 1991:3). With the critique of modernisation, known broadly as Dependency Theory, came the notion that the benefits of economic development were not 'trickling down' as was argued, and that development was fuelled by under-development (Visvanathan, 1997:2-6). Development theories began to address the problems of distribution and equality of benefits both globally on a macro level and locally in terms of various sections of the population. It was at this time the argument that women had been excluded from development emerged. A growing body of research on women in developing countries challenged the most basic assumptions of development processes and called for a gender dimension to be brought into the development paradigm.

Ester Boserup's *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970) was a landmark for the growth of gender analyses at this point. Women were not entering the cash economy, their burden of work was increasing but unpaid, they lacked access to extension services and credit, they were being marginalised in industrialisation with jobs going to men, and

women's craft production was being displaced. The solution was seen to be income-generating projects for women and the establishment of women's bureaux to integrate women into development.

This approach, known as *Women in Development* or WID, was supported by gender disaggregated statistics which emerged from the UN Decade for the Advancement of Women (1976-1985). The WID approach argues that women have been negatively affected by development because it has excluded, marginalised and bypassed them. This is a model of integration, based on the belief that women could be brought into the existing paradigm without a fundamental restructuring of this paradigm (Pearson and Jackson, 1998:4).

Hence, from the mid-1980s came the inevitable critique of WID and the argument that it had mis-represented the nature of the relationship between women and development. It is not a question of including men and excluding women - both men and women had always been included in development, but the ways in which women had been incorporated had served to disadvantage them even further in relation to men. So it was not that women had been excluded as such, but that the processes of development were such that women's involvement was actually detrimental to them. Furthermore, the failure of development to be sensitive to interaction between women and development policies is not only to disadvantage women, it is to jeopardise development policies as a whole (Parpart and Marchand, 1995:13-14).

What was needed was not to add women on to existing processes of development, but to question the very structure and nature of development itself, and to start again, taking gender as a core element of development from the inception. So the need was seen, not for tinkering with the existing paradigm, but, rather, a whole new development paradigm.

To summarise, then, there was a shift from an assumption that development serves women and men equally, to the argument that development excludes women (Women in Development or WID), to the argument that development includes women but in a way which is detrimental to them (Women and Development or WAD). Over the course of the past decade the Women and Development approach has been similarly critiqued and developed into what is now referred to as the Gender and Development (GAD) approach. For GAD, it is important to recognise the roles performed by both women and men within development processes, with an increased emphasis upon the existent diversity and difference between individual and groups of women, and between individual and groups of men at micro, meso and macro levels within the global structural frameworks (Heward, 1999:1-5, Pearson and Jackson, 1998:4).

Gender, Development & Popular Participation in Bolivia

In this chapter we have examined both the importance of a gendered perspective within development theory and practice, and the changing ways in which development has been theorised in relation to gender - simply expressed as a progression from WID to WAD to GAD. More specifically we have employed gendered discourses of endowments and

entitlements, practical and strategic needs, and *de jure* versus *de facto* experiences of (in)equality to examine, for example, gendered dimensions of power within both private and public spheres, and the gender divisions of labour which impact upon women's and men's differential access to the fruits of development.

How then does this analysis inform a critical understanding of gender relations and the LPP in the Bolivian context? On the one hand, the importance of the Law is that it does provide a genuinely legal basis for women's political participation in local and regional governance. Rather than simply normative entitlements, through the LPP, Bolivian women for the first time have formal legislative entitlement to participation in structural decision-making processes.

On the other hand, the LPP can be seen to fall foul of the critique of WID in as much as it largely 'tags women on' to the development process rather than integrating a gendered perspective throughout. As noted above, ignoring the gender dimensions of development often reinscribes or even extends gender inequalities. Thus, for example, while the LPP was intended to formalise women's political equality of participation through legislative reform - to give them *de jure* political status - it largely ignored the pre-existing structures which deprived women of *de facto* political power in the first place. As a consequence it failed to acknowledge that women are not necessarily in a position to take full advantage of the opportunities for political enfranchisement provided through this Law. Moreover, as previously indicated in chapter 4, despite the laudable theoretical intentions of the LPP,

not enough was done in the crucial stage of implementation to facilitate the equality of participation and decision-making it claimed to advocate.

With this critique in mind, and within the context of gender relations in Bolivia, chapter 8 will examine the gender dimensions of the LPP in greater detail. I will argue that, although problematic, the LPP has nevertheless opened up spaces for change, has introduced cracks in the gendered barriers to women's formal participation into which women can, and in some cases have already begun to exert greater leverage.

Chapter 8

Popular Participation For All?

Gender and Popular Participation in Bolivia

The following chapter will examine the implications of the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) for gender relations and the democratisation process in Bolivia, and, more specifically, the implications of popular participation for Bolivian women. I will argue that, although flawed, and still in its early stages, the recent Popular Participation reform can provide avenues for increased participation and visibility of women in decision-making processes at both community and municipal levels. I will offer examples of how, in some cases, women are moving into the spaces created by the LPP and beginning to exploit the possibilities of the Law.

Initially it may be useful to re-emphasise some of the key factors of the socio-economic and cultural context into which the LPP was introduced in order to more fully appreciate the significance of this Law for Bolivian society, and within this, for Bolivian women. As discussed in chapter 2, Bolivia is unique amongst its South American neighbours in that approximately 60% of the population continues to belong to one of several indigenous groups, the largest of these being the Quechua and Aymara populations. Despite the clearly enormous influence of over 300 years of Spanish colonisation, the indigenous populations continue to be linguistically distinct, with Spanish only featuring as a second or third language, and retain many of their

individual customs and beliefs. Nevertheless, although in the majority, the indigenous peoples have long experienced problems of discrimination, inequality and disenfranchisement, with wealth and power being concentrated within a small, largely non-indigenous elite.[1]

Poverty in Bolivia is extreme, particularly in rural areas, with over 95% of the rural population classified as poor in a recent World Bank Report (World Bank, 1996). There exists, unsurprisingly, a distinct hierarchy of inequality, ranging from an ultra-rich urban elite, comprising largely of paler-skinned *Mestizos* or Spanish descendants, to indigenous rural women, who experience disproportionately high rates of malnutrition, illiteracy, birth-rates and incidence of maternal mortality (the latter being the highest in Latin America) (World Bank, 1996). Economic development is hindered by, amongst other things, a serious lack of infrastructure and a crippling national debt, with the servicing of debt repayments alone amounting to 24% of the annual GDP (van Lindert and Verkoren, 1994).

In addition to its often stark socio-cultural and economic polarisation, Bolivia is a country historically characterised by chronic political unrest, having experienced a record-breaking number of coups and rapid changes of government in recent decades. Until civilian rule was established in the early 1980s, it was also no stranger to repressive military regimes. Indeed, since the last national elections held in June 1997, the current civilian Administration is headed by none other than General Banzer, who,

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[1] For more in-depth information about Bolivia as a whole see, for example, van Lindert and Verkoren, 1994, Hargreaves, 1992, NACLA, 1991, Dunkerely, 1990, and Malloy and Gamarra, 1988.

now repackaged as something of an Elder Statesman, was a particularly vicious dictator during the 1970s.

In terms of gender relations, there exists within Bolivia, as elsewhere, a public / private spatial dichotomy in which men are equated with the public realm and women with private or domestic spaces. This dichotomy often tends to be justified in the Bolivian context by recourse to Andean Cosmology which purports that men and women are 'different but equal', and that their occupation of these dualistic spaces and roles are complementary and not accorded hierarchical differentiation.[2] As Harris (2000) states,' In traditional Andean culture the complementary unity of the conjugal bond is reiterated in a wat that leaves submerged the categorical opposition between women and man' (Harris, 2000:164). Harris points to the Ayamara terms for man or husband (*chacha*) and woman or wife (*warmi*) which can be combined and used as a single substantive, i.e. *chachawarmi*, referring the man and wife as a single unit, to support the view of gender complementarity and unity in the Andean context (Harris, 2000:164).

I would argue, however, that regardless of the nature of Andean belief systems prior to Spanish colonisation, over the course of several centuries Andean Cosmology has inevitably been imbued with external values and beliefs to the extent that this 'different but equal' dualism cannot be unproblematically applied to contemporary Bolivian society. For example, it is certainly the case that within the modern Bolivian

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[2] From discussions with *Ayllu Sartanani*, Bolivia, 1996, see also Taipinquiri, 1996, and Astvaldsson, 1996.

State, the public arena is accorded a higher status than the domestic sphere, and similarly, that women are generally accorded a lower status than men.

Indeed the issues raised in a more general context in Chapter 7 - pertaining to, for example, women's socio-political marginalisation, gender inequalities in terms of access to land, credit and power, and women's relative exploitation compared with men within the realms of productive and reproductive work and the gender divisions of labour - are all factors which can be applied to any examination of gender relations in the Bolivian context. Benton (1993), for example, focusing largely upon gender relations in a rural context, provides a somewhat stark perspective on the Bolivian *camepsina's* lot:

'The Bolivian *campesina* has traditionally endured extremely arduous toil in the fields (often with a baby on her back), combined with abysmal poverty and physical violence in the home. [...]Even though generations of women have made a significant contribution to agricultural production, rarely [...] have they been recognized as members of agrarian co-operatives or allowed to participate in community decision making. Frequently the only alternative to a life of constant struggle in the countryside has been domestic service in the city, with its concomitant economic and sexual exploitation.

As rural-urban migrants, Quechua and Aymara women face other difficulties: 'We peasant women, we are discriminated against from the moment we leave home when we go to the city or set foot in the village. They call us Indians, peasants, filth and all that. These are the problems we have to face' (Margarita

Laime). Many such women work either in the 'informal' sector, in which case their work is seen by men as non-productive, or in the least skilled jobs (often in appalling conditions, for very low wages and no job security), which they are obliged to take in order to combine waged labour with household responsibilities' (Benton, 1993:234).

Similarly, as within many societies throughout the world, there is initially a tendency to valorise male over female children[3], and in later years this becomes reflected through gender discrimination apparent within, for example, spheres of education and employment. On average, boys attend school at a 10% higher rate than girls, the gap increasing in rural areas, and almost three out of ten Bolivian women remain illiterate, rising to as high as 80% in poorer rural regions (UNICEF, 1994). The majority of those women officially recognised as being economically active work in low paid, low status, and frequently gender differentiated occupations, the rest being considered part of the informal or tertiary sectors, whose contributions to the national economy go largely unrecorded.

Within the party political arena women's participation remains relatively marginal. Following the 1993 elections, there were 13 women among 151 elected officials in the Legislature, and only one female Minister in the Cabinet in the decade prior to 1994 (Valdés, 1995). Although there was a marked increase in the number of female electoral candidates, as a result of a recent introduction of positive action legislation - largely in the lists as *Suplentes* (substitutes) rather than *Titulares* (main) candidates -

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[3] For further discussion and examples of male valorization and sex ratios see, for example, Harriss & Watson (1987), Brydon & Chant (1989).

the actual number of women elected into the Legislature following the 1997 elections fell slightly to twelve out of a total of 157 officials[4]. Similarly, there are no female representatives amongst the leaderships of the largest labour and *campesino* unions, the *Central Obrera Boliviana* and the *Confederacion Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (UNICEF, 1994).

Nevertheless, within Bolivia today, the gendered division of labour is becoming increasingly contested. Largely thanks to pressure from countrywide women's organisations, recent institutional reforms include a more comprehensive law against domestic violence passed in 1996, and the 'Law of Quotas' promulgated in April 1997, within which at least 30% of *plurinominal* electoral candidates for all national political parties should be women.[5] These two reforms alone are very significant in placing issues of gender equality, citizenship and women's rights at the forefront of political debate, and demonstrate not only the increasing strength of the Bolivian Women's Movement, but an overall raising of awareness of gender issues within the national psyche.

Gender & The LPP: A Critical Analysis

Although the LPP is less directly targeted at addressing issues of gender equality than is the 'Law of Quotas' with its element of positive discrimination, it has the potential to radically change the nature of political participation and citizenship for women and

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[4] *La Razon*, 4.6.97, Bolivia

[5] The '*Ley de Cuotas*' is officially entitled the '*Ley de Reforma y Complementacion al Regimen Electoral*' and establishes obligatory 30% participation of female candidates in Party lists as (*plurinominal* rather than *uninominal*) electoral candidates.

men at all levels of Bolivian society. As outlined in chapter 3, the LPP creates new layers of locally elected government and devolves 20% of national tax revenue to this new municipal level explicitly for participative community development. In this way, the country has been divided into over 300 new municipalities, each with its own locally elected leadership, and within which exist recognised Territorial Base Organisations (OTBs) responsible for planning and producing annual community development plans (PAOs). The municipal government can then use their allotted national tax revenue to fund the implementation of these initiatives, which may involve, for example, the development of local infrastructure such as water, lighting and roads, or could be for the construction of a community centre, or for an environmental project.

The OTBs in each community tend to be pre-existing socio-territorial organisations such as *Juntas Vecinales*[6] or *Ayllus*[7], or other forms of indigenous territorial organisation, which are formally recognised by the municipal government as representatives of a given community or area. The OTBs are supposed to consist of a locally elected leadership at a community level who coordinate the representation of the community's needs based on consultative decision-making. The Territorial Base Organisation consists of a leadership committee who are responsible for calling public meetings, and organising the participative community decision-making which forms

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[6] *Juntas Vecinales* or neighbourhood groups are community-based organisations headed by a locally-elected leadership committee formed by (usually male) members of the community or barrio to which the *Junta Vecinal* pertains. These neighbourhood groups have a long history in Bolivia, particularly in urban areas where the majority of barrios have their own *Junta Vecinal* , responsible for coordinating, managing and representing community services, concerns, and, to some extent, local infrastructure.

[7] *Ayllus* are ancient Aymaran systems of socio- territorial organisation, originally kinship-based, which remain significant today, particularly on the Aymaran-dominated Altiplano.

the basis of the annual development plans to be funded from tax revenue channelled through the LPP.

Hence, the theoretical essence of the Law of Popular Participation is participative development in which local people decide upon their own community development strategies, using their own tax revenue to fund participatively planned development priorities. At best, then, the LPP is a democratising measure which has the potential to encourage both a greater enfranchisement of base communities into national political processes, and a heightened sense of citizenship throughout the population. In its own words the LPP sets out to:

'secure improvements in the quality of life of Bolivian women and men, with a more just distribution and better administration of public resources. To strengthen the political and economic instruments necessary in order to perfect representative democracy, facilitating citizens participation and guaranteeing equality of opportunities in terms of representation of women and men.'[8]

Furthermore, the LPP is the first piece of legislation in Bolivian history which includes an explicit gender-awareness, being written, literally, in the male and female genders (*men and women, he and she* being the standard wording). Although remaining rather vague as to the specificities of the actual level of participation of women and the composition of OTB or community leadership committees, all of the paragraphs pertaining to leaders and representatives include indications that both men and women should be considered eligible.

Proponents of the reform argue that these features give the LPP a progressive thrust in the area of gender relations[9]. It is also suggested by some that, since Popular Participation is centrally concerned with improving local social services, and these tend to be regarded as 'women's spaces', areas in which women in both urban and rural areas are normally more concerned than men, that the implementation of the law provides a favourable context for the development and visibility of women's public roles at the local level[10].

Although this positive scenario should not be wholly discounted, what has noticeably occurred in the short term is that community organisation has become a political arena within which there are, for the first time, genuine opportunities to control significant resources, and have a direct structural relationship with, and the recognition of both municipal government and national political parties. In other words, community-level development and grass-roots social organisation is now being accorded much greater importance, and is an area in which local leaders (thus far men in particular) can make their mark, and are potentially able to use this space as a stepping stone towards achieving greater political ambitions.

It is true that the LPP has opened up increased possibilities for the political participation of women, largely because there is more decision-making in local spheres, which, as one women's leader in Cochabamba said, '*is where women's*

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[8] Law No. 1551, Law of Popular Participation, Article 1, Objectives, 20 April, 1994.

[9] Interview with Ivonne Farah, Sub-Secretaria de Asuntos de Genero, Ministerio de Desarroll Human, La paz, January 1996.

[10] From interviews with the Secretaria Nacional de Participacion Popular and the Sub-Secretaria de Asuntos de Genero, Ministerio de Desarrollo, La Paz, 1995-6

decision-making usually takes place anyway[11]. However, by giving greater importance to the local space, women now have to compete with men for spaces previously relatively ignored. *"Now there is money in these local spaces, men are taking more interest and so women are fighting not to get pushed out"*[12].

At these local levels men always tended to be more *visibly* in control of decision-making through their acknowledged leaderships of indigenous, union, or neighbourhood organisations, such as the *Ayllus, Campesino Sindicatos* or *Juntas Vecinales*. Whilst such organisations were ostensibly responsible for lobbying for infra-structural local development, such as improvements in water supplies or roads, prior to the introduction of the LPP, the efficacy of these local political (male) organisations was limited. This was due to both their relative lack of resources and to the lack of status accorded to these 'feminised' local spaces.

Within this situation, women, on the other hand, were frequently the pro-active but largely *invisible* organisers and facilitators of development and change at the community level. This may be via formal membership of social groups such as *Clubes de Madres* - in which women work together to, for example, improve family nutrition and create community spaces, such as playgrounds and gardens - or through the organisation of informal local networks, developing invisible safety-nets amongst resource-poor families in the absence of a Welfare State.

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[11] Carmen Zabalaga, Coordinator of the *Instituto de Formacion Femenina Integral* (IFFI), Cochabamba, Bolivia, March 1997
[12] Zabalaga, op.cit. 1997.

With the introduction of the LPP, what were traditionally defined as female/feminised spaces - because of their associations with private/domestic/household/community organising – are now, through the increased political power (and resources) theoretically accorded these same spaces, becoming an increasingly contested environment. In particular, by according new powers and status (via registration as OTBs) to the already male-dominated territorial community organisations, such as *Juntas Vecinales*, indigenous, and union groups, the danger is that the LPP will lead to a further polarisation of gender roles and powers at these levels rather than facilitating increased gender equality[13]. In other words, rather than a valorisation, increased visibility and enhancement of women's roles at these levels, men will merely appropriate these new, more powerful positions, and in so doing, further consign the 'remnants' of community organising and decision-making to women with a concomittment reduction in their relative status[14].

In this respect, several criticisms could be raised with regards to the lack of explicit mechanisms written into the Law both to guard against the male domination of these (visible) spaces and to promote equality of opportunity in representation of women and men. Other than the gendered language and recognition of women within the legislation itself, the law does not provide any special mechanisms or incentives for changing gender relations in a positive direction. It could be argued that, whatever the existing radical potential of the LPP, important opportunities were missed to make it

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[13] Why male-dominated organisations such as these have been granted OTB status as opposed to female-dominated community groups relates to their differential definitions as territorial versus social or functional as written into the Law. This issue is discussed in greater detail below.

[14] The formalisation of community development and concomitant marginalisation of women in these areas is a theme which is by no means confined to the Bolivian context. For a comprehensive discussion of the gender implications of democratisation in a global and comparative context see, for example, Rai (ed) (2000) or Greskovits (1998).

more directly powerful as a strategy to encourage the increased enfranchisement of women into community and municipal leadership roles.

The decision to commit the law to equality of opportunity in participation and leadership contests between men and women, but not to name specific targets, was a conscious compromise built into the law on the basis of political and practical considerations. Whilst commentators both for and against the issue of positive discrimination in the Bolivian context are able to present reasoned arguments for either side, the specific arguments put forward at the time of the implementation of the LPP legislation do not, in themselves, provide an adequate case against positive discrimination in this instance.

There were three broad thrusts to the argument against more directly targeting women in the LPP legislation in ways which would have provided a more tangible impetus towards greater gendered equality of opportunity in community leadership.[15] Firstly, at the time it was claimed that setting quotas for the participation of women in the OTB's would generate an unhelpful backlash against an already controversially radical reform, while a declaration of principle would provide a basis for a local movement with sufficient support to move ahead in an effective way. However, we have since seen the establishment of the 'Law of Quotas' in 1997, which does specifically set quotas for women as candidates in national political parties, suggesting that, political will allowing, the LPP could also have included certain targets within its own legislation.

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[15] Collated from interviews conducted with a range of Bolivian commentators, academics, legislators between December 1995 and February 1996.

A second argument for the lack of specific targets for women's participation being named was that higher rates of illiteracy and lower levels of education among women presented serious obstacles to women's leadership participation that could not be legislated away. This argument ignores the existant underlying structural inequalities which lead to women's disproportionate levels of illiteracy and low-educational attainment. Furthermore, I would suggest that, whilst issues of illiteracy and a lack of formal training do pose problems when establishing new forms of governance and leadership, and that women are, statistically, over-represented in illiteracy tables, these problems are by no means gender specific and do not constitute sufficient cause not to specifically target women as potential community leaders.

Indeed the same standard does not seem to apply to male leaders, for example, in Independencía in the High Andes there is a Quechua male councillor[16] elected to the new municipal government who speaks little or no Spanish[17] and who has had very little formal education or training in leadership skills. There was no serious suggestion that only well-educated, Spanish speaking men should be allowed to stand for municipal government, and any such suggestion would likely have been met with widespread outrage from the majority indigenous, rural communities across the country. The point being that illiterate women are inherently no less capable of leadership than illiterate men, and that the way forward is to provide essential training for all candidates, regardless of gender.

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[16] From research conducted in Independencia , July 1996.

A third issue which, it could be argued, actually discriminates against women's participation in community decision-making under the LPP, is that of the definition and recognition of the Territorial Base Organisations (OTBs). The OTBs play a crucial role in the organisation and management of the LPP at the community level. A community-based organisation, once recognised as an OTB, is then responsible for acting as the interface between the municipal government and the population of a *barrio* or neighbourhood, and as such, is in a position of significant power within community-based politics. The problem for the overwhelming majority of women's organisations throughout Bolivia was that they were not deemed to officially qualify as OTBs because they were classed as neither territorial nor as representing the whole population of a given *barrio*.

It was claimed that this problem stems from an objective reality of gender relations in Bolivia, rather than from any insensitivity to gender issues on the part of the legislative team[18]. This 'objective reality' being that indigenous Andean traditions of domestic consultation are based on the concept of complementary gender roles - returning to the public / private spatial dichotomy referred to above - which, it is argued, leads to less purely patriarchal patterns of decision-making than appears at first sight. As such, the OTBs which have gained recognition tend to be led by men, being the traditionally predominantly male controlled community organisations such as the *Juntas Vecinales*, based on the premise that these are territorial organisations and so most logically represent the population of any given *barrio*.

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[17] Spanish being the *de facto* official language and that used in all formal political dealings and in which all the legislation is written.

[18] Interview with Ruben Ardaya Salinas, Director de Fortalecimiento Municipal, Secretaría Nacional de Participación Popular, la Paz, January, 1996.

Typical women's community organisations, on the other hand, tend to be *Clubes de Madres* (Mothers' Clubs), knitting or handicraft-based groups. These community-based organisations tend to focus upon income generation, education and other social functions, whilst also providing a space within which women are able to meet and discuss the issues of the day and form close mutual support networks. Such groups are disqualified from being recognised as OTBs on the grounds that they purportedly have a sectoral rather than a territorial basis. Although this is technically the case, in reality community-based women's groups, whilst not officially precluding membership by women from different barrios, do tend to be overwhelmingly territorial in as much as they pertain to a given neighbourhood. It would be a relatively simple matter to make these organisations officially territorial and, as such, qualify as Territorial Base Organisations on these grounds.

An argument against this is that, whether territorial or sectoral, women's community organisations do not represent both men and women in a given neighbourhood in the same way as *Juntas Vecinales* officially do, despite the fact that *Juntas Vecinales* tend to be overwhelmingly male-dominated organisations. There is an issue here of how it appears to be more acceptable for all-male or majoritively male groups to purport to represent the whole than it is for female-dominated groups.

The 'Beautiful Dynamic' of Popular Participation?

Nevertheless, despite its shortcomings, Popular Participation has already begun to generate some interesting dynamics within the area of gender relations at a community

level. Under the LPP, municipal plans are expected to include '*women's concerns*'[19].

In order to give substance to this provision, the Gender Affairs Sub-Secretariat within the Ministry of Human Development decided in 1995 to target 12 urban and 12 rural municipalities for specific interventions to include gender-awareness in the planning processes. In the targeted rural municipalities the Sub-Secretariat has been working on assessments of gender needs and possible action in relation to these needs (SNPP, 1994).

Urban work by the Sub-Secretariat has concentrated on developing such activities as Legal Advice Centres and the training of women's rights' promoters. In general, the strengthening of local women's organisations, where they exist, has been seen as a priority, whilst attempting to stimulate debate within indigenous communities about the sensitive issue of women's representation in leadership positions within community organisations.

Entre Rios in the Southern Department of Tarija, provides a good example of what can be achieved when the LPP is applied under favourable conditions. In this case the favourable conditions include a strong local Guarani women's organisation, the Assembly of the Guarani People (APG), a powerful indigenous people's organisation, and well-trained facilitators from the Gender and Rural Sub-Secretariats working together with local Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The Legal Services Network, a legal advice centre established in Entre Rios, was used to publicise the opportunities available under the LPP while also carrying out work on such issues as human rights.

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[19] Law No. 1551, Law of Popular Participation, Article 14, 20 April, 1994.

According to the former head of the Gender Affairs Sub-Secretariat, the LPP implementation in Entre Rios has created a 'beautiful dynamic'[20] in which many traditional relationships of ethnic and gender oppression have come to be questioned seriously for the first time. For example, women's groups formed to struggle against norms of gender oppression have spilled over into challenges to local ethno-class divisions between 'mestizos' and 'Indios', with indigenous women confronting the wives of local politicians about the arrogance of their husbands' conduct. Initially the Gender Sub-Secretariat in Tarija concentrated on working with women until the men complained that they were not being provided with support. The response of the Sub-Secretariat was to begin to promote men's groups working on gender issues[21].

Within Cochabamba city, the third largest urban centre in the country, there is a markedly greater participation of women in the OTBs than one finds in rural regions. According to 1997 statistics, approximately 20 to 30% of the OTB leadership is female compared to, for example less than 1% in rural areas within the Cochabamba Department as a whole[22]. This may be in part accounted for by the nature of the city itself in that it is referred to as a 'centre for middle-class intellectuals'[23].

It may also be partially accounted for by the presence of both a relatively powerful Women's Civic Committee and several NGOs working specifically towards the

[20] From an interview with Sonia Montaño, formerly Sub-Secretaria de Asuntos de Género, Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, La Paz, January, 1996
[21] From an interview with Sonia Montaño, formerly Sub-Secretaria de Asuntos de Género, Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, La Paz, January, 1996
[22] From data provided by Osvaldo Montano, Director de Gestion Territorial, Municipal Government of Cochabamba, May 1997

promotion of women's rights within the city itself. These women's organisations have lobbied the municipal government to promote the introduction of Gender Secretaries within the Territorial Base Organisations whose remit is to encourage women's greater participation in the decision-making processes of the LPP, and raise issues of gendered equality of opportunity at the community level.

As a result of these efforts, although no statistics were available, it was claimed that a significant proportion of OTBs within the city of Cochabamba had introduced this new leadership position, and to date, all Gender Secretaries within OTBs are female.[24] This in itself may account for the majority of the 20-30% of women in leadership positions within the OTBs in Cochabamba city. However, whilst this may be seen as a positive step in the right direction to raise awareness of gender issues and encourage women's participation in the Territorial Base Organisations, there is also evidence that this new leadership role is accorded little real importance within the OTBs themselves - possibly why no men have stood for election to this position - and that the role of Gender Secretary remains vague or unheard of in the minds of the community members[25]. But it is still relatively early days.

The *Instituto de Formacion Femenina Integral* (IFFI), an NGO working in Cochabamba city to promote women's rights and provide training for women, has been running a series of workshops since November 1996 to raise awareness amongst women in the area of the rights, responsibilities and opportunities available to women

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[23] From an interview with Victor Hugo Causaya, Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Economic y Social, Cochabamba, July 1997
[24] From interviews with Osvaldo Montano, Director de Gestion Territorial, Municipal Government of Cochabamba, May 1997 and Carmen Zabalaga, IFFI, Cochabamba, March, 1997.

and men under the Law of Popular Participation. Through these participative workshops women from each district within Cochabamba city produced pamphlets detailing their needs and, with IFFI taking an advocacy role, women presented their demands to the municipality.

In Ville Sebastian Pagador, a marginal peri-urban neighbourhood on the outskirts of Cochabamba, women, with the help of IFFI, presented their demands for development initiatives to be included in the annual community development plan (PAO) in 1996. Their plans included a scheme for the construction of a women's community and training centre in Ville Sebastian Pagador. The male leadership of the OTB said their plans were unrealistic because the zone had much more pressing priorities, such as water and sewerage systems, which would require all the LPP funds for the next few years. Undeterred, the women approached the Mayor directly and explained their plans, also explaining that the LPP funds in their neighbourhood did not stretch to those development initiatives which were deemed non-essential. The Mayor eventually agreed to provide 50% of the necessary funding for the project if they were able to raise the other half[26].

Several other instances exist whereby the LPP is being used as a platform to encourage greater awareness of and debate around gender issues, and the increased visibility and participation of women in community decision-making. For example, in Sucre, the capital of the Department of Chuquisaca, the Mayor has encouraged women's participation in municipal planning, responding to a climate created by the

[25] From research conducted in Barrio Colquiri, Ville Sebastian Pagador, and Cochabamba City, 1997
[26] From research conducted in Ville Sebastian Pagador and Cochabamba City, 1997

LPP[27]. In Barrio Colquiri, a *barrio* on the outskirts of Cochabamba city, as discussed in chapter 4, following workshops I held with women's community organisations in the neighbourhood outlining the possibilities existent within the LPP, a group of women came together from across the various neighbourhood groups to collectively approach the local OTB and municipal representatives.

They demanded to know why they had not been involved in the Popular Participation reform before, and insisted that they be involved in future decision-making processes. One woman decided to stand as Gender Secretariat in order to become more directly involved in OTB leadership meetings, and several questions began to be raised about the fact that the Territorial Base Organisation did not appear to be encouraging the participation of the entire community in the planning of the annual development initiatives, as they are supposed to do under the LPP legislation.

Further questions were raised when it transpired that the President of the OTB had used most of the previous year's Popular Participation funding allocation to cobble the road outside his own house. Now the women's organisations in the *barrio* are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the new reform, they are keen to become more involved and also be more critically vigilant of the current OTB's practices[28].

Examples such as these provide evidence of how, in some areas, women are moving into the spaces created by the LPP and beginning to exploit the possibilities of the Law. It is unlikely, for example, that without the LPP providing the institutional

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[27] Ivonne Farah, Sub-Secretaria de Asuntos de Género, Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, La Paz, January, 1997.

framework, the women from Ville Sebastian Pagador would have met to discuss their demands and prepared a proposal which, although it did not make it through the official channels of the LPP, did reach the level of municipal planning and became a future possibility.

Although these instances do currently tend to be exceptions to the more general pattern, being that women's participation in the political sphere at any level remains relatively limited, they nevertheless demonstrate the possibilities that have been opened up by the Law. What these examples also demonstrate is that, once aware of their rights under the LPP, women are keen to become involved, and more than capable of taking up leadership roles. Furthermore, it is not necessarily the case that, as I was told by several male community leaders, 'women simply don't want to participate'[29].

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28 From research conducted in Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba, 1997
29 From various interviews with male community leaders, Barrio Colquiri and Ville Sebastain Pagador, Cochabamba,

As the concluding section argues, giving popular participation a strong gender dimension will be a long, slow process, calling for major investment over many years. The final concluding case-study outlined in chapter 9 examines the implementation of the LPP in the High Andean region of Independecía. This example serves to highlight some of the key and apparently common threads of initial experiences of the LPP for various sectors of Bolivian society. Moreover, it provides a useful illustration of the ways in which the intersections of gender and class inform the indigenous-*campesinos* experiences of the Law.

Section IV

Chapter 9

Inverse Co-optation & Union Control: Gender, Class & Popular Power Games in Independencia[1]

The previous chapters have been concerned with the broad aims and initial impacts of the LPP and the socio-cultural and political contexts into which it has been introduced. Several key questions have been raised of whether the LPP was acting as a catalyst for the empowerment of base communities, or has it merely provided a further avenue for the co-optation of community and union groups by powerful political groups? Has the reform proved to be a radical force for participatory 'peoples power' or have we seen, rather than a decentralisation of power, the decentralisation of corruption and prebendalistic relations? Further, is the LPP process encouraging the homogenisation of diverse traditions of organisation throughout the country, or does it provide opportunities for the recognition and strengthening of these multifarious traditions within mainstream culture in ways previously unseen?

The answers to these and other issues are by no means uniform, and it is certainly and inevitably the case that the effects of the implementation of the Law of Popular Participation are both regionally and contextually specific. Nevertheless, it is helpful

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[1] The following chapter is based on personal research conducted in the region in July1996 in conjunction with Mónica Herbas, Gonzalo Vargas and David Vocal of the *Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Economic y Social* (CERES), Cochabamba, Bolivia. The findings were initially written-up by by Clisby, Herbas, Vargas and Vocal and included in the Phase I and Phase II Reports to SIDA (Booth et al., 1996 and 1997).

to examine the effects of the reform in a specific geographical context in order to see the ways in which a number of key themes emerge. In this way, the initial experiences of the LPP in Independencía serve to highlight several central issues raised by the implementation of the Law throughout the country. The case of Independencía, being an example of a newly introduced level of municipal government, also provides a useful comparison to the experiences found within the already established municipal government of the city of Cochabamba. As such, using the case of Independencía, the following chapter will focus on the context within which the LPP was introduced into this region and highlight the initial effects of the reform on the social and political organisation of the municipality. As outlined in chapter 4, the fieldwork was conducted in Independencía town, Kamí, and the smaller settlements of Charawayto and Pocanche (see figures 12 and 13). The following findings are thus based on data collated from interviews, participatory workshops, and municipal documentation, all collected in each of the above mentioned sites.

Independencía and the Province of Ayopaya

The municipality of Independencía lies some 270 kilometres North-West of Cochabamba city in the high Andean Valleys of the Department of Cochabamba, within the province of Ayopaya. The population stands at approximately 29,000 in a land area of 5,000 square kilometres, with about 70% of the inhabitants spread amongst small rural communities dotted throughout the mountains and valleys of the region (Laserna et al., 1995). The municipality is divided into three cantons, each with its own significant urban centre. In order of population size these are Kamí, Independencía and Calchani. Kamí is an important centre for the mining of wolfram

and thus the majority of the population work in the mines around which the settlement has developed. Independencía, the town sharing its name with the municipality, is the provincial capital of Ayopaya, thus housing the official administrative functions, including the provincial Town Hall.
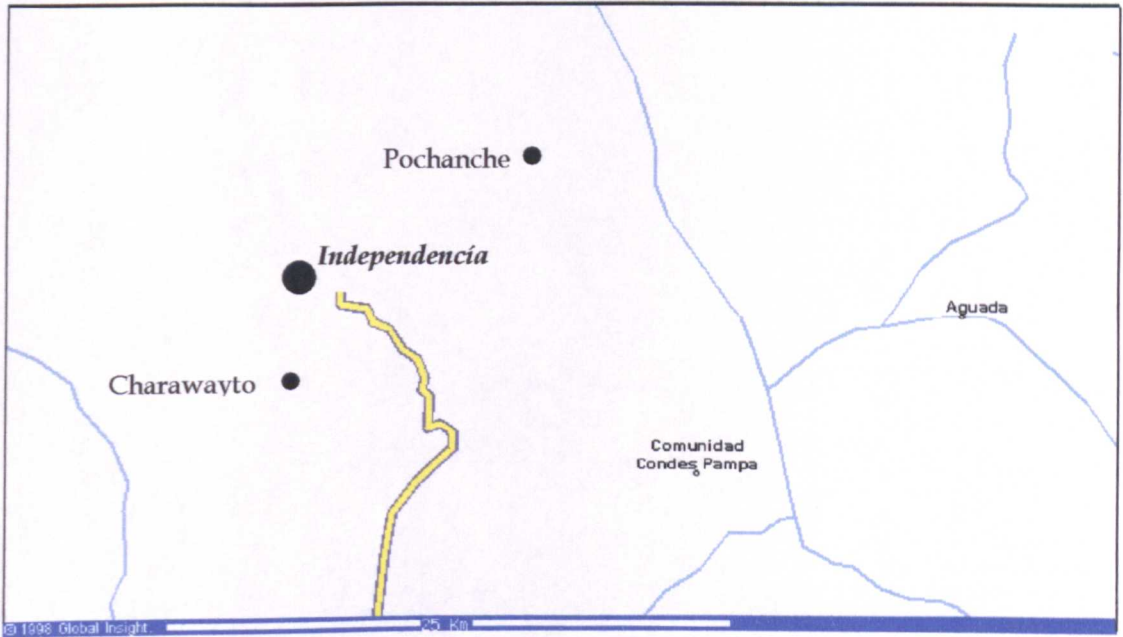
Figure 12. Map of Independencía and Surrounding Areas, Province of Ayopaya.

The province of Ayopaya as a whole falls into the category of Low Human Development, being, according to this scale, 12th position among the sixteen provinces of the Department of Cochabamba (Laserna et al., 1995). Historically, Independencía was characterised by the classical latifundium/minifundium pattern in which land was controlled by a handful of powerful landlords, for whom the majority of the population either worked directly or were in some way subordinately connected.

Figure 13. Map of Kamí and Surrounding Areas, Province of Ayopaya.

As such, the agrarian reforms during the 1950s were important both as a redistributive measure and as the context of the rise of a powerful rural union movement. Following the agrarian reform, however, as has tended to be typical within all those areas in which haciendas formerly dominated, there became a significant problem of land fragmentation due to the collective effects of the land redistribution, irregular terrain and prevailing patterns of inheritance.[2]

Geographically, the municipality stretches across the valleys and plateaux of the High Andes. Hence, access to the region is relatively limited, and communications with Cochabamba city can be unreliable. Once beyond the city limits, the road from Cochabamba into Independencía takes the form of a narrow track cut high into the

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[2] Prevailing patterns of inheritance being that upon death of the landowner or family head, the land is sub-divided between eligible relatives and, as such, plots tend to become increasingly smaller as they are passed down through generations.

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mountains. During the dry season the journey takes an average of eight hours, travelling over rough and difficult terrain, following narrow tracks cut into the side of the high mountains. During the wet season the track becomes a quagmire, rendering access to the region extremely hazardous, if not impossible, for several months of the year.

Figure 14. The Road to Independencía.

The region's key urban centres were partially electrified and a handful of telephone lines were connected during the past decade. Within Independencía town, for example, three telephones were installed in the early 1990s, for the Town Hall, the priest, and one for public use. The clear significance of this relative isolation being that relations between the municipal government of Independencía and the

departmental government in Cochabamba thus face serious logistical difficulties, an issue which will be discussed in greater detail below.

A further significant factor within the area is the relationship between urban and rural populations. Although not as pronounced as during the colonial era, there continues to exist a distinct social division between the urban centres, especially the town of Independencía itself, and the surrounding rural areas. The urban residents or *vecinos* formed a distinct social grouping who felt themselves somewhat socially and culturally superior to the rural farmers, to the extent that, in previous years *campesinos* were formally treated as second class citizens, or rather as not being entitled to 'citizenship' at all. A local Catholic Sister remembers, for example, when *campesinos* were not permitted to sit on the benches in church or 'even allowed to walk in the main plaza'[3]. Since this time, over the past three decades, the status of *campesinos* has improved, with relations being very much based on commerce - the sale of agricultural produce to the townspeople and the *commerciantes*[4].

Relations have been significantly improved through the work of the *Centro Social*, a local Catholic institution largely funded by the charity *Fé y Alegría*, which has been working in the capital for approximately thirty years as a residential education and social centre for *campesino* children. The success of their work can be clearly illustrated by the fact that several leading figures in the town, including the mayor

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[3] Interview with Madre Verena, Independencia town, July 1996. Similarly echoed during interview with Virginia Torres, MBL Councillor, Independencía, July 1996.
[4] Tradespeople, shopkeepers. *Commerciantes* tend to be predominantly female, particularly when involved in the sale of agricultural produce.

himself, and the 'MBL'[5] councillor, were once *campesino* interns in the Social Centre, moving from their rural community to live in and be educated at the Centre, and integrating into the urban community. Nevertheless, despite a certain relaxation of the strict hierarchy in recent years, according to the majority of those interviewed, there remain perceptible residues of the sense of superiority of the former *vecinos* and *hacendado*[6] families over the indigenous *campesinos*.

Figure 15. View Over Independencía Town, Municipal Capital, Province of Ayopaya

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[5] *Movimiento Boliviano Libre*, a left of centre political party.
[6] From the term *hacienda*, referring to wealthy land-owning families typically descendants of Spanish colonists ('*Mestizos*).
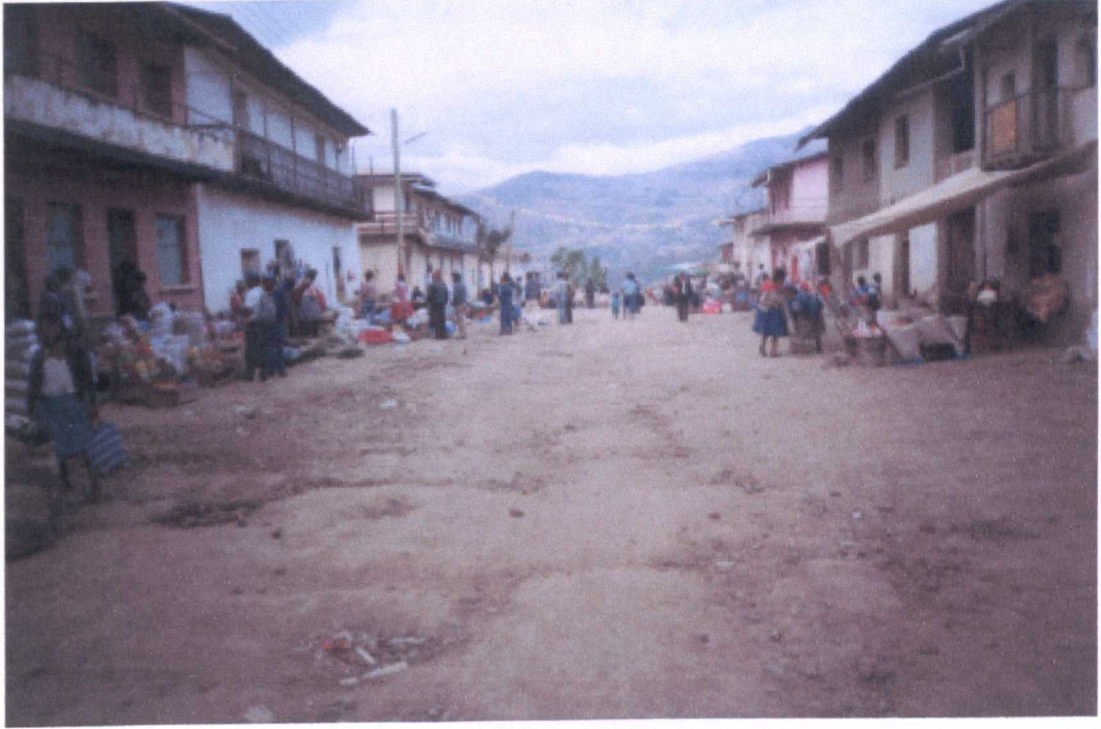
Figure 16. Main Street, Independencía.

Figure 17. Drying Maize for Brewing Chicha, Independencía.

An additional social division, important in the context of Popular Participation, is one which arises from the administrative subordination of Kamí to Independencía town. Kamí is a mining town, developed principally around a cooperative wolfram mine employing some 16,000 people and an Italian-owned enterprise mining soladite, a semi-precious stone, in the Lowlands near Sívingani[7]. The integration between Kamí's mining economy and the agricultural and merchant activities of the two other cantons is slight. Kamí not only maintains the highest urban population in the region, but also boasts transport links with La Paz and the rest of the country which are superior to, and not dependent on, those of Independencía. There is also an issue regarding union allegiance, with the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Kamí belonging to their own mining union, in contrast to the rest of the region which has a strong peasant union. Thus, in Kamí there is a relatively strong sense of unwelcome dependency upon Independencía, one which predates but has, for reasons which will be explained in due course, been exacerbated by the LPP.

Until the late 1970s to early 1980s the peasant unions in certain communities of Independencía were still confronted by hostility on the part of the former hacienda owners and their families over the legalisation of property claims. This was a reflection in part of the continued social dominance and political influence of those families in the area, and in part of the absence of organisations capable of delivering social and technical support to the peasantry.

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[7] From an interview with Marcelino Miranda, Secretary, minewrker's union, Kamí, July 1996.
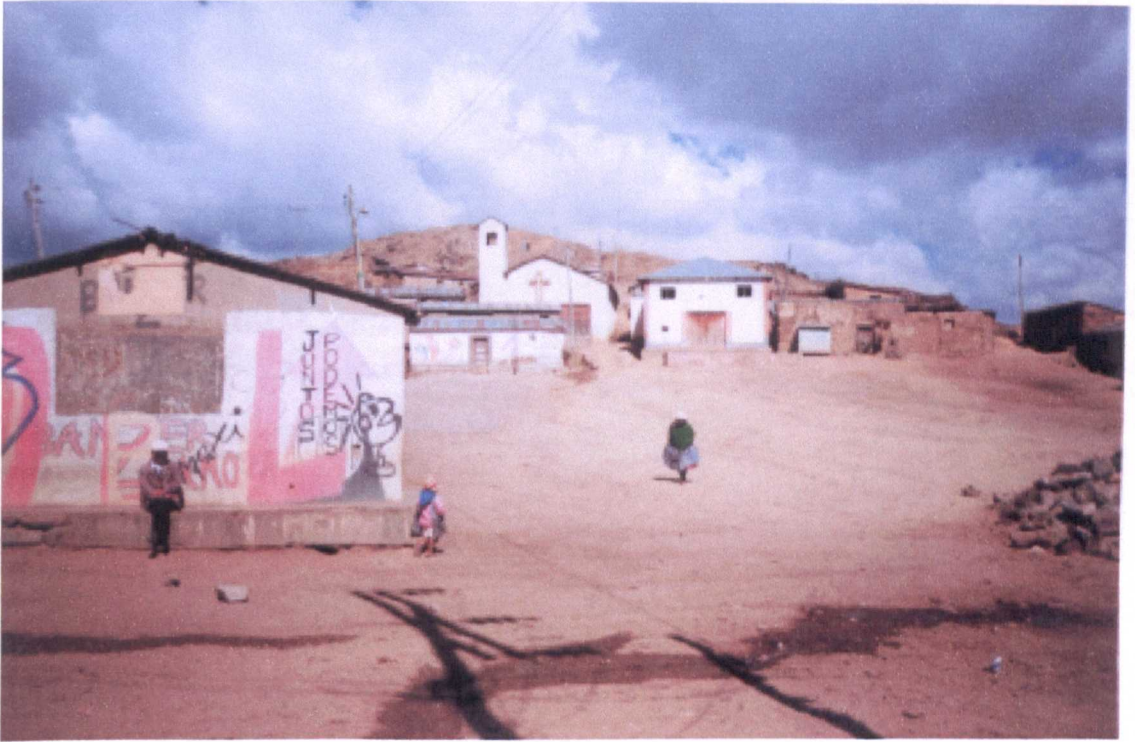
Figure 18. Central Square, Kamí, Province of Ayopaya.

Against that background, during the 1980s there arose various local NGOs, the most important of which - the German-backed *Foundation for Self Management and the Environment* (FUPAGEMA) - remains a significant local organisation. The Catholic Church and its Social Centre are also key local institutions, and a further important urban institution is the recently established Cultural Centre which now runs distance learning courses from the State university in Cochabamba city, and has established a local radio station and video-making facilities staffed by local people. It also boasts the nationally-known folk group *Ayopayamanta* whose music is currently being sold within Europe, through the German connections at FUPAGEMA.

Initial Reactions to the LPP: April 1994 - March 1995

All these social and economic developments have contributed to the opening up of spaces for change in the social, political and cultural life of Independencía, and it is in this respect that the region can be seen to have been ripe for the kinds of transformations promised by the LPP. Within Independencía, as within all the newly created post-LPP municipal governments, the reform promised the creation of a new locally-elected layer of municipal government, involving the devolution of significant powers from the Departmental capital to this regional level, and thus an important move towards greater local autonomy and control over considerable resources.

However, the reform initially faced marked hostility in the region. On its promulgation in April 1994, the LPP was the object of strong resistance on the part of the rural union movement nationally. The unions, led by the Cochabamba Federation, initially argued that the Law was creating parallel organisations which would undermine the *sindicato*[8] , and that it was a Trojan Horse for the introduction of a new rural land tax. This line was followed by the local leadership in Ayopaya, one result of which was that, although the urban population picked up some understanding of what the Law entailed, most rural people remained almost entirely ignorant of it.

Hence, though designed to involve the participation of both the urban and rural populations, the implementation of the LPP began under the direction of a new mayor elected from among the town population with an almost exclusive focus upon the urban centre alone. Nevertheless, the reform attracted certain new resources to the

area, including the building of the Town Hall in Independencía town and the installation of the telephone line.

However, the fact that the majority of the population, and particularly those in rural areas, were largely ignorant of the LPP process, and the powerful *campesino sindicato* was actively in opposition to the reforms it promised, meant that, initially at least, the effects of the LPP were felt little further afield than the newly-built Town Hall itself. Very little progress was made in the recognition of the Territorial Base Organisations (OTB's), and the exercises in 'participatory planning' technically required in the development of the 1995 annual development plan (PAO), were carried out with scarcely any involvement of the rural or urban population[9].

These initial LPP experiences within Independencía clearly meant, therefore, that the reform was rather less popular and participatory than its creators intended. Nor were mechanisms effectively introduced, in the form of a *Comite de Vigilancia,* to exercise control over the functions of the new government. This contributed significantly to certain errors being made in the allocation of contracts and the management of the municipality's accounts. As such, the subsequent occupants of the Town Hall were faced with an unfortunate legacy of financial and administrative difficulties.

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[8] Union organisation

The Development of the LPP: March - December 1995

The region's initial experiences of the LPP did not, then, live up to the radical potential of the reform. Indeed, it may have passed into effective obscurity, its obituary perhaps recording the unfortunate but unsurprising burial of a potentially democratising measure at the hands of the traditional pre-existing hierarchy of powerful *hacendado* families. However, this was fortunately not to be the case, the change coming about with the decision in March 1995 of the country's rural union movement to turn its initial stance of non-cooperation with the LPP on its head, and begin instead to enter the ring with its own political instrument. The union movement's political wing, the *Asambléa para la Soberania de los Pueblos* (ASP) was initially denied legal recognition as a political party in the lead-up to the first municipal elections in December 1995. Given that only those political parties officially recognised by the Central Government were permitted to enter the ring and stand for municipal election, it seemed the *sindicato* as a political entity was to be excluded from the LPP process - indeed, in this situation it was not surprising that the rural union movement were opposed to the reforms.

However, it was permitted for those political parties which had been officially recognised to 'adopt' candidates under their own banner to stand for the local elections. Thus, following some behind-the-scenes negotiations, the *campesino* union launched its own ASP candidates under the auspices of the United Left (IU), who had not been excluded from the electoral playing field. Thus, the ASP/*Campesino* union

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[9] Indeed, although it proved difficult to ascertain exactly who was involved in the creation of the 1995 PAO, it seems it was the product of a meeting between several senior Council members alone.

movement contested the first municipal elections using this borrowed acronym with no small degree of success.

In December 1995, following a vigorous campaign throughout the region and with extensive reliance on the substantial *campesino* population of Ayopaya, the ASP/IU candidates (who also held important positions within the *sindicato* hierarchy) overturned the pre-existing 'urban' hegemony. In the pre-Popular Participation days, during the 1993 elections, the right-wing ADN and centrist MNR parties had won 45% and 38% of the votes respectively[10], and shared the councillors positions between them in a relatively cosy alliance of notable and historically locally powerful urban families. This was all to change in these, the first municipal elections of the post-LPP era.

Following their extensive campaign the 'IU' gained 45% of a much higher overall participation rate - 2,337 valid votes as opposed to the 1993 total of 285 - leaving the MNR in second place with 20% of the votes. The left of centre Movimiento Boliviano Libre (MBL) candidate, Virginia Torres, secured 18% of the vote, leaving the ADN candidate in fourth place with a mere 6%[11]. Thus, whilst both the MBL and the MNR secured one councillor's seat each, the *campesino* union succeeded in gaining an absolute majority of three councillors and so were able to elect their candidate as mayor without the need to form any pact or alliance.

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[10] Official statistics copied from municipal records, Town Hall, Independencia, July 1996
[11] Official statistics copied from municipal records, Town Hall, Independencia, July 1996

It would seem that the various candidates were voted in by quite distinct constituencies[12]. As expected, the 'IU' candidates tended to be supported by the majority of the *campesino* base, with the MNR candidate securing much of the urban vote. The MNR councillor heralds from a prominent urban family and is a former mayor of Independencía, with institutional links to town-based organisations such as the Civic Committee, the Church and Cultural Centre, but appears to have gained little support beyond the town limits. Virginia Torres, the MBL candidate, is particularly interesting, not merely from a gender development perspective. She is of *campesina* origin, arriving in the urban centre as a young teenager to board and be educated at the Social Centres Catholic school. She was supported by certain urban groups as well as by rural communities in which she was respected for her work within the Social Investment Fund (FIS). This instance of a *campesina* woman being a serious contender for mayorship in 1995 and being elected to municipal council is unique in the history of the region, and a rare occurrence at the national level.

However, this relatively radical departure may be tempered to a certain extent by the fact that Torres is also the wife of a former Minister of Agriculture and *Campesino* Affairs in the Union Democrática Popular (UDP) government of 1982-85, thus lending her some credence amongst the local population *through* her husband, *despite* her gender. Additionally, a further factor in the election of Virginia Torres was that the mine workers union in Kamí decided to stand together in a deliberate show of non-cooperation with the *campesino* union in the face of their grievances concerning the

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[12] Based largely on oral indicators resulting from the fieldwork study and institutional mapping carried out in group workshops throughout the region, which suggested that the social and organisational linkages surrounding the municipal candidates formed a set of non-intersecting clusters.

power (im)balance within the region. As such, they refused to vote for the ASP/IU candidate but would not go so far from their union ideals as to vote for the right wing ADN candidate. Feeling no allegiance to the urban-based MNR candidate, they were then left with the MBL candidate, Virginia Torres, who had relatively good relations with both Kamí and the surrounding rural communities. Hence, Torres found herself backed by the substantial voting strength of the mine workers union through a combination of both merit and the political wrangling existent between the differing union entities[13].

Figure 19. Charawayto, Province of Ayopayo.

The IU/ASP candidates were formally selected by the *Central Síndicato*[14] of Independencía, Charawayto, and to a lesser extent Pochanche, based on voting by

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[13] Interview with Virginia Torres, MBL councillor, Independencía, July, 1996
[14] Central organising committee of the peasant workers union.

general assemblies of base *síndicatos*. All the selected union candidates previously, and recently, occupied senior leadership positions within the union hierarchy. One particular problem which had to be overcome in their electoral campaign was the fact that, in line with their national union guidelines, they were previously leading opponents of the LPP, advocating a boycott of the entire process. This sudden reversal of position late in the game led a number of potential voters, particularly those within the urban area, to feel somewhat sceptical of their motives, feeling that they were 'playing politics' rather than having the interest of the regional communities at heart. This scepticism was clearly not, however, ultimately able to overcome the social and political power held by the *campesino* union in the municipality.

Figure 20. Market Day in Charawayto.

Figure 21. View from Charawayto towards Independencia.

Figure 22. Main Street, Pocanche, Province of Ayopaya.

Post-Election Developments: Initial Impacts of Popular Participation

It was within this context that the Independencía Study[15] was conducted, employing a methodological 'triangulation' of in-depth interviews, secondary data collection, and PRA techniques – specifically needs ranking, 'spatial power mapping' and community discussion. Although the findings of the research primarily concern the specific dynamics existent within the region, several key themes emerged which serve to illustrate some of the common impacts of the initial implementation of the LPP throughout the country.

Initially, the most notable finding was that all key informants and all those in community workshops expressed a belief that the Law is a generally welcome reform, largely because it brings resources down to a more localised level. It was also understood that its basic intention was to be a democratising measure which decentralises power to the bases, and this was seen as being overwhelmingly positive. There was, however, a perceived lack of knowledge and diffusion of information concerning the detail of the Law and the rights and obligations it entails at community level. Therefore, there were widespread calls for the development of a program of seminars and workshops to disseminate information concerning the LPP to all communities throughout the region.

Despite the lack of widespread understanding as to the specific details of the Law, it was understood that the reform was a potentially radical exercise in democratisation.

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[15] A discussion of the methodology employed and team formation can be found in chapter 4. The study in Independencía was conducted between May and September 1996.

Through the empowerment of previously disempowered groups, a process of rural democratisation had visibly occurred. The old hegemony had been firmly subverted and the peasant union had gained a controlling stake in the new local government. Indeed, the experiences of the LPP in Independencía demonstrate the ways in which the reform potentially allows for not only a process of co-optation of base communities by powerful political parties, but also the possibility of inverse co-optation, or at least a degree of subversion of the existing and expected power relations.

The *campesino sindicato* was able to 'borrow' the officially recognised acronym of the United Left, through which it was able to field its own candidates in the municipal elections. It was this ability through the LPP which was seen by the peasant farmer's union as being the most important element of the reform. As a result Independencía gained a ruling majority of three 'United Left' councillors who were in reality leading members and representatives of the *Central Sindicato*. The union's councillors were not the only ones who claimed to have employed such methods to gain a seat. Both of the two remaining councillors in Independencía nominally used the MNR and the MBL party lists to become elected but neither regard themselves as actually representing their backers.

The first non-*sindicato* councillor, Ricardo Sandoval, member of a powerful urban family, was formerly Mayor of Independencía under the rightist ADN banner. This time he chose to 'represent' the more centrist MNR, but insisted that he had neither allegiance to the party nor did he intend to follow the official party line. He saw himself, rather, as representing the urban and business interests of the region's capital

and it was in this light that he tended to be perceived and was elected by the local voting population[16]. The second non-union councillor, Virginia Torres, chose to use the MBL party name but again insisted that 'I am not an MBLista!'[17]. Instead, Torres claimed to represent the interests of both the urban sector and several rural communities, as well as being supported by the mine workers in Kamí. Hence, although three national political parties were formally represented in Independencía (the IU, MNR, and MBL) this was very much representation in name only. The true power lay with the political wing of the *Central Sindicato*, the leftist ASP.

Following the municipal elections initiated through the LPP, the case found within Independencía whereby local councillors are officially representing nationally recognised political parties in accordance with LPP rules, but claim not to be following their mandate, is by no means an isolated phenomena. This creates an interesting political scenario with potentially significant consequences at the national level. Whether or not constituting *de facto* representation at the local level, the *de jure* gains made by national political parties through the municipal elections nevertheless boost their overall national representation figures, an increase which clearly brings with it subsequent benefits.

Furthermore, although following the initial municipal elections in 1995 there did not appear to be an overt obligation or pressure placed upon local councillors to adhere to their 'chosen' party line, there inevitably remains the possibility that this may become an issue in future years, thus not only augmenting the *de jure* power of those parties,

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[16] Interview with Ricardo Sandoval, Independencía, July, 1996.
[17] From an interview with Virginia Torres, Independencia, July 1996

but their also their de *facto* power. This in turn could result, for example, in degrees of co-optation of base organisations and communities by powerful national partisan agendas with little or no relevance to the specific municipalities themselves. Concurrently, it remains to be seen in the longer term whether degrees of inverse co-optation may become increasingly significant, whereby national parties feel a certain pressure to take into account the local agendas of their 'nominal' municipal councillors. This being the case, it could add substantial weight to the claim that the LPP is indeed a democratising measure to an extent previously unprecedented in contemporary Bolivian politics.

We return now, however, to the experiences found within Independencía following the initial municipal elections. New resources were promised and there were high expectations of local participative development to come. Unfortunately, the road to the LPP ideal was by no means untrammeled, and in the months following the elections several obstacles emerged which served to cast certain shadows over the progress of the reform.

For some the problems stemmed from the electoral campaign itself. It was claimed by several key informants, who were, significantly, not supporters of the *sindicato*, that the union had mobilised more support from the bases in the 1995 elections by threatening communities with 'abandonment' by an ASP controlled municipality if they did not support the union candidate. In other words they would not subsequently be considered in the LPP resources/projects allocation in the event that the union gained overall control. In Kamí, for example, there is some feeling that this has certainly been the case. The population of the mining town did not unanimously

support the *campesino* union candidate and subsequently expressed strong feelings of abandonment by the union controlled municipality in the LPP process. They claim to have been excluded from the participatory planning process and to have received a mere 'five bags of stones and three footballs, nothing else'[18] from the LPP thus far. They believed this to be the result of their decision not to support the IU/ASP candidate during the 1995 elections.

Figure 23. 'Five Bags of Stones' – The Fruits of the LPP for Kamí.

There were also a number of claims from non-peasant union informants throughout the region that the *campesino síndicato* communicated distorted information regarding the LPP to local populations, information which they felt in some way benefited the union candidates. Although the ways in which this information was distorted was not clearly explained, it remains the case that the rural workers union would have been a major source of information concerning Popular Participation throughout the region, and

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[18] Interview with David Rodriquez, President of the Coperativa Minero, Wolfram Mine, Kamí, July 1996, and again discussed during a workshop with wolfram miners in Kamí, July, 1996

especially in the many rural communities which have little or no access to outside information sources such as radio and television stations. In this sense, then, it would be the case that the bearers of such knowledge would yield a certain amount of power over people who would not be in an ideal position to question the information they received.

Furthermore, being the case that in order to register to vote in Bolivia one is required to present an identity card or carnet, the issue of *carnetizacion* was also raised as being significant within the campaign. Although registration has improved in recent years, following both governmental and non-governmental initiatives aimed at encouraging this, there remain, particularly in rural regions, relatively high percentages of the population who do not possess a carnet and therefore do not have the right to, amongst other things, participate in elections. Prior to the municipal elections in Independencia, then, the IU/ASP representatives of the *campesino* union had distributed carnets within various communities in order to increase the overall voting population.

This certainly assisted the process of *carnetizacion* in the region, and, although there are no firm statistics, the perception is that between 15% (Charawayto) and 40% (Kamí) of the population of the region have their identity cards, depending on locality, rising to as high as 90% in the capital, Independencia, itself. It was unanimously believed that more men than women carried *carnets*. A major reason given for this differential, especially within rural communities, and particularly purported by men and older women, being that politics remains largely a man's domain, and, unless engaged in commercial activity, there is little need for women to be registered. This is because

another use of the carnets is to enable people to legally travel to urban centres - indeed it is required by law that all citizens carry an identity card, but, due to geographical and logistical problems, this would be practicably impossible to enforce in rural areas. Hence women in Independencía would be more likely to carry an identity card if they needed to travel to Cochabamba to sell goods, where they would be more likely to be required to produce it. [19]

Thus, that the IU/ASP candidates promoted *carnetizacion* in their constituency was of clear benefit to themselves in as much as it increased their potential voting population, but their actions also benefited the long battle towards increased citizenship. However, there were further allegations arising from the meetings held within the various communities that the *campesino* union distributed the identity cards on the either implicit or explicit understanding that the recipients could then be counted on to vote for them. Thus it was that the election campaign itself was called into question, and despite this tending to be the inherent nature of electoral campaigns, it would seem that there is evidence that the union employed a degree of 'strong arm tactics' amongst their constituency.

During the post-electoral period, an initial problem faced by the new municipal government in Independencía was the issue of capacity building. There was a marked lack of training and experience in terms of municipal leadership and administration. This seemed to be a particularly serious issue for a municipal government controlled

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[19] Based on interviews with *campesino* union officials, municipal councillors, mine unionists and NGO workers, Independencía, Kamí, and Charawayto, July 1996.

by a *campesino* union. There was almost no training or assistance provided by the central government to equip the new municipality for their new roles. In addition to the problematic legacy of the previous local administration, the new incumbents were faced with serious obstacles in terms of accounting, financial administration and general management of the LPP. Their problems stemmed not least from the relative isolation of the region and the logistical difficulties faced by the lack of reliable communication links with the municipal government of Cochabamba.

In addition to both the logistical and technical factors and the new union leadership's lack of experience and training in these matters, there were also claims that the LPP process is in a sense 'alien' to the base communities and the *campesino* councillors. It requires complicated, written administrative processes which are unfamiliar to the majority of *campesinos* and *gente de base* (resource-poor individuals). An apt example given was that one of the controlling union councillors speaks only Quechuan and no Spanish, and so finds it very difficult to understand and fully engage with the LPP process which is a wholly 'Spanish' reform.

Problems such as these were cited as reasons for the slow implementation of key elements of the Law. Initially, there was the slow registration of OTB's, with only 35 out of approximately 190 communities being registered by July 1996[20]. Secondly, the *Comité de Vigiliancia* (CV) was not formed until March 1996 and was facing serious difficulties at the time of the research in July. There was a general lack of understanding or knowledge concerning the function and role of the CV amongst the general population of the region, and amongst the CV itself there was a perception

that the Committee had not functioned very well thus far and did not possess sufficient knowledge or capacity to adequately carry out the duties and responsibilities required of them.

There were a mere 3 CV members, all male, representing the 3 distinct Cantons. They felt that to reasonably cover the Independencía region, the CV required at least a dozen such members, representing a greater proportion of communities within the region. Furthermore, they lived long distances apart in isolated areas, and given both the serious communication problems within the municipality, and the fact that CV members are unpaid, they found it extremely difficult and costly to meet and carry out their Vigilance duties. They had managed to hold 2 meetings since their inception, and hoped to continue to meet on a monthly basis, but they were already extremely disillusioned about their roles. Indeed, the lack of resources and assistance provided to the members to enable them to function effectively certainly presented both serious obstacles and little incentive to already resource-poor individuals.

In addition to the practical problems faced by the CV, there also existed a feeling amongst the community in general and within the Committee itself, that they were unable to function autonomously as intended. All three members had strong links with the peasant workers union, who were now controlling the municipal government. In order for the CV to fulfil its role as 'overseer' of the work of the councillors and the functioning of the LPP, the CV realistically needs to feel free to act independently. This clearly was not the case for the Vigilance Committee in Independencía.

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[20] Official documentation, Town Hall, Independencía, July 1996.

Hence, there existed within the region several specific obstacles to the smooth and effective functioning of the reform, and in the months following the elections there remained a feeling within several communities that they had not benefited equitably from LPP resources. There were fears that the planning and implementation of development initiatives funded through the LPP would be steered largely towards those communities who visibly supported the *campesino* union, to the exclusion of those who did not. In particular, the population of Kamí, focused around the Mining Cooperative, were calling for greater autonomy and control over the LPP process and attached resources. Their claim, stemming from their limited, if not negative relations with the *Central Sindicato,* was primarily based on their population size, which they estimated to stand at approximately half of the total population of the municipality. This being the case, their demand for greater power over the LPP resources was not without certain justification.

To a lesser degree there were similar concerns expressed in both Pocanche and Charawayto. Although the *campesino* union in Charawayto felt it would benefit from the planning of local development initiatives as a result of the Popular Participation funds, non-union members in the community were less sure. Indeed, it seemed that non-peasant union members of Charawayto had not been invited to participate in the formulation of the Annual Development Plan (PAO). Similarly, neither the communities of Pocanche nor Kamí had been invited to participate in the PAO and did not know the details subsequently contained within it.

Who then did participate in the 1996 PAO? From records of those in attendance at the initial meetings, Independencia town itself was relatively well-represented. The

approximately 150 strong meeting was dominated by both notable urban citizens, church officials, NGO representatives, and members of the *Campesino Sindical*. Complaints that all communities within the region were not equally represented were borne out, and, further, there appeared to be a very low participation of women during the formulation of the Plan. Of the total number of people recorded in attendance at the meeting, fewer than 7% were female[21].

Indeed, overall the study appears to bear out that, other than Torres, few women had been involved in the LPP process in the region. Although there exists a women's *Campesina* union group, '*Bartelina Sisa*', this arm of the peasant workers union appeared to command little power or status either within or beyond the overwhelmingly male union hierarchy. The consensus amongst both men and women questioned tended to be that politics remains firmly a man's domain, and that the LPP belongs within this realm. Furthermore, those community groups granted the official status as Territorial Base Organisations (OTBs) were wholly male dominated, territorially-based union or neighbourhood organisations, such as the *Juntas Vecinales* or the *campesino sindicatos*. Those female-dominated groups in existence in the region tended to be socially or functionally, rather than territorially based, such as *Clubes de Madres* and other family-based income generation collectives, thus precluding them from being recognised as OTBs. In this sense, one could argue that the LPP process itself is inherently biased against women's significant participation, or at the very least, that the LPP has not actually encouraged women's increased

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[21] Official records, Town Hall, Independencia, July 1996.

participation in political, decision-making spheres to the extent proclaimed in the theoretical rhetoric[22]

Initial Conclusions

The case of Independencía, then, illustrates the ways in which the implementation of developmental reform may diverge quite dramatically from its original purported theoretical intention. Written into the LPP legislation is an explicit element of gender awareness, with the more implicit intention that the reform should encourage a gendered equality of participation in decision-making processes at the municipal level. However, despite the nominal gender awareness existent within the text of the legislation itself, the LPP may be seen as an example of the ways in which development initiatives may merely attempt to 'tag gender on' to a pre-existing theoretical structure[23]. In the case of Independencía it seems clear that the initial impacts of Popular Participation did not, despite the rhetoric, make any great in-roads into significantly greater gendered equality within the political sphere. Although the reform has radically shaken traditional power relations within the region, this shake up has occurred largely in the realm of class rather than gender relations.

It is evident that within Independencía degrees of inverse co-optation have occurred. The urban-based power hierarchy lost control of the municipality to that of the peasant worker's union, and the rural population found themselves breaking down the traditional urban hegemony. In this sense at least a process of rural democratisation

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[22] For a more detailed examination of this issue refer to chapter 8.

has undoubtedly taken place. However, as to whether the reform has proved to be a radical force for participatory 'people's power' or merely a process of decentralisation of prebendalistic relations, the answer lies not in clear waters. Although there exists a greater degree of participation in the planning of local development initiatives as a result of the LPP, the process has a long way to go before it comes close to the radical potential of Popular Participation. For those who fell between the camps of both the urban elite and the *sindicato,* there was a palpable fear that through the LPP they have merely seen the replacement of one set of power relations with another equally clientalistic hierarchy.

As to whether the Law has provided opportunities for the recognition and strengthening of diverse traditions of social organisation, or further eroded and homogenised these traditions, again the answer is not a simple one. By strengthening the power of the predominantly Quechuan peasant workers union, the reform has accorded this indigenous-*campesino* form of social organisation greater official recognition and legitimation in the national arena. However, that the reform is written and conducted in Spanish rather than Quechuan, and that it was conceived by a collection of majoritively non-indigenous elite employees of the central government, could be seen, rather, as encouraging the homogenisation of diverse traditions.

Furthermore, when examined from a specifically gender and development perspective, the case of the implementation of the LPP in Independencía demonstrates that the reform missed the opportunity to incorporate an effective gender awareness into the

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[23] For a comprehensive and useful collection which focuses upon women's relative exclusion and differential forms of inclusion in political processes of democratisation throughout the world refer to

process. Although Independencía boasts a female councillor, a relatively rare occurrence within the Bolivian political arena, her election as a woman was not unequivocal. Indeed it occurred more as a result of specific factors and despite existent obstacles to women's participation, rather than because the practical implementation of the LPP explicitly encouraged gender equality of participation.

On the whole, although being seen as a positive, potentially radical and democratising measure, which can be argued to have benefited both men and women (particularly those involved in or whose allegiance lies with the *campesino* union), within the LPP process there can be seen examples of marginalisation of women's participation. Such examples serve to illustrate the ways in which social policy and development initiatives continue to fail to wholly incorporate an explicit gender analysis within their development planning framework. The final chapter draws together the arguments posited throughout the study and considers the extent to which the LPP has increased democratisation and levels of citizenship for various sectors of Bolivian society. In particular I return to consider which of the hypothetical scenarios outlined at the outset of this thesis (in chapter 3) appears to reflect most accurately the experiences of the the Law in terms of gender, class, and the position of indigenous-*campesinos*.

'International perspectives on Gender and Democratisation' edited by Shirin Rai (2000).

Chapter 10

Conclusions:

The LPP as Revolution or

Reconfiguration of the Same Old Story?

When placed within the broader context of Bolivia's contemporary political history, the LPP, as part of a raft of decentralising reforms introduced by the MNR administration in 1994, can be seen as a further element of the cyclical nature of Bolivian reformism. As outlined in chapter 2, the MNR party headed by Paz Estenssoro took power in 1952 and led the National Revolution, extending citizenship rights and introducing electoral democracy. Paz Estenssoro again introduced the neo-liberal reforms of the mid-1980's under the auspices of the MNR's New Economic Policy. Based on a typical IMF adjustment package, the NEP involved radical economic reform and a dramatic restructuring (*capitalización*/privatisation) which involved the selling off of 50% of state sector industries and, for the first time, established a basic pension for all Bolivian nationals over the age of 18. Whilst the neo-liberal policies of the 1980s seemed a far cry from the social-democratic reformism of the 1950s, the LPP, introduced in the mid-1990s as part of a package of political reforms, was heralded as a return to the process of national enfranchisement first witnessed following the 1952 revolution. In this way, the LPP forms part of the latest MNR-led 'revolution'.

The question is, as Emmerij (1998) has elsewhere asked, whether these cycles of reform are indicative of a state of permanent revolution *or* permanent failure, or a state of permanent revolution *and* permanent failure? Whilst the answer to this question is beyond the scope of this thesis, what I have attempted to answer is whether or not the LPP constitutes a genuinely revolutionary potential for democratisation in Bolivia. In particular, the aim of this thesis has been to critically evaluate the impacts of popular participation for various sectors of Bolivian society, specifically marginalised groups of indigenous-*campesinos*, and women within these groups.

As I have argued throughout the thesis, the answer to this question is by no means uniform or straightforward. In this concluding chapter I return to the hypotheses set out at the beginning of the work, presenting arguments, based on the research evidence outlined throughout, in support of each of the three potential scenarios:

- the more sceptical interpretation which emphasises Bolivia's long tradition of 'modernising incorporation', the extension of prebendalism, and minimal change in terms of gendered equality of political participation;

- the more positive perspective which focuses on the potential for inverse co-option and increased recognition of Bolivia's ethno-cultural diversity and genuine advancements in women's enfranchisement;

- a mixed or neutral scenario, regionally differentiated, incorporating elements of both the above hypotheses or with little or no perceived impact as a result of the LPP upon the *status quo*.

This chapter takes each scenario in turn, expands upon them and provides evidence in support of each. I end by suggesting why I have argued for the third scenario and indicating the ways in which I see the research itself as having in some small way contributed to the realisation of the initial goals of participatory enfranchisement as envisaged by the creators of the Law.

Scenario I: The LPP as a 'Revolution' Doomed to Failure

The sceptical interpretation of the LPP is largely based upon the following two arguments:

- *Bolivia's long tradition since Independence of 'modernising incorporation', coupled with the powerful role exercised since 1952 of prebendal[1] or clientalistic forms of politics.* 'Modernising incorporation' refers to processes which increase the unity and coherence of the national state by absorbing the culture and forms of organisation of the country's indigenous majorities and minorities, in a clearly subordinate position, into those of the dominant Western-Christian tradition. Clientalism is important as the source of an effective mechanism of 'modernising incorporation' under contemporary

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[1] The expression refers to arrangements in which public offices or leadership positions gives access to illegitimate income, and can come to be pursued primarily for that reason.

conditions, because of the way it facilitates the co-option of the leaders of formerly autonomous organisations. First, 'modern' forms of organisation are adopted by traditional communities in their desire to gain access to the benefits offered by the national state (peasant unions, mothers' clubs, indigenous peoples' movements, etc.). Then, these are incorporated into a dependent role as a result of the co-option of their leaderships by the dominant political forces of the day (the military, political parties, etc.).

This first scenario remains a possibility as a future potential outcome, however, it was too early in the life of the LPP at the time of the research for this to have been clearly demonstrated one way or the other. In Independencía, for example, it may be the case that the new municipal leaders, who have 'borrowed' national political parties through which to stand for election and gain power at the municipal level, may in the future find themselves tempted by the power provided by these new avenues towards national political prominance. They may choose to some extent to 'abandon' their *campesino/sindicato* origins in favour of following the party-line of their adopted party with ambitions towards greater political prominence within national political structures.

Similarly, in Independencía, in terms of clientalism, it was alleged that the *campesino-sindicato* were employing 'strong arm' tactics to secure their vote amongst the rural *campesino* population. Thus, whilst it is evident that degrees of inverse co-option have occurred in Independencía, it is as yet unclear whether the reform has proved to be a radical force for participatory people's power, or merely a decentralisation of prebendalistic relations. Indeed, for those who fell between the

camps of both the urban elite and the *sindicato* there is a palpable fear that through the LPP they have merely seen a replacement of one set of power relations with another clientalistic hierarchy.

In Moxos, on the other hand, indigenous groups did not initially take advantage of the LPP due to their structural situation and, in particular, the long history of disenfranchisement they have experienced. This was coupled with the national Indigenous, or *Katarista,* Movement's initial suspicion of the reform and therefore initial rejection of indigenous participation within it. The result was that the LPP gave further power to existing *Mestizo* urban elites.

Moreover, participatory planning was limited and did little to shift local power dynamics. If anything it increased the power of existing elites and exacerbated the rivalry between non-indigenous political factions (MNR/ADN). The production of the annual plan (PAO) in 1995 was slow and problematic, although the *Mestizo* mayor went through the motions of producing the PAO. He nominally 'consulted' the (all-male) heads of indigenous local *Cabildos* but without wider consultation or participation. Hence the 1995 PAO did not reflect the needs and concerns of all, and particularly the non-dominant sectors of the population. Then, in 1996, no attempts at participatory planning, however notional, were made and neither were any of the previous year's PAO projects implemented. Furthermore, the LPP funds were calculated, through a process of clever machinations, such that the largely non-indigenous urban populations - standing at less than 30% of the overall population of the municipality - were assigned 91% of LPP resources.

All of this suggests that, initially at least, in this region the LPP had very little impact either upon the existing prebendalistic relations of the urban *Mestizo* elite, or upon the basic political and economic structures which perpertuate indigenous peoples' disenfranchisement and continued servitude. As with the failure of the Law to fully incorporate a gender analysis from inception to implementation, the failure of the LPP in Moxos may be put down to a lack of a critical analysis and engagement with the underlying socio-cultural, economic and political structures of the region.

- *Attempts to facilitate the equal participation of men and women extend little further than the text of the Law itself.* This is due to the failure of the Law to address the underlying structural inequalities which dictate that the public/political sphere remains a predominantly male domain.

Support for this contention may be seen in the evidence and discussion presented in chapters 4, 7, 8 and 9. As I argued in these chapters, it is clear that a critical gender analysis of the kind advocated by a Gender and Development approach (GAD) - as outlined in chapter 7 - was neither present in the initial formulation of the LPP nor in its implementation. Rather it was more a case of 'tagging women' on to development. Thus, for example, I noted in chapter 4, how no notice was taken, either in the formulation or implementation of the LPP, of the relative 'time-poverty' of women compared to men, the latter of whom are normatively entitled to 'leisure time' in which they can engage in political pursuits. I also noted how no attempt was made within the context of the LPP - such as might have been done by setting specific targets for women's involvement in OTB's (see chapter 8) - to redress normative

male attitudes that women do not want to be involved in politics or that major public decision making processes were a male domain.

Indeed, as outlined in detail in chapter 8, the LPP might in fact be seen as further contributing to the marginalisation of women's involvement in community decision-making and planning. This is because on the one hand, the LPP discriminates against women's social/functional community groups, such as, the *Clubes de Madres*, by defining them, as opposed to, for example, the (male dominated) *Juntas Vecinales*, as 'non-territorial' organizations which do not qualify for OTB status.

Moreover, an unforseen consequence of the LPP - one which I would suggest was a result of the largely gender-blind approach to development - was that as more power was accorded to local groups, what was previously defined as female or feminised space because of its low status and association with local communities, has increasingly become a contested domain. It also potentially leads to a further polarization of men's and women's groups, the reinforcement of male domination and a further reduction in the status of women's roles and work within the community.

Finally, the one success story of a the way in which the LPP facilitated the enfranchisement of an individual woman into the political sphere presented in chapter 9 remains somewhat equivocal. In the case of Virginia Torres, a *campesina* woman who was elected to municipal office in the 1995 mayoral elections in Independencía, it is unclear whether her victory was enabled through the reforms engendered by the LPP or whether it was a product of local political machinations and the credence given to her due to her marriage to a former Minister of Agriculture.

It would appear, then, that there is a relatively strong case to be made in support of this first scenario. In terms of the arguments posited within this - modernising incorporation, the decentralisation of prebendalism and the inefficacy of the thrust towards gender equality - the shortcoming of the LPP lay largely in its lack of an integrative approach. By lack of integration, I am referring to the ways in which the reform appeared to envisage popular participation in isolation from wider social processes and thus failed to redress basic political, economic, cultural and gender inequalities. Moreover, there is a certain irony in as much as the reform which advocated popular participation was, the evidence suggests, neither participatory in its formulation (although there were arguably strategic reasons for this) nor genuinely participatory during the phase of implementation.

Scenario II: The LPP as a Revolution in the Making

On the other hand, the more positive or sanguine view tends to stress one or more of the following:

- *The relatively rich social fabric and political culture that has been formed in Bolivia through the interaction between these efforts towards dependent incorporation, and the resistance and counter-strategies they have incited. Significant possibilities now exist within Bolivian politics for forms of 'reverse co-optation' in which traditional communities and mass organisations succeed in turning the tables on their 'patrons', the political parties.* The process of 'incorporation', it is argued, has always been a two-sided game, with

considerable scope for strategising and mutual deception on both sides. As a result, the organisations of the indigenous majorities and minorities have considerably greater real autonomy and capacity for self-determination than appears at first sight. In the competitive, post-Cold War political system now established in Bolivia, it is suggested, there are new - limited but important - opportunities for oppressed groups, including potentially at least, gender-based movements, and women in particular, to impose their demands on political parties in a real and effective way.

In terms of reverse co-optation, the case of Independencía provides a clear example of the potential for indigenous-*campesino* groups to subvert the old hierarchies and reverse the pre-LPP power structures. While, as mentioned above, it is not clear whether this will merely constitute a new form of clientalistic hierarchy, nevertheless, the fact remains that the old urban *Mestizo* power brokers were overthrown by the *campesino sindicato*, leading to the installation of 2 *campesino-sindicato* councillors and a *campesino-sindicato* leader to the office of mayor in the Alcaldía, plus one non-*sindicato* aligned *campesina* councillor.

During the initial stages of LPP implementation indigenous groups in Moxos, on the other hand, failed to seize the opportunities presented through the reform. Nevertheless, during fieldwork in July 1996, it became clear that the region's *Katarista* Movement was waking up to the potential benefits accorded through the LPP. They were also planning to present their own candidates in future municipal elections and thus directly challenge the power of the non-indigenous elites. So, despite the continuing structural inequalities which conspire against them and which

the Law has done little to address, the indigenous population of this Amazonian region may yet be able to use the LPP as a tool for inverse cooptation as did the *campesino-sindicatos* in Independencía.

In terms of the possibilities for greater gender equality, as I indicated in chapter 8, some women are beginning to use the avenues created through the LPP to make their own political and social demands and exert leverage into the cracks opened up by the reform. For example, in Entre Rios in the southern Department of Tarijia, the Sub-Secretariat of Gender Affairs worked together with local NGOs, the Guarani women's organisation and the Assembly of Guarani People (APG) to publicise the opportunities available under the LPP and challenge many traditional relationships of class and gender oppression along indigenous lines.

In Cochabamba, the women's NGO, IFFI, held a series of capacity-building training workshops for women to raise awareness of their rights, responsibilities and opportunities under the Law. This led to women in the *barrio* of Ville Sebastian Pagador to submit plans for a community and training centre into the 1996 PAO. Whilst not ultimately funded through the LPP, it led to the women directly approaching the municipal Mayor, with IFFI taking an advocacy role. The women explained that the LPP funds in their neighborhood did not stretch to those initiatives deemed 'non-essential', and the Mayor eventually agreed to support the project with 50% of the necessary funds if they were able to raise the other half. The point being here that the LPP provided impetus for these women's action. As a further example, in Sucre, capital of the Department of Chuquisaca, the Mayor, responding to a climate

created by the LPP, explicitly encouraged women's participation in municipal planning for the first time in the municipality's history.

In summary, while the initial implementation of the LPP across the country was by no means uniform in terms of promotion of gender equality, these examples demonstrate the possibilities opened up by the Law for women's increased participation in decision-making in community politics and development. Furthermore, as the fieldwork demonstrated, once aware of their rights, women felt more than capable of full participation, including taking up leadership roles, and in this were beginning to challenging the normative private/public spatial dichotomy and, within this, men's assumptions that women did not wish to be actively involved in the political sphere.

Scenario III: The LPP as Both Revolution and Failure.

The third scenario incorporates a combination of both of the above hypotheses. The resulting outcomes may include both negative and positive potentialities of the reform in regional variation, or else lead to little tangible or effective change in the *status quo*. As previously indicated I would argue that, in accordance with scenario III, the implications of the LPP do incorporate elements of each hypotheses. As the case studies demonstrate, whilst there are positive spaces for change through the Law, with increased opportunities for participatory enfranchisement of marginalised groups, such changes are inevitably mediated by the historical conditions under which the Law was conceived and has been implemented.

For the first time under the LPP, formal and legal recognition of indigenous forms of community organisation exists upon registration of, for example, *Ayllus*, *Cabildos*, and other indigenous-*campesino* groups as OTBs. Under the LPP, this formal recognition is then followed by the allocation of relative power and resources with which to instigate positive participatory initiatives in their localities. Moverover, while the Law failed to address some of the basic underlying structural inequalities, it came as part of a package of reforms, some of which similarly affected the indigenous population in a generally positive way. For example, in 1994 the Bolivian constitution was amended to recognise indigenous community land, culture, language, authorities, norms and customs (Article 171). This was cemented by the Law of INRA introduced in 1996 which put a break on the accumulation of 'unproductive' land for agri-business, and demarcated indigenous lands. This meant that small rural properties gained some legal protection and became the indivisible and permanent property of indigenous groups, except in the case of 'works for public use'.

Again in 1994, the Sub-Secretariat of Ethnic Affairs was created, whose task was to ensure that there was a positive inter-cultural and ethnic focus in government legislation. The Sub-Secretariat was also involved in the implementation of the 1994 Education Reform which introduced inter-cultural and bi-lingual education. The legislation itself, as is the case with the LPP, is of course merely a first step which without the necessary accompanying resources and continuing pressure for change, may remain largely rhetorical.

On the other hand, in the subsequent 1997 national elections, former dictator General Banzer was elected as head of a coalition government, and his critics claim that since

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taking power the political climate has not been conducive to the encouragement of democratisation and the extension of citizenship rights (as outlined chapters 2, 3, 5 & 6). This is not to say that the previous MNR administration led by Sánchez de Lozada could not similarly be charged with an underlying authoritarianism. Indeed, this makes the introduction of potentially far-reaching democratisation measures during his Presidency seem somewhat incongruous when placed within the broader socio-economic and political context.

This continuing authoritarianism of contemporary administrations underlines the central problematic surrounding the introduction of the LPP as highlighted in the first hypothesis detailed above; namely the failure of politicians to address the underlying social structures which to a large extent continue to be reproduced despite attempts at the implementation of democratising measures. The problem being that given the nature of the structural framework, in order for such reforms to have a truly radical impact in the longer term, it is not sufficient to simply 'tag on' these measures without fundamentally dismantling the framework itself. This is similar to what has already been argued with respect to gender, that it is not sufficient simply to 'tag women on' to development initiatives without tackling the underlying bases of gender inequalities. However, in each case, this is unlikely to happen given the vested interest of the (male) power-brokers in Bolivian society in the current political and economic situation.

Nevertheless, I would argue that despite these structural obstacles to *de facto* change, once set in motion, the LPP will (and has) create(d) something of a 'snowball effect'. In other words, it will provide people with a sense of empowerment and greater

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control over their own 'development' combined with tangible increases in formal political power for previously disenfranchised groups. During the recent 'water riots', for instance, I was in correspondence with a resident *Cochabambina* who commented that:

"I blame it all on Popular Participation! Now people are expecting to have more of a say in things. They feel that they have the right to decide about what happens in their barrios, and I suppose it's true, they do now don't they?" (Holly Hanzel, Cochabamba, September 2000).

In this way, I would argue that, once set in motion, such perceptual and actual changes in 'popular participation' will raise expectations and levels of involvement amongst community, indigenous and *campesino* groups which cannot be entirely revoked regardless of any future attempts by the state or regional elites to retract the advances made by the reform. Just as importantly, commitment exists amongst both women and men at local and regional levels throughout the country to ensure that the Law of Popular Participation can be used as a tool to strengthen local level decision-making, and within this, to promote greater opportunities for gender equality in participative planning.

I also feel that the process of the research itself went some way towards redressing the lack of participation experienced by people within the communities in which I worked during the initial implementation of the LPP - albeit on a very small scale. Inevitably the research, like the Law, could never claim to be completely participatory or dialogic, and was underpinned by relations of power between the

researcher/researched. Nevertheless, the hope is that, like the Law, the research is not

entirely negated by these problematics.

Appendix 1: List of People Interviewed (La Paz, Moxos, Independencía, Cochabamba)

Interviews took place in La Paz between December-February, 1995/6, in Moxos between June-July 1996, in Independencia between July-August 1996, and in Cochabamba between March-September 1997. The interviews are listed in alphabetical order with the site of the interview alongside the participant's name:

Eduardo Abularach Vaca, Honorable Alcalde de San Ignacio de Moxos, Bení

Xavier Albó, Anthropologist, Centro de Invesitgación y Promoción del Campesino (CIPCA), La Paz

Marciel Altamira, Miner, Empresa Soladita, Sívingani, Municipality of Independecía

Johnny Antezana, Architect, Offices of Popular Participation, Cochabamba

Ivan Arias Durán, Unidad de Análisis e Investigación, Secretaria Nacional de Participación Popular, La Paz

Valerio Arias, Dirigente, OTB/Junta Vecinal, Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba

Rubén Ardaya Salinas, Director de Fortalecimiento Municipal, Secretaria Nacional de Participación Popular, La Paz

Maximo Ajuacho, Teacher, Independencía

Enrique Bellot, Dirigente, OTB/Junta Vecinal, Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba

Honorato Chambi, President of OTB/Junta Vecinal, Member of Vigilance Committee, Ville Sebastian Pagador, Cochabamba

Fernando Calderón, Advisor to the Resident Representative, UNDP, La Paz

Luz Marie Calvo Carmona, Sub-Secretaria de Asuntos Etnicos, Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, La Paz

Carlos Carafa, COTESU, Coordinador del Grupo DRU, La Paz

Enrique Carlejas, Economist, Department of Education, Offices of Popular Participation, Cochabamba

Ricardo Catoira, Sub-Secretaría de Asuntos Etnicos, San Ignacio de Moxos, Bení

Matias Cayuba, Sub-Central, TIPNIS, San Ignacio de Moxos, Bení

Victor Hugo Causaya, Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social (CERES), Cochabamba

Gonzalo Cegaran, Director of Radio Ayopayamant, Independencía

Marcelina Chaves, Secretaria de la Alcaldía, Independencía

Rogelio Chivaca, Director, Gobierno del TIM, San Ignacio de Moxos, Bení

Carl Circa, Director, Iniciativas Democràticas, USAID, La Paz

Desiderio Coca Garnica, Sub-Prefectura Interna, Independencía

Club de Madres, (Gaby, Magda, Irene, Lourdes Sonia, Giovana), Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba

Club de Madres, (Lidia, Rosario, Roxana, Marisel), Ville Sebastian Pagador, Cochabamba

Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinas (CSUTCB), members of women's section, La Paz

Edgar Dávalos, PRODEMO, Presidente, Comité de Vigilancia, Sab Ignacio de Moxos, Bení

Róger Durán Gallozo, Preident, Electoral Court, San Igancio de Moxos, Bení

Jose Durán Guillén, Asesor de Capaciones, Fondo de Inversión Social, La Paz

Ivonne Farah, Sub-Secretaria de Asuntos de Génerro, Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, La Paz

Marcial Fabricano Noé, Presidente, Confederación Indígena del Oriente, Chaco y Amazonia de Bolivia (CIDOB), La Paz

Lucio Flores, Sub-Central, TIPNIS, San Ignacio de Moxos, Bení

Mario Garnica, Concejal: Presidente del Consejo (IU)

Juan Gaulima, CPIB, San Ignacio de Moxos, Bení

Angel Gonzalez, Vice-President, OTB/Junta Vecinal, Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba

Elva Guerra, Encargada de Participación Popular, Alacaldía, Cochabamba

José Guaseve, President, CPIB, San Ignacio de Moxos, Beni

Mauricio Guaji, Sub-Central, TIPNIS, San Ignacio de Moxos, Beni

Olivia Harris, Anthropologist, on leave from Goldsmith's College, University of London, La Paz

Nicanor Huanca, Dirigente, OTB/Junta Vecinal, Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba

Enrique Jordá, Priest, San Ignacio de Moxos, Beni

Roberto Laserna, Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social (CERES), Cochabamba

Rosario León, Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social (CERES), Cochabamba

René Lima, Dirigente, OTB/Junta Vecinal, Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba

Román Loayza, Secretario Ejecutivo, Federación de Sindicatos de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba, Cochabamba

Osvaldo Lupe, Director, Casa Comunal, District 14, Cochabamba

Segundino Lupe, Member OTB/Junta Vecinal, Ville Sebastian Pagador, Cochabamba

Cupertino Mamani, Secreatria General del Central Sindical Campesina Unical del Provincia Ayopaya, Independencía

Patricio Mamani, Concejo: Vice-Presidente, IU, Independencía

Bernadino Medrano, Secretary, Sub-Central, Independencía

Tania Melgar, CIDDEBENI, San Ignacio de Moxos, Beni

Walter Mercado Zedano, Oficial de Generación de Ingresos, UNICEF, La Paz

Ramiro Molina Rivero, Secretario Nacional de Asuntos Etnicos, de Género y Generacionales, Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, La Paz

Wilder Molina, CIDDEBENI, San Ignacio de Moxos, Beni

Humberto Montán, Oficial Mayor del Alcaldía de Independencía, Independencía

Victor Montán, Vice-President of the Centro Cultural Ayopayamanta, Independencía

Osvaldo Montaño Arce, Director de Gestión Territorial, Alcaldía, Cochabamba

Sonia Montaño, formerly Sub-Secreatria de Asuntos de Género, Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, La Paz

Winston Moore, Journalist/Economist/Consultant to Ministry of Capitalisation, La Paz

Virgilio Moy, Sub-Central, TIPNIS, San Ignacio de Moxos, Bení

Menanio Noza, Sub-Central, TIPNIS, San Igancio de Moxos, Bení

Aydé Orihuela, commerciante, Independencía

Benjamin Paredes, NGO worker in N.Potosí, La Paz

José Antonio Peres Arenas, Director, Centro de Estudios y Proyectos (CEP), La Paz

Quintatí Knitting Group (Flor, Alicia), Ville Sebastian Pagador, Cochabamba

Luis Ramirez Velarde, Asesor General, Secretaria Nacional de Participación Popular, La Paz

Residents (Felicia, Dolores, Carmen, Augustino, Jorge) Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba

Roberto Ribero, Director de Fortalecimiento Municipal, Prefectura, San Ignacio de Moxos, Bení

Jan Robberts, Agencia Sueca de Cooperación Internacional (ASDI), La Paz

David Rodriguez, Presidente de la Coperativa de Mineros, Kamí, Municipality of Independencía

Sundalio Rodriguez, Foundation for Self Management and the Environment (FUPAGEMA), Independencía

Gonzalo Rojas Ortuste, Director, Unidad de Análisis e Investigación, Secretaria Nacional de Participación Popular, La Paz

Raul Rojas, President, OTB/Junta Vecinal, Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba

Petrona Salinas, Accountant, Alcaldía, Independencía

Mario Sanchez, Coordinator, OTB/Junta Vecinal, Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba

Filemón Sandoval, Asesor Jurídico, CEJIS, San Ignacio de Moxos, Bení

Godofredo Sandoval, Director, Sinergia, La Paz

Ricardo Sandoval, Concejo (MNR), Independencía

Padre Pascual Sarchí, Priest, Independencía

Victor Silvia, Presidente, Comité de Vigilancia, Independencía

Carlos Toranzo Roca, Coordinador Areas Política y Eco-Social, Instituto Latinamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (ILDIS), La Paz

Moisés Torres, Honortable Alcalde de Independencía, Consejo Izquierda Unida (IU), Independencía

Virginia Torres, Concejo (MBL) Independencía

Mario Triago, Administrative Director, casa Comunal, District 2, Cochabamba

Josephina Valver de Velasquo, member of the Civic Committee, Independencía

Ricardo Vasquez, President, OTB.Junta Vecinal, Central, Independecía

Alejo Velasquez, Dirigente, OTB/Junta Vecinal, Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba

Alejo Véliz, President, Asamblea para la Sobranía de los Pueblos (ASP), Cochabamba

Madre Verana, Coordinator of the Social Centre, Independencía

Carmen Zabalaga, Coordinator, Instituto de Formación Feminina Integral (IFFI), Cochabamba

Ricarda Zamorana, Vocal, OTB/Junta Vecinal, Barrio Colquiri, Cochabamba

Appendix 2: Participatory Workshops

Municipality of San Ignacio de Moxos, Bení:

Members of the Comunidad San Salvador
Members of the Comundad Mercedes del Cabito
Members of the Comunidad El Retiro
Members of the Comunidad San Francisco

Municipality of Independencía:

Central Campesina, Charawayto
Central Sindical, Charwayto
Junta Vecinal, Charawayto
Central Campesina, Independencía
Cooperative Minera, Kamí
Club de Madres, Kamí
Central Sindical, Pocanche

Municipality of Cochabamba:

Junta Vecinal/OTB, Barrio Colquiri
Club de Madres, Barrio Colquiri
Residents of Barrio Colquiri
Junta Vecinal/OTB, Ville Sebastian Pagador
Club de Madres, Ville Sebastian Pagador
Quintatí Women's Knitting Group, Ville Sebastain Pagador
Talleres de Capacitaciónes de las Mujeres, IFFI, Cercado, Cochabamba

Appendix 3: List of Acronyms

AAITP	Amazon Alliance for Indigenous and Traditional Peoples
ADN	Acción Democrática Nacionalista
APG	Asamblea del Pueblo Guaraní
ASP	Asociación para la Sobranía de los Pueblos
CAJ	Comisión Andina de Juristas
CBO	Community-Based Organisations
CEDOIN	Centre of Documentation and Information (Bolivia)
CERES	Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social
CIDOB	Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano
CIEL	Centre for International and Environment Law
CIMI	Indian Missionary Council (Brazil)
CIPCA	Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado
COB	Central Obrera Boliviana
COICA	Coordinating Body for the Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin
CONAIE	Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador
CONDEPA	Conciencia de Patria
CONICH	Chortí Indigenous Council (Honduras)
CONPAH	Coordinating Council of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras
COPIN	Civic Committee of Grassroots and Indigenous Organisations (Honduras)

CPIB	Central Indigenous de Pueblos del Bení
CRIC	Indigenous Regional Council of Colombia
CSUTCB	Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia
CV	Comité de Vigilancia
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EZLN	Zapatista Army of national Liberation
FENATRILIH	National Federation of Tribes for the Liberation of the Honduran Indian
FIS	Fondo de Inversión Social
FRUTCA	Federación Rural Unica de Trabajadores del Campo de Cochabamba
FSB	Falange Socialista Bolivians
FTPB	Bolivian Federation of Press Workers
FUPAGEMA	Foundation for Self Management and the Environment
GNP	Gross National Product
IFFI	Instituto de Formación Feminina Integral
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INA	National Agrarian Institute
IU	Izquierda Unica
LPP	Ley de Participación Popular
MBL	Movimiento Bolivia Libre
MIR	Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionario

MNR	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MRTKL	Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Katari de Liberación
NEP	New Economic Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OMTC	International Organisation Against Torture
OTB	Organización Territorial de Base
PAO	Plan Annual Operativo
PM-C	Pacto Militar-Campesino
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
RUN	Registro Unico Nacional
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SNPP	Secretaría Nacional de Participatión Popular
UCS	Unidad Cívica de Solidaridad
UDP	Unión Democrática y Popular
UNICEF	United Nations' Children's Fund
YPFB	Yacimientos Petrolíferas Fiscales de Bolivia

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