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THE RIGHT “TO KNOW HOW TO UNDERSTAND”: COLONIALITY AND
CONTESTING VISIONS OF DEVELOPMENT AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE TIMES
OF NEO-LIBERAL CIVILITY

by

CARMEN MEDEIROS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New
York

2005

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

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Carmen Medeiros

Adviser: Professor Vincent Crapanzano

This study, based on multi-sited ethnographic research, explores the actions and motivations of the various actors involved in the development encounter: indigenous communities, policy makers, and development experts working for development aid agencies. Examining the case of indigenous communities of the Arque Province, in the highlands of Cochabamba, Bolivia, the study focuses on the processes of participatory development planning as undertaken by a German funded rural development program in compliance with the regulations stipulated by the 1993 law for popular participation. The analysis of the reconfiguration of local social / power relations and of the interactions between development experts and the local population shows that the process of implementation of development projects and legal reforms functioned as an arena of contestation where every step of the process was susceptible of contradictory interpretations and where old social / racial / ethnic tensions were recast in new terms.

While the description of the obstacles encountered by Arque indigenous peasants to exert their rights to political participation stipulated by the law reveals the persistence of discriminatory practices from citizen's rights, the description of development planning

events points to the reproduction of power/knowledge asymmetries in spite of 'participatory' planning methodologies and a populist rhetoric promoting local agency. Through the discussion of the ambivalent and contradictory perceptions of and responses to development initiatives, this study argues that in their own situated visions of development, the indigenous local communities articulate their historical experience within modernity and coloniality; denounce what they view as the oppressive terms under which they have been incorporated as citizens of the Bolivian state; and propose to link development and citizenship rights. In the process, these indigenous actors simultaneously redefine the notion of development to include the acquisition of those elements of the dominant knowledge systems that will empower them with the instrumentalities by which to envision a viable future and the reconstruction of the notion of citizenship rights.

Acknowledgements

The intellectual and political preoccupations underlying this study began to take shape while writing my undergraduate thesis in Belgium in the 1980s. Looking at Latin America from Europe, I struggled to define my Latin American-ness and to articulate my perspective as a non-First World (Third World – Latin American) scholar-to-be. Later on, while working in Bolivia as a European-trained social science researcher, I continued to search for ways of addressing connections between the social production of knowledge from/about Latin America and the power/knowledge asymmetries within the world system. Most of all I struggled to understand how Bolivian society (or any Third World society) could be understood in its own terms. Perhaps the most decisive turn on the path of these reflections was my decision to come to New York to study anthropology and thus acquire a third vantage point from which to look at Latin America, this time as part and parcel of the Americas. I have to thank Dr Jorge Dandler with whom I worked in Bolivia for instilling in me a passion for anthropological research and convincing me to apply for graduate school in the US.

It is in the context of the intellectual community fostered by the Graduate Center at the City University of New York that I acquired the theoretical tools to shape my intellectual preoccupations in terms of an academic project with specific research questions. If I was able to articulate my old intellectual preoccupations into an anthropological research on development interventions it is because I found in the work of anthropologist Arturo Escobar a solid frame to approach the study of development as a hegemonic system of representations. The list of those who contributed to my search along this path in Belgium, Bolivia, and New York is endless. I can only do some justice

in acknowledging those whose help and support have been more crucial and directly related to this dissertation.

To begin with, I owe a debt to each member of my committee. Understanding my project even before I was able to produce a coherent account of it, Professor Vincent Crapanzano helped me shape it from the very beginning. He encouraged my desire to place this study at the crossroads of different theoretical frames providing valuable intellectual guidance on how to develop my own synthesis. I am also deeply thankful for the many ways in which he encouraged me to find my own voice through the writing up process. To his creative, permanent, and supportive supervision this final outcome owes so very much. Professor Cindi Katz was also there from the very beginning. In fact I owe my first steps into a critical reflection of development from a 'Third World' perspective to the discussions I had with her, Kimberley Flynn, Mitu Hirshman, Maureen O'Dougherty, and other members of the interdisciplinary collective workshop on 'Feminisms, Post-Modernisms, and the Third World,' held at the Graduate Center throughout the academic year of 1991- 1992. Professor Katz's insightful questions helped me define my research focus. She provided invaluable support at critical moments in the process of writing both the research proposal and the dissertation. From her I also learned to pay attention to the significant knowledge children have of their environment and indeed I not only enjoyed talking and playing with children in Arque, Tacopaya, and Totora Pampa; I also learned quite a bit from them. Professor Maria Lagos' thorough knowledge of peasant societies in general and of peasants in Cochabamba in particular has been a constant source of inspiration in my efforts to understand the complexities of social relations and political struggles in Arque. Furthermore, since she spent most of her

sabbatical year in Cochabamba, I was fortunate to count with her supportive supervision and valuable advice during my first year of fieldwork in Arque. The work of Professor Thomas Abercrombie has expanded my understanding of the ways in which colonial history has shaped contemporary Andean societies and has been a key source of inspiration in my efforts to explore the issue of citizenship, an issue that I did not contemplate in my original research project but emerged forcefully during my fieldwork. Professor Abercrombie constantly encouraged me to think further; his critical questions helped me strengthen my argument, find better ways to present it in this dissertation, and visualize how to further expand it in the future.

In addition, I want to acknowledge the support of my teachers at CUNY who initiated me into the theory and craft of anthropology: the late Professor Eric Wolf and Professors June Nash, Brackett Williams, and Jane Schneider. I am also indebted to Executive Officer, Professor Louise Lennihan for her constant encouragements and support and to Assistant Program Officer Ellen DeRiso for her practical guidance through the logistics of the PhD program.

Funding for graduate school, research, and writing was provided by a number of generous institutions: the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the Inter-American Foundation, the Organization of the American States, the National Science Foundation, and the City University of New York. Also, I am indebted to PROSANA – GTZ for their material and logistic support without which fieldwork in Arque could not have been as extensive and intensive as it was.

The research on which this work is based would not have been possible without the generous participation of the many people in Bolivia who shared their time and

thoughts with me. I am deeply grateful to the women, men, and children of Totora Pampa for giving me the benefit of the doubt and accepting my intrusion into their space. I thank them all as well as the leaders of the *Sub-centrales* and the *Central Sindical Campesina de la Provincia de Arque* for patiently answering my questions and generously sharing their visions, questions, doubts, and hopes. I must specifically thank Vidal Nuñez, Martin Cruz, Donato Delgado, Gerardo Mamani, and the families of Marcelino Clemente, Seledonio Gutierrez, German Sarsuri, Mario Ignacio, Isidro Fuentes, Angel Chino, Zenobio Clemente, Hilarion Clemente, Rene Gutierrez, Eduardo Mamani, Eulogio Mamani, Pedro Clemente, doña Tomasa, and doña Inocencia. In the towns of Arque and Tacopaya, I thank Padre Mario and Padre Luis for their valuable advice and helpful information; Professor Sydney de la Barra for sharing his knowledge of Arque's history and poems in Qhishwa; Sabiniano Cossio, Manuel Rodriguez, Juvenal Perez, Luciano Alanis, and Filemon Bustos for patiently answering my questions; doña Blanquita, doña Ely, doña Flaviana, doña Aurora, doña Filomena, and doña Luisa for sharing their time, their table, and their thoughts, and for trusting me with their personal stories.

I am also deeply indebted to the women and men who formed the staff of the *Programa de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional de la Provincia de Arque* and to the development workers of the non-governmental organizations of PURISANA and PAFKUM with whom I shared fieldwork in Arque. In their different capacities as development experts, office assistants, and field assistants, they contributed to making my research manageable and agreeable. I must specifically thank: Jorge Lozano, Hans Schoeneberger, and Johny Zambrana for their constant and encouraging support and for so generously sharing all the information I could possibly need; agronomists Carlos

Espinoza, Margot Cabrera, and Walther Garcia for teaching me how to read agricultural practices in the landscape; agronomists William Camacho and David for their enthusiastic support, for sharing with me their work in Totora Pampa, and for our heated discussions during the very cold puna evenings; to Yolanda and Elvira for their patience with my obsessions, their help, and their companionship.

In Cochabamba city I thank the *Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Economica y Social* (CERES) for welcoming me as one of them and giving me access to use their library and computer services; my friends and colleagues Pamela Calla, Rosario Leon, Tom Kruse, and Humberto Vargas for their encouraging advice and intellectual feedback; and the families of Maria-Renee Vargas and Michelle Dechelette for so nicely taking care of me each time I arrived from my long journeys tired, starving, and covered in dust. In La Paz, Amalia Anaya, Ricardo Calla, Luz-Maria Calvo, Maria-Elena Canedo, Ana-Maria Lema, Ramiro Molina, Diego Muñoz, Jorrgé Patiño, Xavier Seoane and David Tuchschnider introduced me to the intricacies of the legal reforms and provided valuable background information. Jose Antonio Quiroga, director of the *Centro de Información sobre el Desarrollo*, not only provided very useful documentation, but generously kept me updated by sending me relevant publications while I was writing in New York.

The writing of this thesis benefited greatly from the critical responses, encouraging support, and valuable editorial observations from many very good friends and colleagues. Special thanks to the members of the dissertation workshops coordinated by Professors Crapanzano and Schneider, namely Diana Agosta, Hugo Benavidez, Julia Butterfield, Alcira Forero, Alfredo Gonzalez, Trennie Junghans, Murphy Halliburton,

Guita Ranjbaran, Aseel Sawalha, Jonathan Shannon, and Bea Vidacs. I am also greatly indebted to Susan Paulson, Sam Shrayar, Gretchen Susi, and Betina Zolkower for their rigorous editorial comments of different chapters; to Yvonne Lassalle and Stuart Rockefeller for their wonderful translations of some descriptions that I originally wrote in Spanish and most of the excerpts I quote from the interviews I conducted in Spanish; to Kate Wilson for her so very helpful suggestion to tape-record and guide with her questions my oral descriptions of what I planned to write in some chapters. The ideas presented in this study have greatly benefited from my long-lasting and ongoing conversation with my sharpest critics and very dear friends Maria-Elena Canedo, Trennie Junghans, Agustin Lao, Yvonne Lassalle, Jeffrey Murer, and Betina Zolkower; I also thank Agustin for introducing me to the work of Anibal Quijano.

Last but not least, I wish to thank those friends and family members without whose emotional, moral, material, and in some cases financial support I never would have finished this work nor survived it with some degree of sanity. At a decisive point in the writing process, April Flakne and Ori Dasberg generously invited me to their house in Florida and for three months provided the most loving and caring environment for me to exclusively focus on the dissertation. In New York, sensitive colleagues and loving friends took turns in providing invaluable support at different critical moments: Trennie Junghans, Betina Zolkower, Yvonne Lassalle, Diana Coryat, Liz Miller, Guita Ranjbaran, Maria Caba, Bea Vidacs, Nora Hernandez, Nora Moumtaz, Laura Kaehler, Aseel Sawalha, Kate Wilson, Chris Boyd, Alfredo Gonzalez, Agustin Lao, Raj Pathania, Michael Pelias, Stuart Rockefeller, and Sam Shrayar. Other dear friends and family members provided constant encouragement and help from abroad: Lucia Aramayo,

Cristiana Bastos, Maria Elena Canedo, Michele Dechelette, Pascale Maquestiaux, Barbara de Leonardis, Georges Landau, Gonzalo Mendieta, my nieces Maria-Emilie Lichem, Antonieta Medeiros, and Laure d'Ursel, and my nephews Gustavo and Rodolfo Medeiros. The same is true of my mother Maria Teresa Anaya de Medeiros and my sister Maria Teresa Medeiros-Lichem who, moreover, did everything within and beyond their means to facilitate my writing in New York. I dedicate this dissertation to my mother for her inspiring, persevering courage and to the memory of my father, Gustavo Medeiros, who died in 1998 and who taught me that intellectual endeavors are worthless when divorced from ethical concerns.

FORWARD

I

This dissertation explores different enactments of development discursive and institutional practices in different sites. The material discussed throughout this dissertation is based on ethnographic research conducted in Bolivia between January 1995 and January 1998 and archival research conducted in Germany in July 1999. The focus of my research was a rural development program, PROSANA (Programa de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional de la Provincia Arque, Program for the Food and Nutritional Security of the Arque Province). Designed in 1989 and implemented throughout the 1990s, PROSANA reflected the new orientations taken by development aid agencies after the crisis-ridden 1980s. Unlike the widely criticized top-down style projects of the 1960s and 1970s—which consisted of large scale works and pre-designed modernization packages prepared by foreign experts in faraway offices—PROSANA's working style and stated objectives expressed greater concern with grassroots participation and empowerment, ecological sustainability, self-reliance, cultural differences, and local technologies and forms of knowledge.

Funded by the German and the Bolivian governments through a bilateral agreement of cooperation, PROSANA was administered by a German development agency and a Bolivian governmental institution and implemented by German and Bolivian development experts, and Bolivian project staff and field assistants.¹ The 'target

¹ The German development agency was the GTZ (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit or agency for technical cooperation). The Bolivian governmental institution was initially CORDECO (corporation for

population' or 'beneficiaries' was the rural population of the Arque Province, an out-of-the-way place in the southwestern highlands of the Department of Cochabamba. Thus, as a development project, PROSANA connected a wide diversity of people working at different institutional levels in different settings: donors, policy makers, administrators, experts, fieldworkers, and the men and women of Arque rural villages.

The ethnography of a development project is, necessarily, a multi-sited ethnography for it involves the study of different places, contexts, and moments of the encounter between "developers" and "developees."² Concerned with exploring the asymmetrical power relations that this encounter presupposes and realizes, for my research I visualized a development project as comprising a variety of arenas where different actors embedded in social and power relations and engaged in active or passive forms of domination and resistance continuously negotiate the 'reality' and meanings of 'development.' With this perspective in mind, during the three years I stayed in Bolivia, I conducted fieldwork in the city of La Paz, seat of the Bolivian government, in the city of Cochabamba, capital of the Department of Cochabamba, and in the Province of Arque (also in the Department of Cochabamba), where I lived in the towns of Arque and Tacopaya, and in the village of Totora Pampa. In the summer of 1999 I visited the headquarters of the German development agency GTZ in the town of Eschborn, near Frankfurt, Germany. Chapter 1 provides a description of these sites and of the modalities of my fieldwork in each site.

the regional development of Cochabamba) and later, when this corporation was dissolved, a unit of Cochabamba's prefecture (Unidad de Fortalecimiento Municipal - Prefectura de Cochabamba).

² 'Developers' and 'developees' are to be understood as categorical entities historically constituted and constantly produced / reproduced through the material and discursive practices of 'development.' Development' functions as a discursive practice in that it defines groups of people as "underdeveloped" and

Research at these different sites entailed variable degrees of intensity in participant observation and required different techniques of eliciting information. As Marcus points out when discussing methodological underpinnings of multi-sited ethnography, “not all sites are treated by a uniform set of fieldwork practices of the same intensity. Multi-sited ethnographies inevitably are the product of knowledge bases of varying intensities and qualities” (Marcus 1995: 100). Furthermore, moving from site to site I felt constantly compelled to reposition myself and renegotiate my identity as a researcher. More importantly, moving across sites I became keenly aware of the different ways in which power relations affect the conditions of possibility for ethnographers to impose themselves in the every day life of their informants.

Beyond the challenge of constantly changing fieldwork methods and perspectives, “something of the mystique and reality of conventional fieldwork is lost in the move toward multi-sited ethnography” (Marcus 1995: 100). This move, Marcus further argues, might give rise to some very particular “methodological anxieties.” For example, it was easier for me to feel confident about the quality of my fieldwork and field-notes in those sites where the ‘us – them’ distance / difference was clearly marked and the conditions for conventional fieldwork could be easily established. Indeed, when I lived in the small rural village of Totorá Pampa, I was able to participate in the everyday life of the village and share the daily routine of some families. I would cook with them and eat with them; I would go with the children to gather firewood, herd the sheep, or collect water. I would spend the day in the fields harvesting barley or sowing potatoes. I knew their houses and their fields. Every thing that happened to me from dawn to bedtime was a novelty to

establishes the rationale for its ‘development.’ This approach to development is inspired in the seminal work of Escobar 1984, 1988, 1991, 1995; and Ferguson 1990/1994.

observe, a puzzle to understand, and the object of my own extensive field note-taking. In contrast, when I lived in the city of Cochabamba, I spent many days and many hours in the offices of PROSANA but I never had access to the daily family routine of the development experts working there.

The experience of limiting fieldwork to office hours and gathering information mainly through structured interviews and written texts made me often feel that I was wasting my time, had nothing special to put in my field notes, and was thus gathering information that lacked ethnographic quality. In Totorá Pampa I filled entire notebooks with field notes. In the city, I designed structured questionnaires and filled them up, but the notebooks did not fill as fast. I think the source of my anxiety was the absence of difference, the blurred line between me and them, the difficulty of defining the boundaries between what (outside the office) constituted fieldwork and what did not; what was part of my usual daily city life in a city I knew very well and what should catch my attention because it was part of my ethnography and should be recorded in my field notes.

For example, while living in the city, my Bolivian relatives would often invite me for lunch. Usually I would not consider these events as part of my ethnographic fieldwork; I would simply participate without observing. On one occasion, however, my cousin's husband made a shocking comment about the 'backwardness' of peasants still living in remote highland areas. Imagining --as if taken for granted--that I would agree with him, he said, "those people don't really consider themselves citizens of the Bolivian state, I mean they hardly know that their communities are part of a larger state." Looking at me, he asked rhetorically "right?" and added "traveling to those places is like going

acquaintances from high school or from my years of leftist activism or work in a social science research institution before I started graduate school. To observe them necessarily entailed observing myself. In that sense a good part of the discussion of the popular participation law I develop in chapter two is an insider's critique, or confession. Hanging out with the development workers in PROSANA's office or in Arque, I was also, though in a different way, one of them. Although it was clear that I was there as a researcher / ethnographer and not as a development worker like them, we were both interested in understanding the dynamics of development in Arque. Walking or riding throughout the province, we were all urban professionals working in the countryside. Although they knew that I was there to study PROSANA as much as to study Arque, when we were together it was never clear whether I was observing Arque with them or observing them in Arque. I sometimes felt guilty of betraying them when in the middle of a conversation I started 'interrogating' them or taking notes about what they were saying.

When shifting the focus of my ethnography from the development workers to the people of Arque I thought that my biggest challenge, in relation to the latter, was to establish my identity as an independent researcher. When introducing myself to the leaders of the peasant organization, town dwellers, or the people of Totorá Pampa I always started by saying that I did not work for any development institution but was there to inquire about development projects. That proved to be less difficult than I thought. More precisely, I discovered that from very early on, a rumor had spread out of Arque Town making of me an Italian relative of the Italian priest: a woman walking around on her own with no apparent strings attached (to a controlling husband or demanding family) could only be a foreigner, i.e. a *gringa*. In the end, it did not matter whether I was paid by

a development institution or not, whether I was *gringa* or a Bolivian who walked like a *gringa*. What mattered is that I was not from Arque and therefore my commitment to the people of Arque was suspicious and had to be tested. The biggest challenge turned out to be my difficulty in taking stands while constantly shifting from the *tecnico's* perspective to the peasant's perspective and *vice versa*.

II

Shifting away from debates about models of social change and from the view of development as a desired state not yet attained, in this dissertation I approach the study of development as the study of the discursive and institutional practices³ of the international network of development agencies that, since the 1950s, proliferated throughout the “underdeveloped” areas in the wake of the strategy launched by the “First World” to bring “growth and improvement” to the “Third World.” To refer to this network and its collection of theories, institutions, programs I will use hereafter the notions of development apparatus or machinery (Escobar 1988, 1991, 1995; Ferguson 1994). I place my study in the context of the critical scholarship that has pointed to the asymmetrical power relations between the “First” and the “Third” worlds as constitutive of the development strategy. While earlier critiques situated in the frame of dependency and

³ This approach is based on Escobar's incorporation of a foucauldian perspective into the study of development (first presented in Escobar 1984). Following Foucault's analysis of discursive formations, Escobar proposes “to speak of development as a historically singular experience, the creation of a domain of thought and action, by analyzing the characteristics and interrelations of the three axes that define it: the forms of knowledge that refer to it and through which it comes into being and is elaborated into objects, concepts, theories, and the like; the system of power that regulates its practice; and the forms of subjectivity fostered by this discourse, those through which people come to recognize themselves as developed or underdeveloped. The ensemble of forms found along these axes constitutes development as a discursive formation, giving rise to an efficient apparatus that systematically relates forms of knowledge and techniques of power.” (Escobar 1995:10)

world system theories have contributed to explain the political economy of this strategy, more recent critiques of development as a hegemonic system of representations have enhanced our understanding of how the development machinery operates and succeeds in producing ‘unintended’ power effects.

As an ethnography of a development project, this dissertation is concerned with the power effects of development discursive and institutional practices and the various ways in which the reality of the development encounter is negotiated by those –who willingly or not—are engaged in it. In studying the project’s implementation process I examine both the conceptual and institutional constraints of the development apparatus-- its mechanisms of delineation-- and the ways in which different actors position themselves, move around those constraints tracing different “trajectories” (de Certeau 1984) and appropriating development messages in ways unforeseen by ‘developers.’ I thus explore the practices and perceptions of the different actors involved in the project and their struggle over the meanings of those practices.

III

Unexpected, at least for me, was indeed the answer I got in the village of Totora Pampa when I inquired about the meanings of development. “With development,” I was told, “we will know where to go.” That is to say, development is that which enables to understand how does the world in which we live function and thus to know how to move in that world. As I will explain in the **introduction**, this interpretation establishes a link between development and the command of those hegemonic forms of knowledge that allow citizens of a state not only to understand the rules by which they can assert their

rights but also to understand how those rules are made. I will thus argue that in their appropriation of the messages of development designs, Arque's indigenous peoples establish an inextricable link between unfulfilled promises of equal rights and unfulfilled promises of better life conditions. I will further argue that this appropriation is rooted in a long history of discrimination, disenfranchisement and exclusion from hegemonic forms of knowledge.⁴

Put differently, the unexpected lesson *Arqueños* (Spanish term for people from Arque) taught me is that I could not address the issue of development without addressing its connections to issues of equal rights, in general, and, in particular, of the rights of citizens to access dominant forms of knowledge. This is the reason why the story I chose to tell in this dissertation is the story of the many ways in which the implementation of PROSANA's development projects—despite the good intentions of genuinely though temporarily committed development experts—contributed to reproduce asymmetrical power/knowledge relations, i.e. the old conditions of not knowing where to go.

After a general description of my different field sites (**chapter 1**), I will examine in chapters 2 and 3 the emergence of new arrangements within the discursive field of modernization / development in the context of the transformations that have occurred in Bolivia since the 1980's. The frame for these transformations was defined by the paradoxical and not sufficiently problematized combination of socio-political processes geared towards the consolidation of democracy (after a long period of military

⁴ To provide the historical background supporting this argument, in the appendix I discuss some of the important milestones in the history of the relations between the people who have inhabited the region of Arque and the larger societies / states of which they have been a part since colonial times.

dictatorships) and neo-liberal economic policies for structural adjustment in response to the debt crisis and pressures from international financial institutions.

Chapter 2 outlines the set of legal reforms through which the 1993–97 government intended to construct a “New Bolivia,” one that was to be a modern, democratic, and multicultural state. These reforms claimed to address demands expressed by the social movements of the 1980s, principally regional and local autonomy, the right of indigenous people to cultural self-determination, ethnic and gender equity, and environmental sustainability. Discussing the critical decade of the 80’s, I will argue that the reforms of the 90’s are best understood as both the outcome of a ‘correction’ process that started in the mid-1980’s and the expression of a new historical configuration within which new social subjects are being constituted and new versions of modernity (modernization / development) are being forged. The components of the vision of a ‘New Bolivia’ included an efficient, decentralized administration, a strong civil society, and a responsible, actively participatory citizenry. The Law for Popular Participation (LPP) was one of the main instruments through which these components were to be enforced. Promoted as part of the project of decentralization, the LPP was the least controversial and most celebrated of the reforms. As it defined local populations as agents of their own development, the law was presented as the most efficient vehicle through which to ultimately achieve the ‘development’ of ‘underdeveloped’ rural communities. The effective application of the LPP was substantially supported by multilateral and bilateral development agencies. Since PROSANA was directly involved in the application of this law, the discussion of PROSANA’s role and work in chapters 3, 4, and 5 will include a critical analysis of the LPP’s impact in the rural province of Arque.

Geographically isolated from the ‘development poles’ of the Cochabamba region, Arque was an invisible province in the eyes of development planners until the mid-1980s when it was officially declared a paradigmatic case of extreme poverty and received the attention of development agencies and governmental poverty-focused programs. In 1991, PROSANA started implementing a comprehensive set of rural development projects to increase the levels of agricultural production, provide better health services and nutritional counseling, and empower grassroots peasant organizations. In 1995, the two municipalities that form the province of Arque were selected, together with another 90 throughout the country, as “pilot municipalities” for the implementation of the Popular Participation Law. This was part of a program designed by the National Secretary for Rural Development and funded through a loan from the World Bank. It is in this context that PROSANA became the institution in charge of providing the necessary technical support to guarantee a successful implementation process (in a region where municipal offices clearly lacked the adequate human and material resources to perform the new institutional responsibilities assigned by the law).

Presenting conflicting approaches to poverty alleviation that emerged in the context of neo-liberal economic policies and new arrangements in the discursive and institutional practices of the development apparatus, **chapter 3** traces the history of how PROSANA was conceived, funded, and organized and describes the main characteristics of the three phases of the project. My analysis will point to the problematic and ambivalent nature of the transformations underwent by PROSANA between 1991 and 1998.

Focusing on those aspects of PROSANA's work more directly related to institutionalizing participatory development in rural impoverished areas, chapters 4 and 5 explore the reconfigurations of regional social (ethnic/racial) power relations in the spaces opened for grassroots participation in local government affairs, the production of 'participating citizens' able to act as 'agents of their own development' through development technologies, e.g. planning methodologies, and the emergence of new forms of contention and negotiation. **Chapter 4** discusses the ways in which local and regional actors with different and often conflicting visions of 'development' and 'popular participation' confront the challenge of redefining their roles and positions within the new institutional framework established by the law. In this context, the process of implementation of the LPP appears as a site of contestation where every article of the law is susceptible to different and contradictory interpretations, and, more generally, as an arena for the confrontation between town dwellers and peasant villagers, a confrontation mediated by development institutions and other regional organizations.

Chapter 5 focuses on one very particular segment of both the LPP's and PROSANA's approach to participatory development, namely the process of participatory development planning. Under the LPP, municipal governments are responsible for the elaboration and implementation of a five – year development program that should incorporate people's demands and follow the criteria of 'integrality,' 'sustainability,' as well as 'socio-economic, ethnic, and gender equity.' Complementary regulations prepared by governmental offices included a detailed methodology describing how to conduct a process of participatory planning starting from rural village-level appraisals. Through a detailed account of the planning practices and techniques that I observed in

Arque, I examine how certain issues are made visible while others rendered invisible, how certain demands are given voice while others are silenced. My analysis points to the disciplining, de-historicizing, and depoliticizing effects produced through these techniques and to the reproduction of a certain power / knowledge rapport at every of the process.

In **chapter 6** I go back to the village of Totorá Pampa to explore the conflicting versions of the story of a field, a piece of land where development experts conducted an experiment in ecological agriculture. The examination of the multiple misunderstandings that surrounded the experiment will reveal --from another angle and at another level-- yet another instance of the unintended reproduction of asymmetrical power/knowledge relations in the context of development projects.

Map 1.: Bolivia Administrative Divisions

Source: Healy 2001



Map 2. Department of Cochabamba: Administrative Divisions

Source: Gordillo 2000

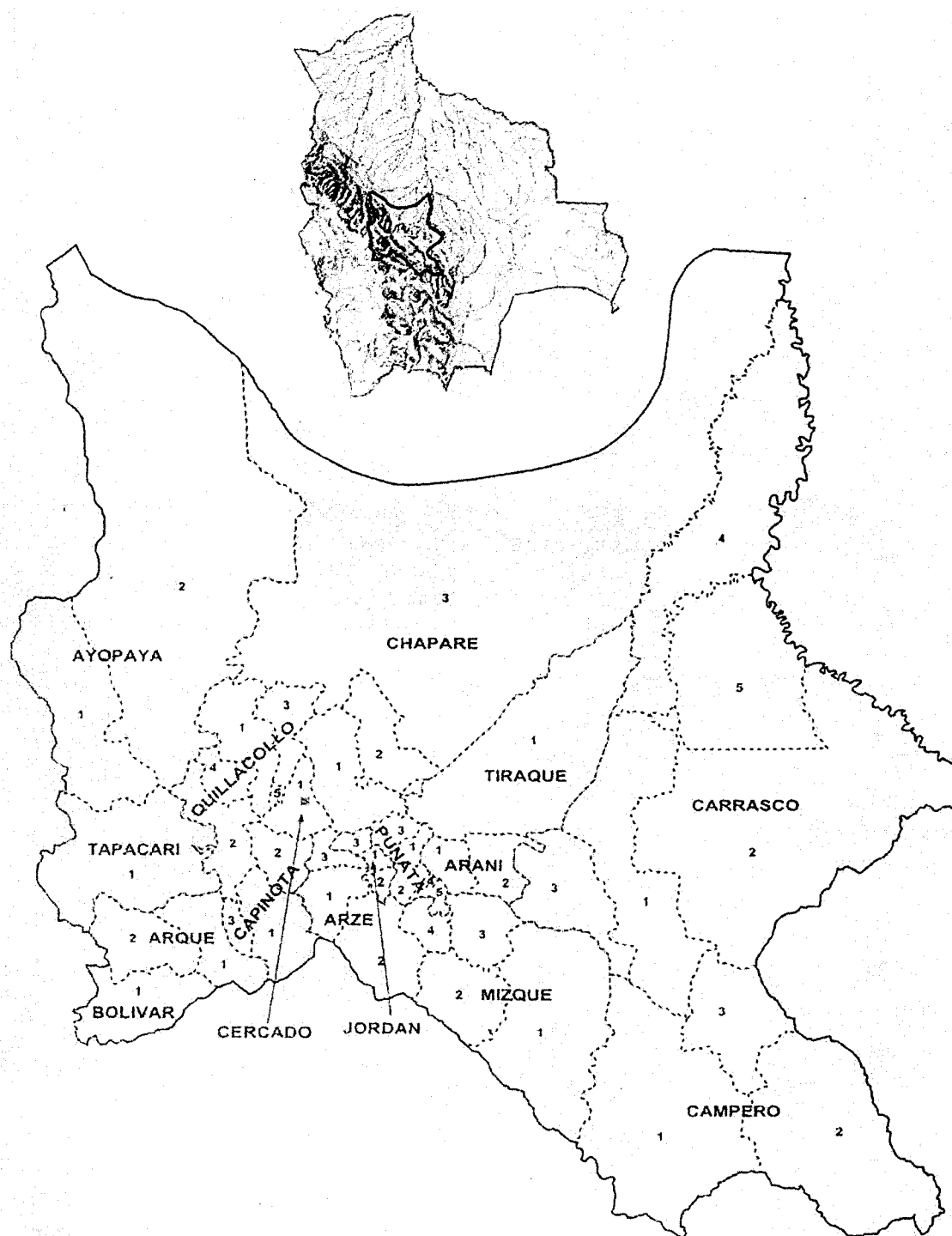


Table of Contents

Forward.....	xiii
Introduction.....	1
I. Denunciations.....	1
II. Coloniality and Modernity.....	23
III. Coloniality and Citizenship.....	31
 Chapter One: Multiple Settings and Shifting Positions: the Context and Conditions of Multi-sited Ethnography	 34
I. The Village of Totora Pampa.....	34
II. The Towns of Arque and Tacopaya.....	47
III. The City of Cochabamba: PROSANA's headquarters.....	60
IV. The City of La Paz: Governmental Offices and Representatives of the International Development Cooperation.....	68
 Chapter Two: The Reforms of the 1990s: the 'New Bolivia'	 72
I. What is New in the 'New Bolivia?' A Brief Comparison with the 1950s Modernization Project.....	73
II. The Decade of the 80s: From Insurrection to Correction.....	79
A. The Early 80s: Insurrection.....	80
B. The Late 80s: Correction.....	85
III. The Law for Popular Participation.....	91
IV. International Development Agencies.....	97
 Chapter Three: Of Unequal Encounters: the History of PROSANA.....	 100
I. Introduction	100
II. The Origins of the Project.....	103
A. Background	103
B. The Feasibility Study and the Project Design	111
C. PROSANA's Institutional Organization.....	123
III. The Phases of the Project.....	127
A. Phase I: Orientation 1991 – 1994.....	127
B. Phase II: Implementation 1994 – 1998.....	140
a) First Period: 1994-1996.....	150
b) Second Period: 1996-1998.....	153
C. Phase III: Consolidation.....	166
IV. Conclusion.....	170

Chapter Four: Social Reconfigurations: New Contests, Old Struggles.....	175
I. Introduction	175
II. The Old Municipal Scheme and the <i>Vecino / Campesino</i> Divide.....	184
III. The Impact of the LPP: New Institutions, Same Old Tensions.....	202
A. Position of the Peasant Organization within CIDPA – CPPA.....	206
B. Conflicts within Tacopaya’s Municipal Government.....	214
C. Obstacles Faced by Tacopaya’s Oversight Committee.....	218
IV. Conclusion.....	221
 Chapter Five: Planning Methodologies and the Process of Participatory Planning in Arque.....	 224
I. Introduction.....	224
II. From Top-down to Bottom-up: a Brief History of Planning Modalities in Development Agencies.....	225
III. Participatory Development Planning in Arque.....	235
IV. The Shaping of a Peasant Development Demand.....	242
A. Arque’s First Peasant Conference (<i>Congreso Campesino</i>).....	242
B. The First Planning Seminar.....	247
V. Failing to Shape a Community Development Vision.....	257
VI. The CIDPA –CPPA Planning Meetings.....	266
A. The Evaluation of the 1996 Yearly Operational Plan.....	267
B. The 1997 Yearly Operational Plan.....	279
V. Conclusion.....	285
 Chapter Six: Stories of a Field: Memory through the Cracks of a Pilot Experiment.....	 288
I. Introduction.....	288
II. The Social Management of the Agricultural Space in Totora Pampa....	289
III. The Conflicting Stories of a Field.....	304
A. Observations and Indirect Information.....	309
B. The Tecnico’s Version and the Institutional Vision.....	315
C. The Local Versions and Visions	320
IV. Conclusion.....	323
 Conclusion: Popular Participation, Development, and Citizenship.....	 327

Appendix: Of Unequal Encounters: a brief history of PROSANA's	
'Target Area'	333
I. Introduction.....	333
II. The Land and the Peoples of Arque in Pre-Columbian Times.....	340
III. Colonial Milestones.....	352
A. The Valleys and the Highlands: a Widening Gap.....	352
B. Colonial Strategies: the Case of the Toledan Reforms.....	354
a) Building Empire - Institutionalizing the State.....	354
b) Toledo's <i>Reducciones</i> of Indians.....	357
c) Contradictory Effects of Toledo's reforms.....	365
C. Andean tactics of resistance to Toledo's reforms.....	371
a) Legal System.....	371
b) Market.....	373
c) Flight and Migration.....	374
D. Colonial Andean.....	377
E. The Bourbon Reforms and Andean Rebellions.....	379
F. Arque at the End of the Colonial Period.....	382
List of References	387

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Components and Stages of a Project Planning Cycle.....	117
Figure 2: The Problems and Causes Identified in 1989.	118
Figure 3: Overall Goal, Project Purposes, and Results in 1989	119
Figure 4: Tree of Main Problems as Defined in 1992.	129
Figure 5: Tree of Problems as defined in 1992 – Complete Version.	130
Figure 6: Tree of Main Objectives as Defined in 1992.	131
Figure 7: Tree of Objectives as Defined in 1992 – Complete Version.	132
Figure 8: PROSANA’s General Planning Matrix as Redesigned in 1992.	133
Figure 9: PROSANA’s General Planning Matrix as designed in 1995.....	141
Figure 10: Tree of Problems as defined in 1994	142
Figure 11: Tree of objectives as Defined in 1994.....	143
Figure 12: PROSANA’s Internal Organization for the Implementation Phase.....	144
Figure 13: PROSANA’s Chart of Institutions Involved in Arque.....	154
Figure 14: Administrative and Institutional Organization in 1996.....	182
Figure 15: Post-LPP Institutional Organization by the End of 1997.....	183
Figure 16: Rotation in Totora Pampa’s <i>Aynoqa</i> System.....	291
Figure 17: Rotation in Vaqueria’s <i>Aynuqa</i> System.....	292
 Table 1: Co-participation Funds for Arque and Tacopaya 1994 – 1997.....	 159
Table 2: Comparative Summary of External Funds Raised.....	160
Table 3: Funds Received by the Municipal Governments of Arque and Tacopaya for the Implementation of Projects Contemplated in the Municipal Development Plans 1994-1997.....	 164
Table 4: Development Needs in Arque as Listed in the First Planning Seminar.....	 251

List of Maps

Map 1: Bolivia: Administrative Divisions.....	xx
Map 2: Department of Cochabamba: Administrative Divisions.....	xxi
Map 3: The Arque Province.....	xxii
Map 4: Arque's Planning Units.....	250
Map 5: Totora Pampa: Management of the Agricultural Space.....	293
Map 6: Totora Pampa's Map Drawn by <i>Técnicos</i> and Villagers.....	296
Map 7: Topography of Bolivia.....	336
Map 8: The Bolivian Altiplano.....	337
Map 9: Pre-Columbian Aymara Diarchies.....	338
Map 10: The Valleys Cochabamba.....	339

INTRODUCTION

Vision is always a question of the power to see -- and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices. With whose blood were my eyes crafted? (Donna Haraway, *Situated Knowledges*) (1991:192)

I. Denunciations

It was the month of February, a summer month in the Southern Hemisphere, which in the tropical latitudes means the rainy season. In the Bolivian highlands, at 3000 meters above sea level, a rainy day is always a cold day. We had been on the road since early that morning visiting peasant villages of the Arque province located not far away from the highway. This is the one and only paved highway that, running from east to west, connects the city of Cochabamba located at 2700 meters above sea level to the cities of Oruro and La Paz situated on the high plateau at 4000 meters above sea level. After it leaves the valley and before it reaches the high plateau, it climbs through the mountains for about 100 kilometers. This part of the highway borders the northern edge of the Arque province, thus marking the boundary between the provinces of Arque and Tapacari, both belonging to the Department of Cochabamba.

Starting in the lower valley, the territory of Arque province crosses the jumble of mountains that cuts off Cochabamba's broad, fertile valleys from the cold, dry plains of the high plateau, and goes up to the border of the Department of Oruro to the west, the province of Bolivar to the southwest, and the Department of Potosi to the south.¹ Running down from west to east, the Arque River crosses through the middle of this thoroughly

¹ This southern border with Bolivar Province (still within the Department of Cochabamba) and with the department of Potosi corresponds also to the territories of the ayllus of Northern Potosi that have been widely studied as the paradigmatic case of "Andeanness" in the anthropological literature, for example the work of Tristan Platt, Olivia Harris, and, more recently, Elaine Zorn.

rugged territory. While during the dry winter this river is reduced to a narrow string of crystalline water allowing cars to ride over the dry riverbed, during the rainy season it grows into a turbulent river of muddy waters. At any moment a sudden tropical storm can cause landslides and violent floods that race down the valley carrying away everything in their path; it then becomes impossible to cross from one riverside to the other. The main “towns” of Arque and Tacopaya, seats of the two municipalities that make up the province, are located along this river.²

From the highway, a few narrow dirt roads penetrate into the mountains of Arque but only three of them go all the way down to the river. Only one out of these three runs through the province, crossing Tacopaya, all the way to the southern border. During the dry season, it takes one hour to drive down from the highway, on the sinuous mountain road, to Tacopaya and, from there, another hour, on a similar road, to drive all the way up to the border with Bolivar province. During the rainy season, this trip can turn into a long, dangerous if not impossible adventure because of landslides, slippery terrain, and river floods. Often, by the time the rainy season reaches its end, cumulative damage has destroyed large parts of the road and the southern part of the province becomes unreachable unless one makes a long detour through the high plateau. And indeed, that was the case on that cold rainy day of late February 1997: our final destination was the village of Totorá Pampa located at the very end of the southwestern border, just next to the Bolivar province. Thus, when we finished our last visit around 4pm we continued on

²Although Arque’s population is less than 400 inhabitants and Tacopaya’s less than 100, I use the word “town” for the Spanish term ‘pueblo’ because Arque and Tacopaya are the seat of municipal governments, and thus have the legal status of an urban settlement officially denominated as ‘pueblo.’ I will use the term ‘village,’ ‘peasant village,’ or peasant community for the rural settlements referred to in Bolivian Spanish as ‘comunidad campesina’ or ‘sindicato agrario.’

the highway all the way to Oruro, from there we traveled southwards on the high plateau and then back eastwards through Potosi and Bolivar arriving at Totora Pampa at 9pm.

We were eight people packed in a Toyota Land Cruiser that belonged to the German funded development program PROSANA, which had been working in the province since 1991.³ After the state decentralization reforms launched by the Bolivian government elected in 1993, PROSANA had come to play a key role in providing institutional and technical support for the implementation of these reforms in the remote municipalities of Arque and Tacopaya. In this context, PROSANA gathered the requests of a substantial number of peasant villages and designed a 10 year extensive development program that included identification of the main problems affecting the province and a long-term strategy to solve them. The main areas contemplated by this program were health, nutrition, education, agro-ecology (e.g. irrigation projects, reforestation, erosion control), and institutional development (grassroots organization and training local authorities to carry out the new administrative tasks required by the decentralization reforms). Following the regulations established by the new laws, the municipalities of Arque and Tacopaya contracted non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to implement specific projects in different peasant communities. PROSANA, then, progressively withdrew from the role of directly executing the specific projects derived from this plan and became, instead, an agent of coordination, training, and supervision.

Among the eight people travelling that day, there were three agronomists from an NGO, the engineer in charge of PROSANA's agro-ecology program, two young Germans doing an internship, Yolanda (the field assistant / translator who helped me with

³ PROSANA (Programa de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional en la Provincia de Arque: Food and Nutritional Security Program in the Province of Arque) worked in Arque from 1991 to 2001.

Qhishwa during the six first months in Totora Pampa) and me. With the exception of the two Germans and me, everybody in the car spoke Qhishwa fluently, for some of them it was their first language, but they never spoke to each other in Qhishwa. PROSANA's supervisor spoke beautiful Qhishwa and thoughtfully cultivated his knowledge of the language.

The purpose of the trip was to visit eight villages where the NGO was carrying out various projects designed to improve the conditions of agricultural production and prevent further land erosion. Five of these villages were located in the northwestern part of the province and, thus, were accessible from the main highway; we visited them between 8 AM and 4 PM. The remaining three –Totora Pampa and two neighboring ones—were located in the southwestern part, and we visited them the following day.

The five villages accessible from the highway had fields located on very steep slopes. The fields we visited in each community belonged to the two or three families – out of the 20 or 30 that form each community—who had agreed to try out the terrace-building program proposed by the agronomists. In contrast, Totora Pampa and the two neighboring peasant villages have milder slopes and flatter surfaces to cultivate. There the agronomists had proposed –to the few families who volunteered- to enclose a plot, plant trees around it, and cultivate a combination of tubers and grains. Initiatives like these were being developed all around the province. They were the building blocks of a larger strategy elaborated by PROSANA to confront the imminent ecological disaster that threatens large sections of many inter-Andean valleys. The agronomists with whom I was travelling were keenly aware of the scope of the problem, they knew that laboriously building a 100 meter terrace would not protect the slope from a ravaging landslide and

that carefully enclosing a small plot would not stop erosion from spreading over hundreds of acres. They had explained to me the many ways in which the alarming levels of ecological degradation had undermined the conditions of agricultural production in the region. Yet this awareness didn't prevent them from enthusiastically working in these small experiments and searching for appropriate solutions based on local farming technologies. Their courage and commitment impressed me deeply.

This was not my first trip to Arque. I had been in the province since May 1996 and had followed PROSANA and NGO "*técnicos*" (the widely used Spanish term to refer to development workers and experts) in their visits to different peasant villages.

Traveling with them by car, motorcycle, or by foot, I had attended festive inaugurations of irrigation canals and health centers; I had helped them in conducting community censuses, project planning meetings, and educational workshops (e.g. on nutrition or children health issues). I had lived for three months in the town of Arque and for a month in Tacopaya. In both places PROSANA had bought and restored old town houses that now served as headquarters for the *técnicos* working in the field. Staying there I had spent long evenings discussing their experiences in Arque, their opinions about the projects, their views about rural development and the changes that followed the new reforms launched by the government elected in 1993.

In both towns, I had discussed the same issues with town dwellers, local municipal authorities, and leaders of the peasant organization at the provincial level.⁴

⁴ I will use 'peasant union' or 'peasant organization' as a translation for 'sindicato campesino.' This form of peasant organization has a long history whose origins go back to the 1930s. Today it has the following hierarchical structure: a peasant village or community is organized as a 'sindicato agrario,' 5 or 6 neighboring villages form a 'subcentral campesina,' and all the 'subcentrales' of a province are gathered in the 'central provincial.' The 'Centrales Provinciales' of all the provinces of a department form the "Federación Departamental." Thus, for example, in the department of Cochabamba we have the Federación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba (FSUTCB: Unified Syndical Federation of

Answering my questions about the main problems of the region and the solutions they could envision for the future, peasant leaders systematically mentioned scarcity of arable land, conditions of agricultural production and access to better education (so that peasants could become engineers). Town dwellers, whether authorities or not, complained about the “ignorance of this people” (meaning local peasants) and dreamed about industries that would exploit local rich resources (from mining to tourism) and magically bring “progress” to the province.

Participating in the daily activities of Arque and Tacopaya, I had learned the codes through which town dwellers obstinately marked their difference from the peasants living in the surrounding communities. Observing the interactions between town dwellers and community peasants, I had witnessed the most blatant forms of racism embedded within clientelistic structures of subordination. These forms and these structures were an evident legacy of a long history of class and ethnic differentiation, a history of distinction and difference that general impoverishment had not erased.

Prior to doing fieldwork in the Arque province I had spent a couple of months in the city of Cochabamba, capital of the department of Cochabamba, getting acquainted with PROSANA and its institutional network, visiting their offices and reading the extensive documentation they produced about Arque. Before that I had spent the year of 1995 in La Paz working as a consultant for different governmental institutions and ministries in charge of designing the policies that would govern the implementation of the new legal reforms. I was, thus, able to observe, and even participate, in the everyday dynamics of governmental offices and their interactions with international development

Peasant Workers of Cochabamba). All federations belong to a national confederation, the Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB: Unified Syndical Confederation of

agencies. Through this exposure, I became acquainted with the new laws, in particular with the 'Law of Popular Participation,' the related extensive official documentation, and the debates that surrounded its implementation.

The relations between the various sites in which I had conducted fieldwork up to this point could be conceptualized in terms of relations between relative centers and peripheries. Indeed, Bolivia has been historically located on the periphery of the world system, but within Bolivia, the cities are the "modern" urban centers in relation to their rural peripheries. The impoverished rural province of Arque is the external edge of the periphery, but within it, the provincial capital could also be seen as a mini-center in relation to its still more peripheral peasant communities. What I had not yet done was to conduct fieldwork in sites located at the two opposite extremes of the larger system of relative centers and peripheries: the headquarters of the German development agency in Frankfurt and the peasant community of Totora Pampa. I eventually went to Germany in the summer of 1999; but that February day I was travelling to Totora Pampa to stay there for the rest of the year.

Entangled with this hierarchical chain of relative centers and peripheries there is a system of identity constructions / representation that I would characterize as an analogous, hierarchical chain of relative selves and others, a hierarchical chain of "selving" and "othering." Depending on the context, one can assert oneself by racializing / ethnicizing an other claiming his/her slightly darker shade (or more Indian looking clothes, or less fluent Spanish, etc.) or be 'othered' (racialized / ethnicized) by somebody

who has a slightly lighter shade (or less Indian clothing, etc.).⁵ In the context of Arque, this chain of othering is often expressed through historically constructed differences between town dwellers, peasants of the lower parts of the valley more "assimilated" to the hacienda regime, and peasants of the higher parts that kept the Andean "ayllu" organization for a longer time. The latter are the "more Indian" of the "Indians," they are the utmost other in the chain of colonial - modern othering . It is in a community of this latter type that I spent my third year of research in Bolivia; and it is there that I had the conversation that I will report below.

Crossing the high plateau en route to Totora Pampa I contemplated the sunset piercing through the clouds and felt somehow the ambivalent excitement of finally going to the real "field," "the traditional Andean community," the most other of the Other. Indeed, if I were to locate the various places where I conducted fieldwork within what Gupta and Ferguson have critically denominated as the hierarchy of purity of field sites, Totora Pampa would be the "purest" one (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 12-13).

In the context of the development institutions working in Arque, Totora Pampa was considered one of the difficult communities because of the lack of motivation that people had to participate in those projects that were supposed to benefit the village. Villagers' relations with the NGO were rather tense, and in fact three weeks before my arrival, this was dramatically demonstrated when someone had thrown stones at the NGO's jeep. Village authorities had presented their apologies explaining that those who did it were drunk and did not know what they were doing. It is thus not surprising that

⁵ Revealing what Bolivian anthropologist Silvia Rivera has denominated as the pigmentocratic character of Bolivian society, this hierarchical chain of othering runs along a continuum of shades between two imaginary poles: the ideal type of whiteness and the ideal type of Indianness (Rivera 1996: 18). This is also related to what French ethno-historian Thierry Saignes described as "mépris échelonnés" (Saignes

some of the *técnicos* with whom we were travelling that day of February 1997 tried to discourage me from staying. They left the next day, but Yolanda, my field assistant, and I stayed. The house where we were lodged had been built by PROSANA for the community, and was located on the village plaza, next to the church and the school building. Part of the house served as an office for the local authorities and community meetings; the other part had a kitchen and two rooms for NGO *técnicos*, and other official visitors (PROSANA experts, provincial authorities, etc.)

Shortly after the *técnicos* left, Yolanda and I went to visit one of the main local authorities, the *secretario general* of Totorá Pampa's *sub-central campesina*. I briefly introduced myself and asked for an appointment. As I anticipated, he told me that I should start by explaining to the community the purpose of my stay and ask them permission to stay. I asked him if I could attend the community meeting that was going to take place that same week. Without hiding his resistance he said that he would have to consult community members at the meeting and let me know if they agreed or not to include my presentation in their agenda. He also intimated that approval might be difficult to obtain, and that I might have to come back the following month.

The meeting started in the evening with the call of the Andean horn *pututu*. By 9 pm the room was packed with some 30 men and 4 or 5 women (who, as widows, functioned as heads of families). I was told to wait outside and was called in around midnight. With the help of Yolanda as a translator I started by explaining that I was not working with any development institution and therefore could not offer them any development project. Rather, I was interested in learning about the work these institutions

1985:284). This hierarchical chain of othering is also one among the manifold expressions of what A. Quijano (1991) refers to as 'coloniality of power' (see below).

were doing in the region. I was there on my own, I was a student doing a research project as part of university requirements. I was studying the history of Arque and the changes brought about by the new laws and development projects. I told them that the only thing I could offer them, if they would let me stay, was to share my knowledge about history and about the new laws. After a long interrogation during which, to my surprise, they listed each and every one of the new laws that were being passed, mentioned the aspects of Bolivian history they were interested in,⁶ we agreed that we would organize –throughout my stay— a series of workshops and that we would start by discussing the Popular Participation Law.

Two days after the community meeting in which I formally presented myself, I received a visit from Mario Ignacio, the *sub-central*'s secretary general, and Zenobio Clemente, a former authority and the one who during the meeting had asked historical information about Bolívar's parents. They came to express their interest in learning about history and about the new laws; there were also other implicit agendas in their visit, not the least of them being to test me. I expressed my interest in working with them and sharing my knowledge about the laws and the history. We talked about "Popular Participation" and development projects in the province.

Taking advantage of the fact that the topic was on the table, I asked them about "development" in general. This conversation followed:

⁶ One of them, Don Zenobio Clemente, said that he was interested in knowing who were the parents of Simon Bolívar, the army general who won the decisive battles against the Spanish royal army. After that Bolivia was declared an independent republic in 1825, and Bolívar was its first president (the name Bolivia honors this general who was born from Spanish parents in what today is Venezuela). Bolívar's ideals for an 'enlightened democracy' were deeply inspired in the philosophy of the enlightenment and the French revolution.

- Carmen: what is development, what does 'development' mean?⁷
- Mario: development? ... It's like **awakening**...
- Zenobio: Yes, it is that all the people have to wake up in order to get training.⁸
- Mario: We have to wake up and move forward.
- Carmen: What do you mean you have to wake up?
- Zenobio: Yeah..., don't you see? We are like in the **darkness**, like **drunks**, we **walk without knowing** where we are going. **With development we will know where to go.**
- Carmen: Are you saying, with development you will know where to go?
- Zenobio: Yes, yes, that is what I am saying.
- Carmen: Mm... And what does it mean, "to move forward?"
- Mario: I mean to grow, to improve, live a better life.
- Zenobio: Now we are not doing well because we don't know how to read, we don't understand, **we don't know how to understand** what is happening.
- Carmen: You were saying that with development you will know where to go, now how does it happen, on what, on whom does it depend that you will get this 'development'?
- Mario: It **depends on us**.
- Carmen: On you?
- Zenobio: It depends on **us organizing ourselves** well and it depends on **us getting training**.
- Carmen: And on whom does it depend that you will get training?
- Mario: Ah, ... that depends on the schools and institutions."⁹

This was not the first time I was asking the question about what development means and part of their answer sounded similar to what I had already been told by the provincial peasant leaders I had interviewed in Arque and Tacopaya.¹⁰ But Mario and Zenobio were also saying something else, something nobody had said before or since. What was unique this time was that by using the awakening metaphor they were making explicit that which

⁷ This conversation was in Qhishwa but I used the word 'development' in Spanish.

⁸ The expression he used was 'capacitakunanpaj', which comes from the Spanish verb "capacitarse." Although it is usually translated as 'to get training', its connotations are sometimes closer to the expression 'to get an education' in English.

⁹ "Instituciones" is the generic term they use to refer to the development institutions and NGOs working in the region. The projects they carry out have always a training or action - research component.

¹⁰ These provincial leaders are much more "urbanized" and my interviews with them were in Spanish.

had remained implicit in other conversations. In that sense, this conversation was very representative though unique, or, more precisely, representative in its uniqueness.¹¹

In the context of my fieldwork, this conversation was a sort of breakthrough, or moment of revelation. Put differently, it constituted one of those unique moments of synthesis when, suddenly, the incoherent and unrelated pieces and bits gathered hitherto start coming together and begin to reveal the shape of the puzzle that has still to be solved. Retrospectively, I see that making sense of what I heard that night became both a purpose and a standpoint. A purpose in the sense that most of what I did during the subsequent 10 months in Totorá Pampa was oriented towards understanding not just what Mario and Zenobio ‘said’ but what they were ‘talking about’.¹²

At the same time, this conversation provided me with a vantage point to situate the questions I asked, the position from which I looked at and reflected upon the information I gathered in the different sites where I conducted fieldwork. This conversation and my understanding of it informed my vision, circumscribed the field of

¹¹ It is important to bear in mind that this conversation is representative of my conversations with Arque community peasants and NOT of the conversations I had with those who consider themselves “town people.” An outsider would not easily distinguish them unless they are wearing their distinctive clothes and she is told (as I was) which ones are “typical” or “peasant” (meaning Indian) clothes and which are “civil” (meaning civilized) clothes. These differences will be dealt with in more detail in chapters 1, and 5.

¹² I am using here the concept of understanding in the sense defined by Rabinow and Sullivan (1987: 13-14) in their discussion of the interpretive turn in social sciences: “To understand a text is to follow its movements from sense to reference, from what it says to what it talks about. To understand an author better than he could understand himself is to display the power of disclosure implied in his discourse beyond the limited horizon of his own existential situation. (...) As a model of text interpretation, understanding has nothing to do with an immediate grasping of a foreign psychic life or with an emotional identification with a mental intention. Understanding is entirely mediated by the procedures that precede it and accompany it. The counterpart of this personal appropriation is not something which can be felt. It is the dynamic meaning identified earlier with reference to the text, that is, the power of disclosing a world. In this approach, understanding any action is analogous to textual interpretation. This means that the intelligibility of any action requires reference to its larger context, a cultural world.”

vision, the position from which to see, the lenses through which to see.¹³ This dissertation is about the issues that, starting from this conversation and grounded on my experience in Arque, I came to see as relevant for the critical appraisal of development today.

As surprising as it might seem, the awakening metaphor used by Mario and Zenobio evokes in my mind images of the Enlightenment project, and more specifically Kant's definition of the Enlightenment. The differences and distances are obvious, but I will suggest that the few resonances are less far-fetched than they would seem. The contrast is revealing, not to say illuminating.

In a newspaper article written in 1784,¹⁴ Immanuel Kant stated:

"Enlightenment is man's release from self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. *Sapere aude!* "Have courage to use your own reason!" –that is the motto of enlightenment. (Kant 1959: 85)

Positing the pre-existence of a state of tutelage in which man finds himself by his own will, Kant defines Enlightenment as a way out (*Ausgang* in German) of this state, the event and the process that releases man from that tutelage (or immaturity, i.e. the inability to use one's reason without direction from another). Thus, from the very beginning, Kant

¹³ My point here follows the lines of Haraway's conception of situated knowledge in which objectivity is seen as a particular, specific, embodied, partial, and responsible perspective. Thus, I don't mean in any way to say that I am speaking for Mario and Zenobio, nor that I am taking their position or that I pretend to see through their eyes. As Haraway (1991: 193-196) puts it, "The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another, **to see together without claiming to be another**. Here is the promise of objectivity; a scientific knower seeks **the subject position not of identity, but of objectivity, that is partial connection**. **There is no way to 'be' simultaneously in all, or wholly in any, of the privileged (subjugated) positions structured by gender, race, nation, and class.** (...) We do not seek partiality for its own sake, but for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings situated knowledges make possible. **The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular.**" Emphasis mine.

¹⁴ The 1780s were a decade of important indigenous rebellions in the central Andes and also when colonial intellectuals started becoming acquainted with enlightenment ideas and thus criticizing the despotic nature

identifies linkages between will, authority, and the use of reason and, as Foucault points out, defines Enlightenment as “a modification of the preexisting relation linking will, authority, and the use of reason” (Foucault 1984: 35). While, in this initial paragraph, man’s will appears as the key –the cause of both the pre-existing state and the release from it—later he will acknowledge the part played by despotic rulers. “[T]he guardians have made their domestic cattle dumb and have made sure that these placid creatures will not dare take a single step without the harness of the cart to which they are tethered ...” (Kant 1959:85). Under these conditions only very few could ‘dare to know’. “But that the public should enlighten itself is more possible; indeed, if only freedom is granted, enlightenment is almost sure to follow” (Ibid: 86).

Kant thus calls for rulers to be enlightened and grant freedom. What is the nature of this freedom?

“The public use of one’s reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among men. The private use of reason, on the other hand, may often be narrowly restricted without particularly hindering the progress of enlightenment. By the public use of one’s reason, I understand the use which a person makes of it as a scholar before the reading public. Private use I call that which one may make of it in a particular civil post or office which is entrusted to him.” Thus, “the citizen cannot refuse to pay the taxes imposed on him” but he has the right, the civil freedom, “as a scholar, [to] publicly express his thoughts on the inappropriateness ... of these levies.” (Kant 1959: 87)

It is the freedom to use one’s reason for, as Foucault puts it, “reason’s sake.” It is the freedom to criticize the laws of the state while at the same time obeying them. It is a freedom whose underlying assumptions are the clear separation of the realm of obedience from the realm of reason and a peculiar distinction between the public and the private uses of reason. It is a freedom with restrictions, but, there are restrictions that are “an obstacle” for enlightenment and restrictions that are a “promoter of it.” In this context,

of Spanish rule which prevented Spaniards born in the Americas from occupying the higher positions of colonial offices.

the enlightened ruler is the one who is not afraid to tell his citizens “argue as much as you will, only obey.”

Thus, enlightenment is at once a spiritual / ethical and an institutional / political problem and the question is that of “knowing how the use of reason can take the public form that it requires, how the audacity to know can be exercised in broad daylight, while individuals are obeying as scrupulously as possible” (Foucault 1984: 36). According to Foucault’s interpretation, Kant proposes a “contract of rational despotism with free reason: the public and free use of reason will be the best guarantee of obedience, on condition, however, that the political principle that must be obeyed itself be in conformity with universal reason.” Enlightenment, then, is not only a matter of personal, individual courage, it is also a political matter involving the redefinition of the relationship between rulers and ruled, of the rights and obligations of citizens and their relation to the state.

Why this long detour through Kant and the Enlightenment? It is not just because of the associations and evocations the term ‘awakening’ triggers in my mind. There are two closely related reasons. First, I believe that, in the conversation, Mario and Zenobio were also addressing the relation between citizens and the state, the question of citizen’s rights and obligations, and the linkages between will, authority, and reason, although, of course, in a very different way and in very different terms. The contrast is important because it reveals that the differences don’t derive from an opposition between Western modernity and non-Western / non-modernity. Very much to the contrary, they stem from the colonial difference, or, more precisely, from their differential positioning within the same modern / colonial world.

Second, the enlightenment project inspired the ideologies and policies promoted by the ruling elites of the independent states founded in the 1800s. Put differently, the promises Mario's and Zenobio's great-great grandparents received, as citizens of the newly founded Bolivia from their new rulers, were the promises of the enlightenment project (see section III). This detour is also an answer to Zenobio's inquiries about Bolivar's parents: after all, enlightenment thinkers were the intellectual parents of Bolivar's ideals. Thus, from the perspective of Latin American history, the enlightenment project, which is emblematic of modernity, is a relevant referent for the discussion of the issues raised in my conversation with Mario and Zenobio, and for the discussion of development and modernity in Latin America.¹⁵ But before we move into that discussion, let's have a closer look at what Mario and Zenobio said about development as awakening.

Indeed, what did Mario and Zenobio mean by development as awakening? When I asked them that question, they answered: "Don't you see?"¹⁶ We are like in the darkness, like drunks, we walk without knowing where we are going. With development we will know where to go." In their own way, they were also identifying a pre-existing state, the current state of darkness, and a way out of it, a process or event that will bring

¹⁵ In his discussion of Kant's text, Talal Asad states that "Non-Westerners who seek to understand their local histories must also inquire onto Europe's past, because it is through the latter that universal history has been constructed. ... The European Enlightenment constitutes the historical site from which Westerners typically approach non-Western traditions" (Asad 1993: 200). For the case of Latin America several precisions and clarifications need to be added: first, from the perspective of Latin America, the modernity of the enlightenment is a second modernity, for the first modernity started with the "discovery" of the Americas in the 15th century. The Americas were part and parcel of the early modernity / colonialism. Second, the second modernity, the one of the enlightenment, coincides with the end of Spanish colonial rule (in contrast to other regions of the world where it coincides with the beginning of colonial rule).

¹⁶ I hear several things in their way of saying to me "don't you see?" First, this was not just a rhetorical question, they were indeed surprised at my question because they assumed that, coming from the city, I had to see their situation as one of darkness. Second, I think that they chose to convey to me this image of

light into the darkness, in this case, development. However, the metaphor they use to explain what is problematic about this state is not the one of tutelage but that of drunkenness, which opens a very different semantic field. The problematic aspect they chose to emphasize is not the “inability to use one’s reason without direction from another” but the fact of “walking without knowing where we are going.” This difference has, at least, two significant implications.

First, it suggests that darkness is **not a consequence of the inner inability** to think freely (where you end up because of lack of intellectual or moral autonomy / maturity), but **rather an external cause for the impossibility** to see (what prevents the understanding of the conditions and directions for walking). In this logic, development is not that towards which the “underdeveloped” have to direct themselves. It is neither the process of getting there nor the arrival point.¹⁷ Rather, development is a starting point and that which is required in order to know where to go, the light (enlightenment) that makes it possible to see, to define, choose where to go.

Second, Mario and Zenobio’s statement suggests also that the issue is not understanding for reason’s sake but understanding for action’s sake. Put differently, if the problem is the impossibility to see the direction for effective action, then the solution requires not only the audacity to know but also, and more importantly, the instruments for an adequate vision of the field of action. Switching metaphors, I would argue that what is at stake, for them, is the access to that knowledge which allows for the understanding not only of the rules of the game but also of how those rules are made.

darkness because they knew I knew something about the new laws and they wanted me to take seriously my commitment to give them a clear explanation of these laws.

¹⁷ This statement reverses what has always been stated by the development orthodoxy, i.e. that development is where we have to go, the destination, and the arrival point.

In the same vein, what I hear in their statement “**We don’t know how to understand what is happening**” would read as follows: we don’t know how to grasp (in the sense of understanding and of controlling - handling) the forces that shape the conditions under which we act; this is not because we don’t dare to know but because our will and our reason are necessary but not sufficient to grasp the reasons of the rulers. In the context of our conversation, they were specifically referring to the skills they need to deal with the larger society, to perform the new tasks related to the Law of Popular Participation (that is, local participation in the affairs of a municipal government), and to defend their rights (understand the laws, etc). More clearly than before, here, they are addressing the necessity to understand the codes of the dominant society and, thereby, revealing the conditions of their ethnic oppression (racial discrimination and class exploitation), their exclusion from the exercise of their rights as citizens and thus the long history of asymmetrical power relations. (See appendix for a discussion of some milestone along that history).

In my understanding of their notion of development as awakening, the way out of darkness requires that they get a hold of those external forces which produce (or monopolize) the light that allows to see where to go. Put differently, with development they will know where to go because they will know how to understand those forces.

Last but not least, that development as awakening appears linked to consciousness of external forces of domination does not entail in any way a perception of themselves as deprived of agency. On the contrary, as it becomes evident when we look at the answer they gave me when I asked who does it depend on that they will get development, their

answer was quick, firm, and straightforward: “It depends on us.” Only later did they specify that it also depended on “schools and institutions.”

“It depends on us (...) getting organized.” That they will get ‘development’ depends primarily on them, but on them getting organized in order to act as a collective subject. Who are the ‘we’ they are referring to when they say, “it depends on us”? It is at the same time ‘we the people of Totora Pampa’ and ‘we the peasants of Totora Pampa’. The collective subject is the ‘peasant community of Totora Pampa’ which also corresponds to the peasant union (*sindicato*) of Totora Pampa, and which, together with 7 neighboring communities / *sindicatos*, forms the peasant ‘subcentral’ of Totora Pampa.¹⁸ Indeed, during the 1953 agrarian reform the peasant communities of large estates (*haciendas*) were constituted as ‘*sindicatos agrarios*’ and as such they were entitled to the part of the estate they used to farm. It is, thus, as peasant unions (*sindicatos*) that, since then, they have been recognized by the Bolivian state, have received (when they did) services from state institutions, and have struggled to defend their rights. The importance bestowed on having a strong organization (and acting as a united community) is grounded in this historical experience and permanently emphasized by peasant leaders at all the levels of the union hierarchy. It is also an ideal not always achieved and often threatened by internal conflicts and external pressures. On different occasions, Mario and Zenobio complained about the increasing difficulties in keeping the community united and well organized. Also from later conversations I had with them I came to believe that some disorienting effects of the new legal reforms stemmed from changes in their relations to state institutions and redefinitions of the terms in which the state interpellated

¹⁸ As mentioned earlier, the subcentral, in turn, is part of the Arque Central Provincial, which in turn is part of the Cochabamba Federacion Departamental and through it of the Bolivian Confederación (CSUTCB).

them as subjects. For example, under the Popular Participation Law, the state interpellates rural individuals as inhabitants of a territory, members of a territorially based organization with legal status and legal rights and obligations in the affairs of municipal governments. In other words, their ‘peasantness’ or ‘unionization’ (i.e. their class identity) becomes irrelevant in the new context of municipal participation. In the new context defined by the law, representatives of peasant villages are eligible for municipal offices and a peasant village through a form of organization chosen by its inhabitants (e.g. *sindicato agrario*) can obtain legal status (*personeria juridica*) and constitute a legal subject with rights and obligations stipulated in the law’s text. As I will discuss in later chapters, the law brought about changes in the roles and positions of local actors and Arque’s peasant organization—especially in its supra-village levels—faced new challenges and difficult choices.

Now, having a strong organization and acting as a collective subject appears, in the context of the conversation, as a necessary but not sufficient condition to get ‘development,’ for ‘getting training’ is also an important requirement. However, organizing themselves seems to be a pre-condition to be able to get training, to get an education, i.e. a right to which, in principle, all Bolivian citizens are entitled. In other words, what I hear them saying is that in order to be able to assert themselves as citizens they first have to struggle collectively against different forms of exclusion and negotiate the terms of their inclusion as citizens of the Bolivian state.

To get training, to get an education in order to get ‘development’, is in part about learning the rules by which citizens can effectively assert their rights but it is, above all,

about understanding how those rules are made and about acquiring the instruments of dominant forms of knowledge.

This is what they are asking from schools and development institutions. These institutions are perceived as possessing these instruments, or at least knowing what these instruments are, and as being responsible for transmitting them (passing them over) to the community. As brokers between rural communities and cities, other state institutions, and, more generally, the larger / dominant society, state education institutions, NGOs and other development institutions alike should provide the means to bridge over the gap.

That they will get development, in sum, does not depend on individuals' will to dare to know or on rulers granting freedom of opinion to self-determined subjects but on a collective struggle to access dominant forms of knowledge in the context of asymmetrical power relations. The obstacle to overcome is not a state of self-incurred tutelage or immaturity but rather the fact of a dispossession. If dispossessed from (or prevented from access to) the right instruments to see we face a state of darkness (lack of vision) or drunkenness (distortion of the vision). The image of drunkenness inserts an apparent ambiguity because more often than not, drunkenness is associated with a self-incurred state. In recent years, literature on the Andes has explored not only the collective and ritual components of drunkenness but also, more specifically, its role in processes of memory (Abercrombie 1993 and 1998) and resistance (Saignes 1993).

In the case of our conversation, I hear my informants using the image of drunkenness to **denounce** a state of disorientation created by distorted perception. It is not about a self-blaming critique, nor about a passive acceptance of their conditions of oppression, nor about a conspiracy theory. Rather, I sense the expression of a historical

awareness. That is, they see this distorted perception as a result of a long history, of which they are part and during which they have been systematically excluded from the power positions where hegemonic knowledge is produced, though never excluded from effects of its power. There is a clear memory (always silenced) of the confusion produced by messages of inclusion that always came accompanied with practices of exclusion and of messages of exclusion that always came accompanied with practices of inclusion.

The problem to address is not their being immature, or being non-western and therefore outside modernity, it is rather that their situation is the outcome of the way in which they have been part of or even produced by modernity. The vision of development as awakening which Mario and Zenobio conveyed to me is not grounded on a metaphysics of reason but on an ontology of power relations. More specifically, it is grounded on their historical experience of a power / knowledge regime through which they have been constituted as the most other of the 'Other' and, thus, assigned a subaltern position. It is from this position that they point to the inextricable links between development and that power / knowledge regime. It is also from this position that they simultaneously denounce the terms under which they have been incorporated as citizens of the state and propose to link development and citizenship rights thereby redefining both the notion of citizenship rights and the notion of development. I argue, thus, that it is their historical experience of modernity that informs their vision, their suspicions and their hopes.¹⁹

As I understand it, the conversation I had with Mario and Zenobio is about development and about citizenship. It is about a political demand for certain citizenship

rights and about the awareness of the systematic denial of such rights. What is striking is that many development projects since the 1980's and the "modernization" reforms launched by the Bolivian government between 1993 and 1997 explicitly addressed the necessity of redefining concepts of development and enlarging citizenship participation in the context of democratization and state administrative decentralization. However, when following the implementation of PROSANA's projects and of the popular participation law during my fieldwork, the interactions I observed between state representatives, development experts, and indigenous peasant villagers appeared to me as new forms of reproducing the old conditions of 'not knowing where to go.' Thus, I will argue throughout this dissertation that, in spite of their claims, the redefinitions of development and citizenship contained in the new 'participatory' reforms obliterate the specific demand for the right to know where to go. How are we to understand this obliteration? My purpose in this dissertation is to explore the different ways in which the conditions of "not knowing where to go, not knowing how to understand" are produced and reproduced.

II. Coloniality and Modernity

The assumptions underlying my main argument follow a critique of the characterization of modernity as a European exclusivity. Viewed from the margins, peripheries or shifting borders of the modern world system, modernity is not only what happened within the European continent after the middle ages and was later exported, as a finished product, to the rest of the world. A central aspect of the Latin American

¹⁹ See appendix for a discussion of important milestones in the colonial history of modernity in the Andes.

critique of modernity is that it points to the colonial encounter with the “other” as constitutive of modernity²⁰

From a Latin American perspective, modernity begins with the European expansion in the 15th century and results from that expansion. Modernity is co-produced by all those who were involved in the process. Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel (1991: 4) conceptualizes modernity as “the culture of the *center* of the ‘world system,’ of the first world system, through the incorporation of Amerindia, and as a result of the *management* of this ‘centrality’. (...) European modernity is not an *independent*, autopoietic, self-referencial system, but instead is *part* of a world-system: in fact, its *center*. Modernity, then, in this planetary paradigm is a phenomenon proper to the system ‘center – periphery’.” (emphasis in the original)

“Modernity as such was ‘born’ when Europe was in a position to pose itself against an other, when, in other words, Europe could constitute itself as a unified ego exploring, conquering, colonizing an alterity that gave back its image of itself. This other, in other words, was not “dis-covered’ (descubierto), or admitted as such, but concealed, or covered-up (encubierto), as the same as what Europe assumed it had always been. So, if 1492 is the moment of the “birth” of modernity as a concept, the moment of origin of a very particular myth of sacrificial violence, it also marks the origin of a process of concealment or misrecognition of the non-European.” (Dussel 1995: 66)

Dussel makes the distinction between the first modernity of the Hispanic, humanist, Renaissance and the second modernity of Anglo Germanic Europe. During the first modernity the question of the rights Europeans had to colonize other cultures was central to the philosophical ethical debate, during the second modernity that ethical question was

²⁰ To distinguish Latin-American postcolonial critique of modernity from other post-colonial perspectives, it is important to bear in mind the specificity of Latin American colonial history. From the perspectives of the Americas, modernity and European colonization started with the conquest. This leads scholars like Dussel to conceive of modernity as being co-produced and to conceive of the development of modern rationality as the outcome of colonization. In contrast to most African or Asian experiences, the modernity of the colonial experience is the early modernity while the modernity of the Enlightenment corresponds to the post-colonial experience of creating new independent republics. Quijano’s critique of this second modernity in the Andes is often grounded on the humanist values of the early modernity.

silenced, “it had been answered in fact” (Dussel 1991: 14). If during the first modernity Spain managed its centrality through forms of domination grounded on old paradigms, the forms of management of the second modernity were grounded on the new modern paradigm formulated during the 17th century. According to Dussel (1991:15),

“This new paradigm corresponded to the exigencies of efficacy, technological “factibility” or governmentalism of the management of an enormous world system in expansion; it is the expression of a necessary process of simplification through “rationalization” of the life-world, of the subsystems (economic, political, cultural, religious, etc). Rationalization ... is effect and not cause.”

Anibal Quijano, the Peruvian sociologist who developed his critique of modernity in an independent though parallel way, makes very similar points though from a sociological perspective. Quijano (1995: 203) also points to the “co-presence of Latin America in the production of modernity” from the beginning of the 16th and throughout “the crystallization of modernity” in the 18th century. Pointing to “unbridgeable split” that emerged within European Enlightenment between “tendencies that saw reason as the historical promise of liberation of humanity from its own ghosts, from social injustice and the prisons of power, and, on the other hand, tendencies that saw rationality in instrumental terms, as a mechanism of power, of domination,” crystallization of modernity refers to triumph of instrumental reason over historical reason (ibid:206).

According to Quijano (1995) the increasingly active Latin American participation in the production of modernity was drastically interrupted by the turn of the 19th century when the center of economic power definitively shifted towards the North Atlantic and the declining Spanish empire, by then almost in ruins, desperately tried to hold to their American colonies through very restrictive and repressive policies. From then on, Latin

American modernity was subjected to a “traumatic metamorphosis” and “would not again encounter modernity except under the guise of “modernization” (Quijano 1995: 207).²¹

An important particularity of Quijano’s critique is to place the “invention” of a new idea of race at the center of the inextricable links between modernity and colonialism. For him, “The idea of race is, without any doubt, the most efficient instrument of social domination invented in the last 500 years” (Quijano 1993, my translation). What is significantly new in the meanings of ‘race’ since the 15th century stems from the specific way in which social relations of racial oppression and the production of new historical identities were (still are) articulated with social relations of labor and economic exploitation. This new idea of race is at the origin of the racial / ethnic hierarchies underlying the cultural and social power relations between Europeans and non-Europeans up until the present. This is part of what the concept of **coloniality of power** intends to capture.

²¹ Quijano explains this ‘traumatic metamorphosis’ in the following terms: “If modernity, as a movement of social intersubjectivity could occur at the same time in Europe and Latin America, this was due not only to the communication existing between both worlds, but also to the fact that they were going through the same socio-historical process: the apogee of the mercantilism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The problem with Latin America, however, was that just when its modernity seemed to enter the phase of the demarcation of its specificity and maturity with respect to Europe, when it began to define itself as a new social and cultural possibility, it fell victim to its colonial relationship to Europe and was subjected to a literally Kafkaesque “metamorphosis.” While in Europe, mercantilism started to transform itself into industrial capitalism, in Latin America, especially from the last third of the eighteenth century on, the parallel transformation was halted, and the economy began to stagnate due to the double effect of the continued restrictions imposed by the political economy of the Iberian metropolis and the displacement of the economic power in favor of England. So, while in Europe modernity was part of a radical mutation of society, feeding off the changes prepared by the emergence of capitalism, in Latin America, from the end of the eighteenth century on, modernity was linked to an adverse social context, in which the decline of the economy and the breakdown of the mercantilist system permitted the social sectors most antagonistic to it to occupy the leading positions in the elaboration of Latin America’s independence of Europe. In this way, the same modernity that remade in Europe not only the sphere of intersubjective relations but also, increasingly, the material, social relations themselves, becoming, as a result, the mode of everyday life in society, in Latin America remained confined to the intersubjective sphere, blocked from its possibility of entering the materiality of society, and even there it was repressed, persecuted, forced to seek refuge in the practice of enlightened minorities.” (Quijano: 1995: 205)

Racism and ethnicism were initially produced in the Americas and then expanded to the rest of the colonial world as the foundation of the specific power relations between Europe and the populations of the rest of the world. After five hundred years, they still are the basic components of power relations across the world. Although colonialism became extinct as a formal political system, social power is still constituted on criteria originated in colonial relations. In other words, coloniality has not ceased to be the central character of today's social power." (Quijano 1993: 167; quoted in and translated by Grosfoguel and Georas 2000: 11).

Quijano coined the term of **coloniality** to address the persistence of colonial relations of oppression and domination in the process of nation-state building in which Latin American countries have been engaged since they were founded as independent countries, almost 200 years ago. While 'colonialism' refers to colonial situations enforced by the presence of a colonial administration, 'coloniality' refers to colonial situations after the demise of colonial administrations²².

As a frame for historical analysis, the concept of coloniality of power draws attention to the fact that colonialism (European colonial expansion), modernity, and capitalism (the economic relations that led to the development of capitalism) occurred together. Although each one of these historical phenomena has its own internal coherence, neither of the three (the specific character each one took) can be fully explained without taking into account their historical co-occurrence, their interrelations and entanglements. At the same time, however, none of them can be reduced to the other or explained as mere

reflection (effect or cause) of the others. It is in this historicalness that lies the richness of Quijano's concept / framework. Furthermore, in exploring the historical continuities of colonial forms of domination, he focuses on the ways in which these forms / mechanisms inscribed themselves in inter-subjective relations of power, in processes of subject constitution and identity construction, in regimes of representation and forms of knowledge production, in subjective perceptions and collective imaginaries (Quijano 1991, 1993, 1995). In sum, as Lao (2001) aptly defines it, Quijano represents the coloniality of power as "an intersection between two axes: one characterized by the relationship between capital and labor (the axis of exploitation), the other representing the relationship between Europe and its Others (the axis of coloniality). The primary categories of identity which constitute modern subjectivities (i.e. race, nation, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality) are historicized as colonial products associated with world historical regimes of subjection and resistance."

Walter D. Mignolo, who aligns himself with Dussel and Quijano and engages their different arguments, looks at coloniality as the darker side of modernity. Mignolo's original contribution to the debate is his conceptualization of 'border thinking.' For him, the understanding of colonial situations requires a problematization not only of the object to be understood but also of the understanding subject. "In which of the cultural traditions to be understood does the understanding subject place him or herself by constructing his or her locus of enunciation?" (Mignolo 1995: 16). Mignolo replaces the metaphor of center-periphery by the one of internal and external borders of the modern world system. Building on the notion of borders as developed by scholars like Anzaldúa, he proposes

²² I use 'colonial situation' in the sense defined by Grosfoguel and Georas (2000: 3): "the cultural, political, and economic oppression of subordinate racialized/ethnic groups by dominant racial/ethnic groups with or

the notion of border thinking with the “intention of transcending hermeneutics and epistemology and the corresponding distinction between the knower and the known, in the epistemology of the second modernity” (ibid).

What this critique of modernity from a Latin American perspective shows is that the foundational dynamics of modernity is a peculiar dynamics of inclusion -exclusion. In the process of its expansion Europe included more and more people while at the same time producing the mechanisms of their exclusion, permanently constructing them as the Other, the non-European, non- Western, non- modern. The modern idea of race was crucial for this excluding construction of otherness. The non-European was first posited as a racialized other; later on, in some regions, he/she would become an ethnicized other.²³ Thus emerged the race / ethnic hierarchy which has constituted the substratum for intersubjective constructions and relations of discrimination. Since then, other forms of excluding constructions of otherness were grafted onto this persistent structure of colonial domination. Thus, for example, the objectification of the non-European other in the context of what Mignolo calls the epistemology of the second modernity.

Indeed, within the modern paradigm that crystallized during the Enlightenment, knowledge is the product of a subject – object relation. As Quijano (1993) has pointed out in this relation is one of exteriority and fundamental difference. The subject is the one who knows (the Cartesian knowing subject) and that which is to be known is the object, by definition exterior to and of a different nature than the knowing subject. That is, the knowledge of the other can only be the knowledge of an objectified other. These founding mechanisms of constructing the colonized as excluded others, racialization and

without the existence of colonial administrations.”

objectification, have been articulated since then to a variety of “distancing devices” (Fabian 1983) and “regimes of representation” (Mitchell 1991) giving rise to different, historically specific, forms of excluding constructions of otherness. Thus, to the racialization and objectification of the other we could add the construction of the Other as living in another time / epoch, outside the modern times, that is, what Johannes Fabian has conceptualized as the denial of co-evalness (Fabian 1983).

I would further emphasize that modernity / coloniality also entails the misrecognition (or more precisely the production of the misrecognition) of this foundational dynamics of inclusion / exclusion. The mechanisms through which this misrecognition was produced and reproduced have varied throughout history, but perhaps the most enduring ones were those related to the forms of knowledge production developed within the modern paradigm. As Dussel, Quijano, and Mignolo have shown in their respective works, the European paradigm of rational knowledge was developed not only in the context of but as part of a power structure that implied the European colonial domination over the rest of the world. This paradigm allowed for the omission of any other subject outside the European context, which in turn rendered invisible the colonial order as an order including colonizers and colonized. Historically, the emergence of this paradigm is to be understood in the context of the process through which the idea of Europe was constituting itself in a relation of difference to the non-European others. From the perspective of the emerging Europe, these differences were perceived as a hierarchy of inequalities, ‘naturally’ inferior. “The intersubjective constructions produced by colonial domination were assumed as ahistorical categories (posited as scientific – objective), as natural phenomena not pertaining to the history of power” (Quijano 1991:12).

²³ See de la Cadena 2000 for a thorough discussion of culture in the Andes.

In sum, the construction of the included others as excluded non-Europeans, non-modern, non-rational and the misrecognition of the social and historical character of these constructions are closely linked and are both inherent to the coloniality of power. On these grounds, the main question I address here is how this dynamics of inclusion/exclusion and its concomitant misrecognition manifest themselves (are at work) in the new arrangements within the development discourse defining the underdeveloped as agents of their own development, in particular, and in the constructions of a new citizen embedded in the 1993-97 modernization reforms, in general.

III. Coloniality and Citizenship

As I mentioned earlier, Quijano coined the concept of coloniality of power to address the ways in which historical continuities of colonial forms of domination affected the processes of nation-state building in Latin America since the 19th century. From the beginning most political projects, in spite of their many ideological differences, cast their objectives in terms of promoting national integration and the establishment of a modern state founded on the principle of formal equal citizenship. However, national integration, modern democracy, and equal rights for all citizens are still very open questions. According to Quijano, this paradoxical history cannot be explained without taking into account the coloniality of structures of power, i.e. the persistence of the colonial race/ethnic hierarchy as the foundation of all forms of intersubjective relations of power.

When the independent republics were created in the 19th century, the new ruling elite was formed by the Creoles, the children of Spanish colonizers born in the Americas. Interpreting in their own peculiar ways 19th century ideologies of enlightenment and modernity, the heirs of the colonizers embarked in the project of imagining new 'national

communities' and forging new modern nation-states. In societies—like Bolivia-- with an Indian majority and in which local Creole elites were responsible for imagining the new 'national community,' the process of forging the nation has been, since then, a permanent social struggle.

While juridical equality was the foundational ideology of modernity and political independence and all those born in the territory of the new republic were recognized as Bolivians, the status of citizen was the exclusive privilege 'honorable' literate males, i.e members of the Creole elite. As Rossana Barragan (1997: 62) explains

Unlike the colonial period, where the rights, duties, privileges, and restrictions of the two republics, Indian and Spanish, were all regulated, the modern republican discourse of equality covered the legal corpus with the varnish of a single penal code, a single code of procedure, one Constitution. But behind these modern forms, society was thought of, in subtle and inexplicit ways, as composed of different groups and castes.

A new system was thus inaugurated, where 1) social stratification was not recognized but continued to exist; 2) the right and so-called 'privileges' of indigenous people disappeared; and 3) the stigma of belonging to certain groups and categories, and the ambiguity involved in making these distinctions, became a social battlefield.

Barragan convincingly demonstrates that the body of laws founded on the principles of juridical equality was crucial to the making of the nation because "it created a contested field which shaped the strategies used by the indigenous and *mestizo* population in their relationship with the state and fueled the dynamics of identity" (ibid.: 59). Based on a detailed analysis of written laws, records of their application and the elite's legal discourse, Barragan also argues that in 19th century Bolivia, "enlightenment ideology and the imitation of Europe allowed [the ruling elites] to think of themselves as the patriarchal leaders who would bring light, civilization and progress to barbarous people" (ibid: 62).

Confirming Quijano's general argument, Barragan's analysis of Bolivian 19th century legislation suggests that the construction of citizenship involved not only a 'civilizing' process but also the reconstitution of what Chatterjee (1993) has called the 'rule of colonial difference.' At the core of this historical construction of citizenship is a constant conflict between the persistent discrimination on the basis of racial and ethnic criteria and a legally defined equality whereby citizenship implied to conceive of others as being of the same nature as oneself, as another subject -not as an objectified other -- even though he/she might occupy a different (unequal) socio-economic position. This original tension, this complex construction of citizenship so closely related to the reconstitution of the rule of colonial difference is constitutive of the colonality of power knowledge. Citizenship has been since the 19th century an open wound, its construction a battleground.

By exploring the interweaving between forms of colonality of power /knowledge and the power effects of development institutional and discursive practices this dissertation will shed light on the ways in which development practices contribute to the reproduction of the distorted vision referred to by the image of drunkenness and thus to the reproduction of the forms of discrimination through which Andean indigenous people remain excluded from exerting their rights as citizens of the state. I will thus argue that while development practices constantly misrecognize their connections to forms of colonality of power and knowledge, the development encounter is predicated on that same colonality of power and knowledge.

CHAPTER ONE

MULTIPLE SETTINGS AND SHIFTING POSITIONS: THE CONTEXT AND CONDITIONS OF A MULTI-SITED ETHNOGRAPHY

“In contemporary multi-sited research projects moving between public and private spheres of activity, from official to subaltern contexts, the ethnographer is bound to encounter discourses that overlap with his or her own. (...) Such ambivalent identifications, or perceived identifications, immediately locate the ethnographer within the terrain being mapped and reconfigure any kind of methodological discussion that presumes a perspective from above or “nowhere.” (Marcus 1995:112)

This chapter provides a general description of the different sites and of the modalities under which I conducted fieldwork in each site.

I. The Village of Totora Pampa¹

Part of canton Ventilla² in the municipality of Tacopaya, the village of Totora Pampa is located in the southwestern corner of the Arque province.³ It is the region of the puna, i.e. the semi-arid, undulated plains, in between the Oruro high plateau and the mountain range where narrow canyons, deep gorges, and wide ravines announce the beginnings of Cochabamba valleys.

¹ I am using the term village to refer to the rural settlements of indigenous peasants which in this region are called ‘comunidades campesinas.’ That is to say, the Spanish word ‘comunidad’ (community) is used to refer not only to the people but also to the physical space they inhabit, the settlement – territory where they live and own land.

² As mentioned before, the Arque province comprises two municipalities, Arque and Tacopaya, each of which is further subdivided in ‘cantones’

³ Totora Pampa borders, to the North, with the communities of Chiarkala and Jankiri; to the East with Kakisa and Puitucani; to the West with Sami-Sami; and to the south with Wikuyu and Karpani (the latter being part of the Kirkiawy ayllu, in the Bolivar province).

Totora Pampa is an out-of-the-way place, unless one lives there or has a good Toyota land-cruiser and an excellent driver. In that case and during the dry season, it takes less than 3 hours to go to Oruro and less than 5 hours to Cochabamba. By truck it takes 5 hours to go to Oruro and about 10 hours to Cochabamba. A road (if we can call as such a dusty precarious path) going southwards crosses the puna and reaches the road to the city of Oruro (100 kilometers). Another dusty, precarious and often impassable road goes north-eastwards and reaches the road that, starting in Bolivar, goes down to Tacopaya and then up to the highway that leads to Cochabamba city (157 kms.). Thus although Totora Pampa belongs to the Department of Cochabamba, it is closer to the Oruro high plateau and has more direct access to the city of Oruro than to Cochabamba. During my stay I would occasionally see trucks coming from and going back to Oruro. Only the pick-ups and land-cruisers of PROSANA and other NGOs would come from and go to Cochabamba. In order to go to Cochabamba Totora Pampeños have to walk for one hour to catch the weekly Bolivar – Cochabamba truck or walk for 4 hours through the mountains and ravines to Tacopaya where they have more options. When walking to or from those far away truck stops, they use donkeys to carry the potato loads they will sell in the city or, when coming back, the food-stuff, gas canisters, or sewing machines they bought in the city. Until the 1980s the most frequently used means of transportation was the train which traveled along the Arque river linking the cities of Oruro and Cochabamba. The railroad station of Aguas Calientes was less than a two-hour walk away from Totora Pampa.

At an altitude ranging between 3.800 and 4.000 meters above sea level, puna lands are dry, cold, and windy. Hidden in between round-top hills, rural villages, with

their adobe houses and thatched roofs, merge into the colors of the land and are hardly distinguishable from afar. The ‘peasant community’ or, more strictly speaking, the ‘*sindicato agrario*’ (agrarian union) of Totora Pampa is formed by 82 households and has a total population of 384 inhabitants (48% men and 52% women). The *sindicato* is comprised of around 1,100 hectares the agricultural management of which follows a complex system of field-crop rotation (including the combination of farming and grazing). Within this territory, there is a riverbank village of some 50 houses, also known as Totora Pampa; a more dispersed settlement of some 30 houses called Vaquería; and several scattered clusters of a few houses. The number of people actually living in these settlements varies in conjunction with the crop rotation cycle and the movement of the herds.⁴ I lived in the village, but my informants were drawn from the entire *sindicato*.

Most of the village’s homes are distributed around the plaza and along the one single street that runs parallel to the river or rather thin creek, easily crossed by jumping over the narrower sections. A few other houses are scattered on the plain facing the plaza on the other side of the creek. Facing the long rectangular dirt plaza are the church (which opens twice a year when the priest of Tacopaya comes), the school compound and the notary public’s office. Two newer buildings built as part of the projects supported by PROSANA, stand out. One, also facing the plaza, provides offices for local authorities and space for community meetings while also serving as a guesthouse. The second building, located behind the church, away from the plaza, hosts a “health center”

⁴ Most families have two residences. For example, the year I lived in Totora Pampa, the *aynuqa* of Totora Pampa was in fallow and therefore families were living in the village with their herds. When the *aynuqa* is being used for agricultural production most families move with their herds to their second residence. Some members of the household may stay in Totora Pampa, but the herds will be kept away until the *aynuqa* is left fallow again. A few households (5 or 6) have their second (or main) residence in a neighboring community where they also have access to land (inherited from their parents who bought it or acquired through marriage).

consisting of a small clinic. During the day, these buildings' cement walls and red tile-roofs with electricity generating solar panels appear conspicuous in a landscape of earth and straw. At night, their light bulbs shine in the darkness of the cold, moonless puna nights. Needless to say, there is no electricity and no running water in Totora Pampa. Most families use candles and kerosene lamps and cook with firewood. The few who can afford to bring gas containers from Oruro or Cochabamba -- development workers staying at the guest house, school teachers living in the school compound, the nurse practitioner at the health center, and the few families who own land in El Chapare, the far away region of tropical agricultural frontier-- are the only ones to cook on a gas stove.

I arrived in Totora Pampa in a rainy evening of February 1997. At the beginning, Totora Pampa struck me as a very quiet village, a place of reserved and private people. This first impression might have been related to the layout and use of private household space. Families live in compound like spaces formed by one or a few houses around closed backyards, behind which --and separated with a wall-fence-- is the cattle-shed. Houses are usually small and have one or two rooms with doors facing the backyard. Extended families might share a compound, but within it, each nuclear family tends to build their own house facing a separate yard. House doors facing the street --if there are any-- remain closed. Household members and frequent visitors use backyard doors. Houses facing the plaza are used as offices or stores rarely opened, or are rented to outsiders, as was the case with the school's principal or an Oruro merchant woman who only came for a few days during patron fiestas or harvest season. Walking around I could not know what was going on inside the compounds (not even if there was anybody home) unless I knocked at the door or climbed the yard's wall-fence, which of course I did not

dare to do. There were no idle wanderers or people sitting in front of their doors, ready for a chat; but there were children playing around in the early morning and late afternoon. The few times I would run into an adult, she would be rushing to take care of some urgent business. In this village that looked empty most of the time, people seemed to just mind their business and keep things to themselves.

This first impression of secrecy or mystery was more certainly based on the difficulty I had to figure out how to overcome the polite but clear distance with which I was received. During my first week, the days that followed my official presentation at the monthly community meeting (described in the previous chapter), I was mainly concerned with introducing Yolanda and myself to Totorá Pampa women, the absentees of community meetings. “We are here because we would like to know what the development institutions are doing in the region,” would be my usual presentation. “We don’t know much about that, men might know,” would be their usual answer at the beginning. Although men seemed less reluctant to talk, their answers to my questions about the community were short, evasive, or misleading. If they were a group of two or three, they often used a joking tone which left me clueless but which Yolanda interpreted as ‘atrevido,’ risqué humor, potentially offensive or containing sexual connotations. I then decided to shut up. For the next two months, I barely asked any questions but was asked many questions by visitors, like Mario and Zenobio, who dropped by my house after dinner.

I lived in the guesthouse during my ten-month stay. I shared the house with Yolanda, my field assistant, and various development workers who came and went and only occasionally spent a couple of nights there. My most frequent visitors were the

many children I caught spying through my window. Playing and drawing with them or cooking for them was one of my main activities in those first days. It is through their children that parents got to know me and began to accept my presence and eventually also my questions. I spent most of my first two months herding sheep with ten-year old Albertita behind the village hills, helping her 7 year old brother Praxides carry water from springs near the creek, watching their oldest 16-year-old sister Carmen weave fluorescent color belts on the loom behind the shed, and eventually, in the backyard, silently peeling potatoes with doña Angelita, their 38-year old mother, while don Marcelino, their 60-year old father, a man well versed in the arts of telling fortunes with coca leaves, listened to the news on the radio in a room I would be invited to enter only much later.

There was, however, one person who seemed very willing to talk openly and came to visit Yolanda and me on our first evening, even before our formal presentation at the community meeting. This was Seledonio, the 25 year-old nurse in charge of the health center. That first evening we had a long conversation. He seemed to know exactly what kind of information a researcher would want to get. Without my asking much, he provided me with an excellent introduction to the main characteristics of the community: the land rotation cycle, the agricultural calendar of activities, rules of inheritance, functions of the different authorities. The information he provided me with was certainly extremely useful as a structural framework to hold the puzzle and as a guide for my inquiries. But beyond this static description of principles and norms, the social fabric of village life remained impenetrable for some time.

Seledonio had been trained as a nurse by PROSANA and had known Yolanda since then. Yolanda also happened to be a nurse and she had worked with PROSANA around the town of Arque at the time when Seledonio was studying there. Seledonio was very happy to see Yolanda and was looking forward to discussing his work at the health center with her. While explaining to him the purpose of our stay, Yolanda had the good idea of comparing my research to the survey-study he had to do at the end of his training program. He brought that up next day at the community meeting and I am sure his intervention was decisive in obtaining the community's approval.

Seledonio, as well as his wife Mercedes, were from Totorá Pampa. Their families lived there, and they had land and a house, although they lived at the health center. His trajectory was unusual in this community and his double status as community peasant and nurse in charge of the health center was the source of both many rewards and many conflicts. I understood later that his availability and openness towards me was not only linked to his friendship with Yolanda or his connection to PROSANA, but also to his complicated status as insider/outsider deriving from his position as a nurse employed by the state. Seledonio and Mercedes had “changed their clothes” meaning that they had assumed a dress code that people in Totorá Pampa only wear when they travel outside the region, specially when they go to urban centers. Instead of the colorful home-spun-like short jacket, Seledonio wore jeans with sweaters and quilted coats. Instead of the black home-spun-like dress with home-woven shawls, Mercedes wore the wide pleated skirt called ‘pollera de chola.’ This non-peasant clothing, meant to avoid ethnic markings, was also known as “ropa de civil,” which I discuss below.

Since Seledonio was always busy at the health center, he could rarely take the time to work in his fields. Mercedes, his wife, was often left alone to perform the agricultural tasks, sometimes with the help of a cousin or a brother in law. I also spent a good part of my first two months accompanying Mercedes to the fields and learning to harvest or cook potatoes in an improvised underground oven.

Through my interactions with Mercedes and the children, I soon realized that Totorá Pampeños have many ways of closely following each other steps without saying much or asking any questions. This is maybe why they always act on the assumption that everybody knows (or can easily find out) everything about everybody. Their intimate knowledge of their environment and the shared routine established by the agricultural calendar enable them to decipher the signs of people's daily activities inscribed on the landscape, as if they were reading the chronicle from a local newspaper.

One afternoon, around 5 or 6pm, just before sunset, I went with Albertita to gather firewood from the bushes on the slope overlooking the village. When we came back, she told her mother that her aunt was probably not feeling very well. How did she know that? From the slope she had seen that there was no smoke coming out of her aunt's house. The absence of smoke at a time in which everybody in the village is supposed to be cooking dinner indicated to her that her old aunt who lived alone was not feeling well enough to cook.

Children are not only constantly paying attention to what is going on around them and taking note of anything unusual but they also know, from a very early age, a lot about their environment, who is who in the village and what belongs to whom. One day in April I was walking with Praxides on the hills that separate the village from the area where

wheat had been planted that year. Since I knew that, in principle, each family was supposed to have at least a plot in that area, I asked Praxides if he could point to me the one that belonged to his family. While for me the area looked like one continuous grain field with a few empty spots freshly harvested, for Praxides it looked like a quilt made out of very distinct patches of slightly different kinds of barley or slightly different patterns of farming. Not only did he know which plots belonged to his family but he also knew who were the owners of all the other plots. On a quick glance, he could easily infer who had been harvesting barley that day. Albertita could not only recognize, even from a distance, sheep or llama belonging to her but she could also tell which animal belonged to whose herd.

Daily activities in Totora Pampa vary greatly according to the agricultural calendar. The places where these activities are performed also change from year to year following the land rotation system (on this system, more below). By and large, during the months of intense agricultural work (seed-time from September to November and harvest from February March to May), the village looks deserted for most part of the day. If it is a school day, some human activity can be perceived inside the school compound. A Bolivian flag (horizontal red, yellow, and green stripes) up on the school's pole indicates that there are classes and the sound of children playing in the school yard interrupts the whistle of the puna wind every now and then. Between 8 and 9 am, shepherds (8 to 11 year old children or their grandmothers if the children are in school) cross the village pushing a herd of 30 – 40 sheep, a few goats and a few llamas. Right after, parents, their babies, and / or their teenage children rush towards the opposite direction with plow and oxen. By ten o'clock they have all disappeared behind the hills. They would reappear in

the afternoon, between 5 and 6, playful shepherds from one direction, their parents from the opposite direction, mothers in a hurry to start cooking. If they run into somebody, women exchange greetings without slowing down, men would occasionally stop briefly to exchange a few words.

During the months of low farming activity there is still a lot of work to be done but the fields don't require intensive full time labor. Mid-May to mid-September are the months during which Totorá Pampeños can afford the time to travel. A few women might try and some might succeed in organizing the household so that they can go to their villages of origin to visit their families for a couple of days. More importantly, this is the time for men's seasonal migration mostly to the coca leaf region of El Chapare, the region that has increasingly become the main source for indispensable complementary cash income (the only one guaranteed).

June, July, and August are the months during which young girls weave the textiles they will parade at the festivals (fiestas) they hope to attend, mothers take care of the herding, children attend school more regularly, men sit in their backyards to sew *aimilla* dresses for their wives or jackets for themselves with their manual Singer sewing machines. Young single men use the same Singer machines to embroider elaborate patterns on the jackets they will wear for the festivals (fiestas) they will attend. Late May early June is also the period of threshing the grain, and June through August the season for making *chuño* (dried, de-hydrated potatoes). The year I was there, these activities were carried out on flat areas along the creek: the village was transformed; there were people all around and constant movement. They were still always busy, but they seemed somehow more relaxed. Maybe that was my impression because by then they all knew

me, got used to my presence and they were more willing to put up with my interrogations.

It is in the evenings that people can afford the time to sit and chat. To have a kitchen with a gas stove and electric light at night turned out to be very useful for my fieldwork. During the many cold nights that Yolanda and I spent alone in the house, all sorts of visitors dropped by after dinner. Among them there were children who wanted to do their homework, adult men interested in discussing the new laws, women who wanted to exchange a cup of dried potatoes for a cup of sugar, school teachers who wanted to share their views about the educational reform, or authorities who wanted help in writing a letter. These were privileged moments for engaging in long conversations and animated debates while sipping a cup of hot tea. It was on such an evening that the conversation with Mario and Zenobio, which I reported in the introduction, took place.

When I visited a family in the evening, I would usually find them gathered around the firewood stove getting the warmth from the live coals. Chatting with the parents while the children fell asleep I learned about the past; as if there were something in the calmness of the night that made it easier for memories to come alive. The past that came alive in the stories don Rene, the notary public, told me concerned the droughts of the 1980s. He was in his 20s and his children were babies, they lost everything: the whole harvest, including the seeds, and all their animals died of thirst. The past that came alive in the stories don Marcelino told me concerned the 1950s Agrarian Reform. In 1953, Don Marcelino had traveled in the train that took thousands of peasants from different regions to attend the massive peasant gathering where the Reform was first announced. Since then, he has been a member and faithful supporter of the MNR, the political party

governing at that time (and again during the time of my fieldwork). Although he later acquired membership cards from other political parties (he showed me 3) he always remained a *movimientista* (an MNR supporter) in his heart. “Many political parties make all sorts of promises and the younger generations believe them, but I am old enough to know that they never fulfill their promises. The MNR gave us the land, nobody else has given us anything...”

This otherwise rather quiet village was thoroughly transformed during special events. The first time I witnessed such transformation was when representatives of an USA NGO (called PCI) arrived with trucks loaded with foodstuff (flour, sugar, etc. packed in large white sacs and labeled with the American flag) to launch an aid program of work for food. The other times were during the *fiestas*. There are two types of *fiestas*: civic celebrations like the parade for Independence Day on the 6th of August and religious celebrations like the patron saint fiesta for Santa Barbara on the 4th of December.

The fact that the people of Totora Pampa refer to themselves as a peasant community does not preclude constant tensions, insurmountable conflicts and a clear awareness of internal stratification. Whenever I brought up the issue of inequality and socio-economic stratification, the first general answer would be “we are all equally poor here.” Once I started asking about specific families, a different picture emerged. First, according to local perceptions, they were all more or less equally poor, but with the exception of don Wilfredo Clemente. Being the single child of his parents who, in turn were also single children, he had inherited the largest amount of land and of sheep, and he also owned a truck in the city of Oruro. Everybody I asked, including don Wilfredo himself, considered that his family was much better off than the rest and that no one else

in the community could aspire to their standard of living. Then, among the rest, the more or less equally poor, 5 to 7 families were considered slightly better off. This was not just because they had more land, but also because they had better quality land, were able to produce larger amounts for the market and/or were able to engage in some commercial activity (a store, buying and selling animals), and could thus generate a permanent flow of cash. The 14 families that own some land in the tropical region of Chapare were also considered to be doing better than the rest. They were set apart in the local classification because their well being did not derive from their situation within the community. At the other extreme, there were 6 families considered to be poorer than the rest because of their low level of agricultural production, which forced them to migrate more often than the rest. They either had less land than the rest or else their land was of a very bad quality, and they did not participate in networks of reciprocal exchange through which they could have access to better land or more labor.

Furthermore, 'Totora Pampa' is also the name of the '*Subcentral*,' the next level in the union organization hierarchy, which is formed by eight neighboring agrarian sindicatos or unions: Totora Pampa, Chiarkala, Jank'iri, Janq'oyu, Kakisa, Llallagua, Puitucani, and Wik'uyu. When it was first created during the years that followed the 1953 Agrarian Reform, the *Sub-central* of Totora Pamapa was formed by 13 *sindicatos agrarios* and was coextensive with what had been, until the reform, the *hacienda* of Totora Pampa. Indeed, before the 1953 Agrarian Reform, Totora Pampa also was the name of a large hacienda, a land estate of 11.258 hectares. With the agrarian reform law, the 13 *estancias* (farms) of the hacienda became the 13 *sindicatos agrarios* of the *Subcentral* of Totora Pampa (later subdivided in 2 sub-centrales). From the 11.250

hectares of the hacienda –later Subcentral-- around 1,100 hectares corresponded to the *sindicato agrario* of Totora Pampa.⁵

As in other parts of the Andean highlands, the management of agricultural space in Totora Pampa follows a complex system of field – crop rotation (including the combination of farming and grazing) which tends to maximize productivity and minimize risks. This system called *aynuqa* can be found in the higher parts of the Arque province; the closer one gets to the lower parts of the valleys, the less likely its occurrence. While it is true that haciendas in the valleys followed a different form of management of the agricultural space, the case of Totora Pampa is representative of those highland regions where the incorporation into hacienda did not involve the disintegration of the *aynuqa* system. (More about this in chapter 6.)

II. The Towns of Arque and Tacopaya⁶

Seats of the municipal governments and parishes of the two municipalities of the Arque Province, Arque and Tacopaya are two very small valley towns, located at opposite banks of the Arque River, some 30 kilometers apart. To go from Totora Pampa to Tacopaya I walked some 5 hours, 2 hours down the mountains to reach the Arque River and the empty train station of Aguas Calientes and then 3 hours down stream, on rails that run along the river. From Tacopaya to Arque it takes another 6 hour walk

⁵ These peasant communities or ‘sindicatos’ are related also in other ways. First, they form the jurisdiction of the *corregidor*, the local authority that reports conflicts and problems to the provincial sub-prefect. Second, and related to the previous point, they are part of the *alcaldes de campo* system. The village of Totora Pampa plays a central role: the offices of corregidor and alcalde mayor always go to its members. Finally, they are also related marriage since they form an endogamous unit.

⁶ I am using ‘town’ as a translation of the Spanish word ‘pueblo.’ Although extremely small in size, these pueblos are designed and designated as ‘urban areas’ and stand in sharp contrast to the surrounding

further down stream on the same rails; rails of a train which did not run anymore.⁷

Larger than Tacopaya, the town of Arque is also more important from an administrative point of view since it is the capital of the province. As such, it is the seat of the provincial court of justice and of the sub-prefecture, the highest state office at the provincial level.⁸ However, Tacopaya has more traffic (meaning that more cars pass through) because it is on the only road that crosses the Arque province from north to south.

Deserted by heavy emigration to urban centers and reduced to less than half the size they had in the 1950s by floods and landslides, Arque and Tacopaya are ghost towns of ruins and locked houses, pale remains of times well gone by. They are the last traces of the times when haciendas and mills flourished along the Arque River, a well-frequented route connecting Cochabamba agricultural valleys to the mining centers on the high plateau. Hacienda and mill owners lived in the towns that developed on the riverbank as market and resting points (and train stations) along this route

All that remains from Tacopaya is a long L-shaped street with some 30 barely habitable houses, only half of them regularly inhabited. In contrast, Arque has kept its old and large square (plaza) and a few blocks (1 to 4) of the streets around the plaza. Tacopaya has a population of less than a 100 people, while Arque has a population of some 400 people. Put together, the population of both towns represents less than 3% of the total population of Arque Province, that is 18.249 people (6,820 in the Arque section

indigenous peasant villages, i.e. '*comunidades campesinas*.' It is this contrast pueblo – *comunidad campesina* that I aim at conveying through the terms town – village (see footnote 4 above).

⁷ The railroad along the Arque River was built in the 1920s to connect the cities of Oruro and Cochabamba. All train services along this line were canceled when the railroad company was privatized in 1996 – 1997. When I was leaving in Arque in 1996 I would occasionally see a cargo train passing and I took it on two occasions to attend meetings in Tacopaya.

⁸ Following the politico-administrative organization of the Bolivian state, prefects govern departments and sub-prefects govern provinces; prefects are appointed by the Bolivian president and sub-prefects are appointed by prefects.

and 11,492 in the Tacopaya section).⁹ Almost all of them (a good 98%) have siblings, children, or close relatives living in the cities of Oruro or Cochabamba and are constantly traveling back and forth. In both towns, PROSANA bought houses from former hacienda owners and restored them to accommodate the teams of *técnicos* (agronomists, nurses and field assistants) in charge of implementing the various projects in the surrounding peasant villages.

Reminding us of more prosperous times in this temperate valley, the plaza of Arque is a fairly large square / park with geometrical gardens, large, beautiful old trees, benches all around, a kiosk in the middle and a statue of a national figure.¹⁰ In the northern side of the plaza is the town hall (with the sub-prefect's, the mayor's and the judge's offices), the church, the hospital (a very small one), and the office of the notary public. When I first arrived in Arque on a weekday in May 1996, the plaza was still and the town seemed emptied of people. Just one of the four shops on the plaza was open. A basket covered with a white cloth in front of an open door announced the availability of fresh-baked bread. Also open were the parish office on the western side, the judge's house (which he rented from a landowner who lived in Cochabamba) on the eastern side, and PROSANA's house on the southeastern corner of the plaza. Freshly painted and renovated, PROSANA's two-story house stood out among the rest of the old, decaying houses around the plaza, most closed from the outside with big padlocks. The faded walls still bore old campaign posters from the municipal elections of 1995: a white, red and black arrow from ADN, with the slogan "Vote Progress for Arque, Vote Neri Medrano;"

⁹ According to the 1992 census (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas - INE 1992)

¹⁰ This statue represents ex-president Barrientos who died in a helicopter accident when he visited Arque in 1969.

a blue rectangle, labeled “UCS with the People;” pink letters, spelling out “Long Live the MNR, Long Live Participación Popular;” and the nationally famous slogan “Bolivia La Nueva: Change for Everyone.”

And indeed, not much happened in town during the week. The town hall building was open, but the working office for the municipalities of Arque and Tacopaya were in the city of Cochabamba.¹¹ The only functioning offices were the judge’s, the notary’s, and the parish. Also the school (only elementary and middle levels), the children’s boarding house¹² and the health center were open. One store in the plaza and the mill in the outskirts of town were the only local businesses working. At the beginning I could also see men working around the train station (or what remained of it), but that did not last very long. The railroad represented the last income-generating activity in the province that was not directly linked to agriculture. Until the 1980s, daily passenger trains would stop at the Arque town station and travelers would eat at the town’s *pensiones* (small restaurants) and buy the town’s renowned bread. Up until the 1990s Arque remained an important station for cargo trains, and served as the operational base for local railroad maintenance. In this respect, the railway provided a small but vital source of economic dynamism, especially in the form of 50 railroad workers paying for room and board. The closing down of Arque’s station took place while I was living in Arque in 1996. Upon the departure of the last 10 railroad workers, the remaining *pensiones* in town closed their doors. Thereafter the only remaining sources of income were those linked to the surrounding peasant communities.

¹¹ To carry out the tasks attached to new responsibilities of municipal governments, mayors and their staff needed not only computers and phones (there was no electricity or phone lines in Arque or Tacopaya).

¹² If there were enough children to attend school it was because the priest established a boarding house where children from the surrounding peasant communities could stay during the week.

That peasants from the surrounding villages are a source of income for town dwellers appeared clearly to me on my first Sunday in Arque. From the early morning, the plaza was filled with colors and music, and a hubbub of people from the surrounding villages. The women were decked out in brightly colored polleras of *bayeta*¹³, perfectly white blouses, woven *llijllas* worn “en q’epi,” or slung over one shoulder and tied in the front¹⁴, and white woolen hats. The youngest girls’ hats sported brightly colored woven strips and decorations; later I learned that this meant they were single. The men wore either cotton pants, black or white, or blue jeans, with short jackets of brightly colored *bayeta*, embroidered on the lapels by a sewing machine, and white hats of wool. Many strolled about playing their *charangos*; some carried large radios on one shoulder (a sign, I was to discover, that one had been to the Chapare.) It was the last Sunday of May, *fiesta del Espiritu Santo*, and there was a mass as well as a fair in town; people from the surrounding villages had come to town in their finery. A store on the southeast corner of the plaza had tables out in the street to display its wares: *bayeta* cloth in raucous colors: fluorescent green, pink, orange, red, violet; polleras of *bayeta*, white cotton blouses, *bayeta* jackets, balls of yarn in the same colors, and white wool hats. On the west side of the plaza some fifteen vendors had improvised their posts with plastic and cloth on the ground. They sold hot peppers, tomatoes, onions, chunks of animal fat, colored sweets, bananas, coca, matches and candles. A pair of vendors also offered sugar, rice, noodles,

¹³ *Bayeta* is a plain-woven fabric of sheep’s wool. Until 50 years ago, people in rural areas spun their own yarn to make *bayeta*. The *bayeta* fabric and yarn sold in the Arque fair today are synthetic.

¹⁴ A *llijlla* is a square cloth woven of wool, which women both use to carry moderately heavy things (a few pounds of potatoes, a baby) and wear for their appearance. *Llijllas* are usually woven with elaborate patterns, and young women display them at fiestas to show off their weaving skill.

cigarettes, batteries or bread¹⁵. Most of the vendors were “*de pollera*,” they wore the pleated skirts of synthetic material characteristic of “*cholas*” as well as black or brown felt hats; only the youngest two or three were “*de vestido*”, or dressed in simple a-line skirts..

This was not a *campesino* market like the one in Pongo, which I visited several times during my stay in the province. Located on the main Cochabamba-Oruro road Pongo’s fair attracts peasants bringing potatoes, truckers and intermediaries (*rescatistas*), as well as vendors from far and wide, and the numerous selling posts offer a tremendous variety and amount of goods. Neither truckers nor intermediaries ever get to Arque; the town is not a crossroads to anywhere. Arque’s is a ‘mini-market’, with small vending posts and tiny quantities (a vendor might offer two oranges, five bananas, ten tomatoes.) The vendors are from the town, and their patrons are from nearby villages, people who are in town to attend mass or meet with the local authorities.

Seated in the plaza, I took in the hustle and bustle of people, colors and music. The doors of PROSANA stood open, and there was a steady traffic of *campesinos* (peasants) coming to talk with the executive secretary of the Central Campesina¹⁶. The doors of the church, the parish office, the sub-prefect and the notary public were also open. Community *corregidores* and *alcaldes de campo* visited the sub-prefect, with their elegant ponchos and rods of office.¹⁷ From the plaza I could also see the market vendors

¹⁵ In the past there was a more permanent municipal marketplace, but it was washed away in one of the floods that has carried off half of the town. In November 1996, a new market was built by the Municipality of Arque, with funds from *Participación Popular*.

¹⁶ On Sundays, PROSANA’s offices served as the office of the *Central Campesina*; a year after I arrived, the *Campesinos*’ Union built its own office, also with the help of the *Alcaldía*.

¹⁷ *Corregidores* are local magistrates local authorities in charge of keeping order and managing conflicts within a certain area, usually a canton. If local conflicts go out of hand they report them to the provincial sub-prefect. *Alcaldes de Campo* are partly the *corregidor*’s aids and partly traditional ethnic authorities, a variation of an office created in colonial times.

and their patrons doing business. At the clothing- vendor people paid with money; at the food stalls with money or goods.¹⁸ In sharp contrast to Totora Pampa, people hang around, specially in Arque's plaza, and one always find somebody siting in front of their houses ready for a piece of gossip or idle chat.

By early afternoon the plaza began to empty, as groups of people headed into the other parts of town, which extend two blocks west of the plaza, and three blocks to the north¹⁹. They were going to the town's *chicherías* to relieve their thirst. In Arque, a little red flag hanging over the door indicates that a house is serving *chicha*, freshly made corn beer. Walking in the streets of Arque on that Sunday afternoon I counted 20 red flags. In the late afternoon everyone began to head home, the women singing, the men playing their *charangos*. The next day, Monday, the ancient and decrepit weekly bus set out for Cochabamba; it would return on Thursday. Everybody in town has a relative or connection in the city and many town dwellers are constantly traveling back and forth. They bring from the city the items they will sell to or barter with peasant villagers. In the bus departed most of the vendors. The town returned to its habitual stillness.

The relations between town folks and peasants from the surrounding villages are not limited to the exchanges at the market or the *chicherías* on Sunday. Long lasting ties established through patron-client arrangements guarantee the reproduction of unequal exchange relations that take various forms. The story of doña Nieves, a 47-year-old widow and mother of 8 children, is quite representative of the many stories I heard from other women who as single mothers, widows, or divorcees, face the challenge of raising a

¹⁸ Barter is usually done with *chuño*, measured on a plate or in a basket.

¹⁹ One block south of the plaza lie the train tracks, which run along the banks of the Río Arque. To the southwest is a block of abandoned houses, then a recently planted grove of eucalyptus trees and a huge retaining wall that protects the town from the threatening Wallia River.

family in the midst of great economic hardships. Doña Nieves started working as a maid when she was 12 years old. She worked and lived in the house of her godmother, the wife of a lawyer in Arque. “She made me work from 5 am on” told me Doña Nieves one afternoon while she was watching the bread baking in the adobe oven.

“I got married when I was 17 just to keep working like a donkey and I’ve worked very hard ever since. My husband was a railroad worker but he did not have a permanent contract, we did not have any benefits and I did not get any pension when he died. I started moving around with commerce when I got married. At that time there was a daily train between Cochabamba and Oruro, it was easier to travel around. I would make bread and *chicha* to sell in the city and I would bring goods sell here. Now I still move around with commerce, but without the train I have to walk for hours in order to reach the highway from where I can take a bus or a truck to go to Oruro. All my children live in Oruro, most of them are married, but I still have the 3 younger to support. I send them to Oruro to go to school because they would not learn anything at the school here.”

In order to support these children who lived in a rented room in a poor neighborhood in Oruro, doña Nieves had to keep moving around combining multiple exchanges of petty commerce. She sold the bread she baked in Arque along the Cochabamba – Oruro highway, in the streets of Oruro or in the fairs held during patron saints fiestas in Arque, Tacopaya, or other neighboring towns; while in Oruro she also cooked food to sell in the market; from Oruro she brought a few goods (candles, matches, batteries, fat, sugar, rice, or noodles) to sell in the shop her 70-year old mother tended in their house’s front room in Arque; during harvest time she walked through the surrounding peasant villages bartering for potatoes or corn that she would later sell in Oruro. In order to secure a minimum gain in her precarious business, doña Nieves relied on the good deals she could get when bartering with her *compadres*. For example, she got most of the wheat for making bread from don Desiderio, a peasant from the nearby community of Taraqachi, and father of one of doña Nieves grandsons. I met don Desiderio when he was unloading

bags of freshly ground flour from his donkey in front of doña Nieves' house. He was in town because he had to see the judge that afternoon, in the meantime he was helping out doña Nieves: he used his donkey to take the wheat he sold (bartered) her to the mill for grinding, then he went for firewood for her oven. In exchange, doña Nieves would allow him to lay his blankets on the floor of her front room – shop for the night and feed him two large bowls of soup.

Similar to doña Nieves' were the cases of doña Sinforoza, doña Ely, and the majority of women I met in Arque and Tacopaya. I met doña Sinforoza in Tacopaya, she was selling the renown Arque bread and empanadas at the fair during the patron saint fiesta (Santa Catalina – November 23). After the fiesta we walked together back to Arque. Along the way she told me her story together with extensive gossip about each and everybody I knew in Arque town. She had migrated to Cochabamba city when she got married. Her husband had gotten into the habit of drinking and hitting her. She escaped from the husband with her children and was now living in Arque with her old mother. Doña Ely had migrated to Oruro where her husband worked for the railway company. He had a heart condition and had to go into early retirement. (This heart condition was actually Chagas). They could not make it in Oruro and went back to Arque. He died shortly after. Doña Ely lived in her father's house. Her father had been fortunate enough to find a job in Arque: he was hired as caretaker by PROSANA and could help her out. An important complement to her meager income came from her occasional cooking for the events PROSANA organized in Arque (workshops, seminars, meetings, etc.) But her father also died (shortly before I arrived in Arque) and her younger brother came back from the city to take over the father's job with PROSANA. Because of inheritance issues,

doña Ely and her brother were on very bad terms and did not talk to each other. She did not want to cook for PROSANA anymore because she could not stand being around her brother (so she said) and went back to her diversified mobile petty commerce: making bread to sell it in Cochabamba and travelling around with barter.

More fortunate were older widows whose children sent them money from the city or who received a steady pension from the state (because their husbands had worked for the Railway Company), they alternated between making bread and making *chicha*, but they did not move around with barter and commerce. Much better was the situation of older couples who had been able to save money and make some investment and cover the expenses for their children's education. Such was the case of don Gregorio and doña Celestina Iriarte who were in their 60s and owned the best furnished and only always open shop at the southeastern corner of the plaza. In 1996, don Gregorio was Arque's mayor and doña Celestina kept the store. She did not barter for commerce, but no other store in town could compete with hers and obviously her store would not survive without her peasant clientele. Doña Celestina and don Gregorio were originally from the highlands of Arque (more about them in chapter 4). The importance of the exchanges between town dwellers and peasant villagers and the extent of the dependency of the former from the latter was clear to me from the beginning, but was certainly not acknowledged by the town dwellers.

Of a different kind (and more likely to be overtly tense – conflictive) were the relations and exchanges between community peasants and the landowners of small and medium size haciendas who had not been totally affected by the 1953 agrarian reform and had thus kept access to land. With the exception of one or two, these landowners

lived in the city but kept their houses in Arque or Tacopaya and came a few times per year (for fiestas, the seeding period and harvest). These landowners had sharecropping arrangements with the peasants of their ex-haciendas (see chapter 4).

One does not need much time in town to perceive the tensions in the interactions between those who live in town and those who visit from the surrounding villages. Also striking are the signs through which differences are marked. Clothing is the most visible marker of difference. *Vecinos de pueblo* (as town dwellers are usually called) do not wear bayeta-like clothes or white sheep-wool hats. Older men wear gabardine-like men's slacks, shirts, sweaters and occasionally a suit jacket; younger men wear jeans, T-shirts and sweaters. Most older women wear a '*pollera*' (wide gathered skirt, sometimes pleated,) with a '*manta*' (a rectangular manufactured shawl), and a few older women wear dresses or straight, narrow skirts. Most younger women wear jeans, dresses or straight narrow skirts, and only a very few younger women wear *pollera* and *manta*.²⁰ The bayeta-like clothes that most Arque community peasants wear are not always as colorful as the ones I described earlier. In some areas, especially around Tacopaya, women wear black bayeta-like *pollera* with a black jacket embroidered with colorful ribbons, and in the higher areas bordering Bolivar province they wear a black dress (the blouse and the wide gathered skirt are of the same fabric and are sewn together).

Language is another marker of difference. Both *vecinos* and peasant villagers speak Qhishwa, but while all *vecinos* also speak Spanish, most peasant villagers

²⁰ Women who wear *pollera* and *manta* wear braided hair and a regionally distinctive hat. Community peasant women also wear braided hair and their wide gathered skirts have a similar cut, but instead of a manufactured '*manta*' they wear a homespun square cape with elaborate design to show their weaving skills. The *pollera* and *manta* dress is usually called '*pollera de chola*'. It is worth noting that when community peasant women go to the city or to the Chapare, they change into a '*pollera de chola* outfit'. Also important to note that this dress distinction does not apply to other areas of Cochabamba. Finally,

don't (more exactly, women don't and men barely do). Body language and forms of utilizing space within the town are also different. When individual men or women from neighboring communities come to town on an ordinary weekday, they move quietly and swiftly.

The tensions between *vecinos* and peasant villagers can be easily perceived when observing interactions in everyday life. The tone in which *vecinos* address themselves to *campesinos* (peasants) ranges from rude and dismissive to authoritarian, paternalistic, and patronizing. Distances and markers of difference are maintained even when *vecinos* and *campesinos* have to share town spaces for some special event. In Arque town there is on Sundays a mass in Qhishwa mostly attended by community peasants, and a mass in Spanish mostly attended by *vecinos*; if peasant villagers are present they typically stand in the back of the church. In Tacopaya, until the 80s peasants had to hear the mass standing at the door.

Generally, *vecinos* and peasant villagers do not celebrate the same religious fiestas and do not participate in each other's fiestas. However when they do, for example during Arque's and Tacopaya's patron saint fiestas, they do not participate in each other's activities, which moreover do not occur at the same place or at the same time. Distances are also kept after death: tombs are located in different sides of the cemetery. On the day of the dead, November 2nd, everybody visits the cemetery and performs the same rituals, yet they do not participate in each other's prayers; they are together but they do not mingle.

young girls wearing *pollera de cholita* in Arque town are usually girls who moved recently from a peasant community into Arque town.

Town dwellers refer to themselves as ‘we the people who live in town’ or ‘we *vecinos del pueblo*’ in contrast to ‘they, the *campesinos* or sometimes the same in its diminutive form (*los campesinitos*). Although these terms and distinctions are loaded with implicit racist prejudices, explicit racial categories are seldomly used, if at all. I never heard the word “blancos” (white), and I rarely heard the term ‘mestizo’ (as in “We Bolivians we are all mestizos”, or “We town dwellers are mestizos”). Still more seldomly did I hear the term ‘Indio’. I would however very often hear the term “civilized”, both in town and in peasant communities. But what does “civilized” mean in Arque? This is how I learned what the term meant. In my frequent trips to Tacopaya, I often visited doña Filomena, a woman who wears *pollera* (*una señora de pollera*), a widow in her late 50s who kindly shared with me her many memories about the times when Tacopaya was a lively town. One day we were sitting in front of her house, facing the river. She was describing to me how that street had looked at an earlier time: Earlier there had been a row of houses and, further up, a plaza with two-story houses belonging to landowners. The latter are now deceased, and their children (engineers and lawyers) live in the city of Oruro. Today the same area is but a bare riverbank. Just when she was reciting to me the names of Tacopaya’s landowning families, doña Dionisia, an older woman, also ‘*de pollera*’, passed by. I knew doña Dionisia because I often bought soda at her store. Doña Filomena commented to me “you see, I was telling you about doña Adela Montaña who used to live here but she is already dead. She raised Dionisia, she brought her from the countryside when she was a little kid. Dionisia was raised here since she was a kid and she got civilized, her sisters are still peasants (*desde wawa se ha criado aqui y se ha civilizado, sus hermanas siguen siendo campesinitas*).” To my question about

what she meant by “civilized,” she answered “because of the clothes and even because of the word (por la ropa y hasta por la palabra).” Seeing the question mark on my face she added, “she wears civil clothes and she speaks Spanish (se viste de civil y habla castellano).”

III. The City of Cochabamba: PROSANA’s Headquarters

The department of Cochabamba is a highly diversified region that includes not only valleys and highlands, but also tropical and semi-tropical production areas. Ever since colonial times, highlands and valleys were integrated into a wider economy linked to the mines of Potosí and Oruro and thus became important sources of labor and agricultural products. The tropical lowlands remained by and large an impenetrable frontier until the 1950s. The 1953 agrarian reform put an end to the hacienda regime that had dominated agrarian relations in the valleys of Cochabamba since the sixteenth century. More precisely, the agrarian reform confirmed the emergence of a diversified peasant economy and the demise of a landowning class that had started losing its economic power long before. Indeed, as Brooke Larson’s study has thoroughly documented, the tendency towards fragmentation of agricultural units and small-scale agricultural production started in the later part of the 18th century. Since then, an increasing number of valley peasants became petty commodity producers, engaged in petty commerce as traders or artisans, developed a regional network of peasant markets and gave shape to a diversified peasant economy “that has made a deep imprint in the region down to the present day” (Larson 1988:209). Thus, she argues, “[c]ontemporary scenes of a robust peasant economy, based on ... small-scale agriculture and a strong

commercial orientation, are not byproducts of the 1953 agrarian reform. They harken back to colonial times.” (Larson 1988: 295)

While the distribution of hacienda land among valley peasants did not represent a radical change but reinforced an old tendency in the valleys, the agrarian reform and the new policies implemented by the MNR government after 1953 did trigger important transformations in other areas of Cochabamba. First, at the national level, the priorities and poles of economic development shifted from mining industry to agribusiness and oil (gas) production. This involved a geographical shift from the highlands to the lowlands. While in the highlands and inter Andean valleys haciendas were dismantled and land distributed among Andean peasants, in the eastern and northern tropical lowlands large estates were consolidated for the production cash-crops for export. The axis of economic activity that run along the Altiplano connecting the mining centers of Potosí and Oruro to La Paz was replaced by a new axis connecting La Paz and Santa Cruz through Cochabamba. Thus centrally located, Cochabamba became a hub of transport and commercial activities. The western highlands, e.g. Arque, however lost their economic importance as trade corridors between the mining centers and the central valley and were left outside the new development axis. Second, another transformation brought about by the 1950s reforms was the expansion of the agricultural frontier in the lowlands of Cochabamba, i.e. the region of El Chapare. The problem of land scarcity in the valleys and highlands compounded with deterioration of the conditions of agricultural production and the increasing fragmentation of the agricultural unit (*minifundizacion*) triggered the increasing migration of Andean peasants to this region. There they specialized in the

production of tropical fruits (oranges, pineapples, bananas) and coca leaves (Blanes and Flores 1984).

In the decades that followed the agrarian reform the, central valleys saw the expansion of peasant economy characterized by increasing integration into market relations, spatial mobility through a regional network of peasant markets and diversification of economic activities (i.e. household members engage in multiple income generating activities). As family enterprises of petty producers, valley peasant households combined farming with trading, temporary migration (as far as Buenos Aires), self-employment as artisans or truck owners and temporary wage laborers in urban settings (CERES 1981, Long and Dandler 1978, Lagos 1994). The commoditization and diversification of the peasant economy in the valleys was accompanied by processes of socio-economic stratification, as illustrated by the case of peasants – truck owners studied by Maria Lagos (1994).

In the 1980s when a profound political and economic crisis affected Bolivia (see chapter 2), Cochabamba experienced a sort of economic boom unfortunately linked to the then growing international cocaine traffic which triggered an unprecedented increasing demand for coca leaves. As the price of coca leaves skyrocketed, valley and highland peasants, petty traders, small entrepreneurs, and adventurers were attracted to El Chapare. Coca growers increased the size of their plots and obtained higher incomes compared to other peasants. The coca boom created an intense economic movement within and outside the region. In spite of its uncertain and vulnerable basis, the boom generated income opportunities and alleviated the stress of the economic crisis (Laserna 1995). By the 1990s, El Chapare became the target of drastic policies of coca plantation eradication

and military intervention. It also became the site of resistance and confrontation by an increasingly strong peasant organization. For many impoverished peasants of the highlands (e.g. Arque), owning a plot of coca or migrating seasonally to El Chapare remained—despite the risks—an important and indispensable source of income.²¹

Capital of the department, the city of Cochabamba is located in the central valley, one of the widest and more fertile inter-Andean valleys of the Bolivian highlands. Rather small until the 1950s, the city has expanded since and today it has a population of more than 500.000 inhabitants. The urban growth of Cochabamba was linked to the increasing commoditization and diversification of the peasant economy of the main valleys (Valle Bajo, Central and Alto) (CERES 1981, Dandler et al 1982, Calderon and Rivera 1984, Rivera and Calderon 1984). A pivotal aspect of this urbanization process was the development of a very large peasant market in the southern part of the city, the market of 'La Cancha' (Calderon and Rivera 1984). This huge market place is the principal center for food and consumer goods for Cochabamba's urban and rural populations. A large number of peasant households of the valleys establish a double residence between the city and the countryside, as part of their strategy of economic diversification. Using the maximum labor capacity of each family member, this strategy combines agricultural production with trading, wage labor, self-employment, and / or the development of a family enterprise for the artisanal production of goods (from food to tiles) (Dandler and Medeiros 1988; Calderon and Rivera 1984, Rivera and Calderon 1984). Women, in

²¹ According to an official report on Cochabamba's GDP, the agricultural sector represents 41%, manufacturing industries 32%; commerce 18%; services 9%. Prefectura de Cochabamba 1997:63.

particular, are involved in commerce and the most successful of them own a shop in La Cancha.²² As Calderon and Rivera (1984:175) argue,

in Cochabamba, urban development is the outcome of both the dynamics of a peasant economy linked to the dominant market system and of the fragile industrialization processes. In this context, different forms of production and reproduction are juxtaposed and articulated; urban growth is more the outcome of the role played by petty-commodity economies than of a modern capitalist industrialization.

By the 1990s, family shops and small-scale enterprises represented 97% of the manufacturing industry of Cochabamba (Prefectura de Cochabamba 1997:67).

This pattern of urbanization is clearly expressed in the spatial organization of the city. On the southern side, around La Cancha and along the roads connecting the city to the valleys' rural towns, we find shantytowns of rural migrants, low income housing new urban developments, small factories and family workshops. In the administrative center, a few churches, or convents and parts (or ruins) of old colonial style hacendado houses barely reveal the contours of the old city. Residential neighborhoods expand towards the north and north east. In these areas we find two or three story family houses surrounded with well kept gardens and tree covered streets and plazas. The coca-boom of the 80s, the laundering of drug traffic related money, and the financial speculation that followed neo-liberal policies of privatization of state enterprises brought to this city a few sumptuous villas in residential areas and a few tall buildings with dark / mirror windows around La Cancha as well as in the center and large avenues of residential areas.

I arrived in the city of Cochabamba in March 1996, got a room in a family house, started my contacts with PROSANA and took lessons to improve my Qhishwa skills.

²² Arque peasants are not part of this urban or rural diversified economy. If they migrate temporarily to the city they are more likely to be the badly paid basket carriers (cargadores de bultos) in La Cancha than the

Between March and May I stayed in the city. My daily routine was to hang out in PROSANA's office as much as possible: reading their documents, the various studies about Arque that various experts had written; interviewing staff. At the beginning I was mostly observing but after a couple of weeks I was also participating: attending some of the meetings, helping them prepare some event or workshop; writing up reports of the events etc. I also visited the related offices of CORDECO and witnessed how they became part of Cochabamba's Prefecture, though they remained in the same building, a building that until the 1960s served as the train station. Between May and October I mostly followed PROSANA's tecnicos in their visits and activities in Arque. That is to say, I was back and forth between Arque and Cochabamba. Some weeks I would stay in Arque, other weeks I would be back and forth (when the experts working in the city went to Arque it was usually just for the day or for a couple of days). In October I moved to Arque, but I kept my room in the city throughout all my fieldwork (every month or two I would go back to the city for a few days up to a week to attend some special event in PROSANA and buy my food).

PROSANA's offices were located in a three-story house in a residential area. The largest room in the first floor (or ground floor) was the reception area with the secretary / receptionist's desk, shelves exposing the research reports produced by PROSANA's experts, and a reading corner where visitors could consult these reports and other related works of PROSANA's library. (Copies of PROSANA's reports were also for sale.) A smaller room in the front served as office for the administrator in charge of handling the budget covered by the Bolivian government, coordinate travel schedules and the

sellers. In that sense we can say that the dynamics of valley peasant economy involves not only a process of internal stratification among valley peasant households but also a regional differentiation.

corresponding assignment of cars and drivers. Two rooms in the back served as offices for the German director (a GTZ's employee), Hans Schoeneberger, and the Bolivian director (and employee of the Cochabamba's development corporation first and later of Cochabamba's prefecture), Filemon Iriarte. Before coming to Bolivia, Schoeneberger had lived in Peru where he had conducted research for his doctorate in nutrition science, learned to speak perfect Spanish, and married a Peruvian. Iriarte, was an economist who had studied at the University of Cochabamba where he obtained the degree of *Licenciado* (a degree somewhere in between a bachelor's and a master's degrees).

In the second floor were the offices of the health unit, the education unit, the agro-ecology unit, and of the administrator handling the budget covered by the GTZ. At the head of the agro-ecology unit was Alberto Vega, the other GTZ German expert. Son of Spanish migrants in Germany—thus his very Spanish name—Vega grew up bilingual (Spanish / German), studied agronomy engineering in a German University, came to Bolivia in the early 1980s as a development 'volunteer' with a German NGO, and married a Bolivian. Working in the same unit with Vega from mid 1996 on were Carlos Espinoza and Margot Cabrera, who had studied agronomy engineering at the University of Cochabamba and worked with local NGOs before entering PROSANA.

In the third floor were the offices of socio-economics unit and of the data-base / computers department. At the head of the socio-economics unit was Jorge Lozano who had also studied at the University of Cochabamba where he obtained the degree of *Licenciado* in sociology. Lozano and his assistant, Johnny Zambrana also had worked for an NGO before entering PROSANA.

In a smaller construction around the backyard was the radio-room and the apartments where PROSANA's doorman and housekeeper lived with his family. He was also in charge of operating the radio. Indeed, radio being the one and only means of communication with Arque, a special radio connection was on all day long to send messages with instructions for the field teams or receive news from them.

Activities at PROSANA's headquarters started very early in the morning. Since trips to different parts of Arque were scheduled for almost everyday (including weekends) PROSANA's house opened around 6 am when drivers arrived to prepare the cars for the road. By 8:30am, when the offices opened, the cars had already left. Mondays was usually the day I could find every body at their desks writing the reports on the events they had attended in Arque over the weekend or coordinating the schedule of activities for the week. All sorts of visitors dropped by throughout the day: university students who wanted to consult PROSANA's library, Arque's municipal authorities and / or representatives of Arque's peasant organization who came for a meeting, representatives of the governmental agencies with which PROSANA was coordinating projects, and directors of the NGOs that won the bids for the implementation of projects in Arque and received training and advice from PROSANA's experts.

Having observed and participated in their work, I am convinced that the majority of PROSANA's experts or *técnicos* were well intentioned, very committed, and hard working people. The critical analysis of development interventions I present in the chapters that follow does not entail--in any way whatsoever--a criticism or even less a judgement of their professional or personal qualities as development workers. Rather, it is

a critical reflection about the structural constraints and the larger historical context that shape the effects of their practices.

IV. The City of La Paz: Governmental Offices and Representatives of the International Development Cooperation

Those who have ever visited the city of La Paz certainly have inscribed forever in their memories the moment of their arrival. It is, to say the least and in all the senses of the word, breathtaking, especially if arriving by plane. Indeed, the airport being located on the high-plateau at 4000 meters above sea level, our breath is first literally taken by the altitude and second figuratively by the force of the landscape. While dizzy from the lack of oxygen, as we leave the airport we are struck by light's brightness and sky's intensive blue, then this immense dry plateau, and, at the horizon, the imposing Andean mountain chain of white peaks. The southern peak is the Illimani, the most beautiful mountain I have ever seen. Looking from the airport, we get the impression that the high-plateau continues all the way to the bottom of the Illimani. Yet, the most impressive view is still to come. Ten minutes after crossing El Alto's busy streets the plateau ends abruptly; the imposing Illimani is still in front of us, but looking down from the edge we discover the city of La Paz, seat of the Bolivian government.

With its shantytowns hanging from the edge's steep cliffs, La Paz starts at 4000 meters above sea level and extends through canyon valleys all the way down to 3000 meters above sea level, where residential neighborhoods can afford fancy houses and green lawns. In between (mid-town), a growing forest of high buildings indicates the administrative and commercial center (cathedral, parliament, presidential palace etc.)

This topographical stratification corresponds inversely to the social - ethnic stratification: the lower you live, the higher your social status and thus the higher the chances of successfully claiming a purer European descent; mid-town being a sort of mediating ground. Twenty years ago La Paz included the few neighborhoods of rural migrants surrounding the airport on the high-plateau. Since then, increasing rural migration led to the creation of a separate city, El Alto. Today, El Alto has a population of about 500.000 and the city of La Paz about 800.000.

I was not born in La Paz, but my parents moved there in the 1970's and I lived there throughout the 6 years of secondary school. Since then, I have been back several times, though always for limited periods of time. In 1994, after submitting grant proposals and without yet knowing if any would come through, I decided to go back to La Paz and, while waiting for the answers, look for a temporary job. Originally, when designing my research project I had foreseen spending two months in the capital city to gather general information about governmental development policies. I ended up staying the whole year of 1995 working as a consultant with development agencies and state institutions in assignments related to the implementation of the popular participation law (LPP) and of ethnic and gender policies. This experience actually allowed me to closely follow the everyday work of two state offices, talk to the staff, be a participant observer in several meetings where newly designed policies were discussed, or official reports were elaborated for the international agencies supporting the implementation of these policies. I visited different rural communities to evaluate the impact of these new policies and attended long meetings where state officials tried to explain the new policies to local authorities and representatives of grassroots organizations. Although in this dissertation I

am not disclosing any information directly related to the object of my consultant work, the general picture of governmental offices and institutions I will draw in here is based on that experience. Furthermore, when I needed to gather information for this research, I knew what to ask, whom to talk to, and which official documents to look for.

The two state offices where I worked were the *Secretaría de Asuntos Etnicos, de Género y Generación* (Secretariat for Ethnic, Gender and Generational affairs) and the *Secretaría de Desarrollo Rural* (Secretariat for Rural Development), both placed within the Ministry of Human Development and both coordinating many activities with the agency in charge of the LPP, the *Secretaría de Participación Popular* (Secretariat of Popular Participation), at that time (1995) placed within the Ministry of Sustainable Development. All the offices of both ministries were located in the neighborhood of Sopocachi, a 15 to 20-minute walk away from La Paz administrative center. Until the late 1960s, Sopocachi was a quiet residential neighborhood with large family houses and sunny streets. As more and more offices move into the neighborhood, Sopocachi is becoming an extension of midtown. High apartment buildings have taken away the sun from the streets and the Illimani cannot be seen from any corner anymore. The few houses left, squeezed in between the buildings, are today fancy restaurants, elegant nightclubs, art galleries, conference centers, and offices.

Thus, Sopocachi has its own character and a certain international flavor. It is in Sopocachi that we find research institutions, university centers, the 'Alliance Francaise', the 'Goethe Institut', and the cafés where intellectuals, artists, and young professionals hang out. Most NGOs have their offices there, and so do embassies and international development agencies; for example the German Embassy and the German Development

Agency (GTZ). It is in Sopocachi that I lived and worked during the year of 1995. It is there that I became acquainted with the leftist social scientists, lawyers, and former NGO activists enthusiastically in charge of designing the regulations and policies related to the implementation of the reforms I discuss in the next chapter.

Although my visit to Germany was mostly limited to archival research and thus did not involve fieldwork (no participation, though some observation), it is worth noticing the sharp contrast between the atmosphere of conviviality I found in Sopocachi and the environment of the GTZ's main office in Germany. Indeed, located in Eschborn, a small town in the suburbs of Frankfurt, the headquarters of the GTZ look very much like any other corporation headquarters: a large modern building surrounded by gardens and a nice green lawn. Removed from the hubbub of the big city and its busy streets, it appears very accessible, but one cannot enter the place unannounced. It is not a place one can run into while walking through the city. The staff that works there does not live around it; they commute every day from the city or other suburbs. Visitors need appointments and are directed to the specific area of their appointment: visitors don't run into people by chance. The one assistant to whom I talked did not add much to what I already heard from GTZ-Bolivia, gave me annual reports, and directed me to the documentation center. In response to my questions I left with a handful of documents.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REFORMS OF THE 1990s: THE NEW BOLIVIA

[B]ajo la superficie aparentemente homogénea de comportamientos y prácticas moldeadas por la noción liberal de *ciudadanía*, se encubre una diversidad de horizontes y profundidades históricas... (Silvia Rivera 1993: 99-100)

El pacto liberal, o el pacto populista, o el pacto neoliberal, no han conseguido sustituir democráticamente al pacto colonial, en la medida que continúan siendo imposiciones de uno de los polos hacia el otro (o hacia la multiplicidad de actores que se enmascaran bajo el nombre de 'sociedad civil'), y desembocan en formas de convivencia precarias que tan sólo buscan el apaciguamiento de la furia de los oprimidos o la instalación de una normatividad retórica, hecha-para-ser-violada, pues sólo tiene por finalidad el encubrimiento de los aspectos vergonzosos o cuestionables de dominación. (Silvia Rivera 1993: 124)

I arrived in La Paz one early morning of December 1994. Along the highway, coming down from the airport, I saw the remnants of political graffiti painted for the presidential elections that had taken place in 1993: in big pink letters the acronym of the party that had won the elections "MNR" (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario), also in pink, "Viva Goni" (the nickname of the elected president, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada) or "Unidos en la diversidad" (united in diversity). But what called more my attention were a couple of big billboards. Against a white background an abstract design in red, yellow and green (the flag colors) suggested the shape of Bolivia's map, underneath, big black letters announced: *Bolivia la Nueva /Capitalización, Educación, Participación/ El Cambio para Todos* (The New Bolivia / Capitalization, Education, Participation/ Change for All). This was, I was immediately informed, the motto for the vast program of legal reforms undertaken by the, then, current government. I registered the technocratic efficiency suggested by that publicity, but I was far from imagining the scope of such reforms. I did not know then that I would end up following closely the

implementation of some of these reforms. Even less did I suspect that their impact on even a remote rural region like Arque would become the central focus of my research fieldwork.

In this chapter I will outline the main components of the 1993 –1997 legal reforms, describe the main characteristics of the government that carried them out and the role of international development agencies, and provide some historical background to put the reforms into perspective and discuss the critical decade of the 1980s. I will argue that the reforms of the 1990s are best understood as the expression of a new historical configuration of social, economic and political relations. A configuration within which new social objects are constituted and new versions of modernity / modernization are articulated.

I. What Is New in the New Bolivia? A Brief Comparison with the 50's Project of Modernization

A new Bolivia is what the 1993 - 1997 government intended to construct through a comprehensive set of economic policies and legal reforms that aimed at modernizing every aspect of Bolivian society. By linking neo-liberal economic policies with poverty-focused programs and projects of decentralization, these reforms intended to combine structural adjustments with more equitable social policies. While the Bolivian case is not unlike other such experiences in Latin America, what makes it particularly interesting is the programmatic scope of the legal reforms and social policies. Cast in the celebratory tone of a populist rhetoric, they seemed to address both the demands expressed by the social movements developed during the 80's and the agenda of international development

agencies (e.g. regional and local autonomy, the right of Indigenous peoples to cultural self-determination, ethnic and gender equity, environmental sustainability, etc).

Capitalization, education, participation, the three words written underneath *Bolivia la Nueva*, referred to the three laws passed in 1993 and presented as the main pillars of the reforms. The capitalization law established the mechanisms for the privatization of state enterprises. It stipulated that 50 percent of the shares would be sold to private enterprises while the remaining 50 percent would become “the share of Bolivian citizens.” The law of educational reform established the basis for a bilingual and multicultural education. The law of popular participation augmented the power and autonomy of local municipal governments and established mechanisms for a greater participation of local organizations in the affairs of local municipal governments. Other related laws, like the retirement law and the law for state’s administrative decentralization, were passed subsequently. Very significant was also the reform of the political constitution of the state and, especially, the modification of the first article, which now defines Bolivia as a pluriethnic and multicultural state.

Another major theme was the “modernization of the state,” i.e. the reorganization of state offices and institutions following criteria of rationalization, efficiency and accountability. This included, among others, the creation of new instances for financial regulation, the transformation of the judicial system, the reorganization of the national institution for land distribution and, last but not least, the restructuring of state departments. Indeed, in order to achieve more efficiency in the matters of state administration, the structure of ministries and state departments was completely modified. The number of ministries was reduced, the names and functions of ministries

were redefined, some state departments were closed down, others lumped together and new ones were created. Among the innovations were the ministries of economic development, of sustainable development and of human development. The ministry of sustainable development included, besides departments in charge of environmental policies and the implementation of a new system of national planning, the newly created National Secretary of Popular Participation, in charge of designing policies and regulations related to the application of the Law for Popular Participation. Within the Ministry of Human Development were placed the state departments of health, education, urban affairs, rural development and, another celebrated innovation, the National Secretary of Ethnic, Gender, and Generation Affairs.¹

Thus, the 1993 – 1997 reforms were presented as part of a “profound transformation of the State, the economy and society.” A transformation seen as the necessary condition for the incorporation of Bolivia in the new international order as well as for achieving “social equity, economic growth, and political democracy” within the frame of a “sustainable development” (República de Bolivia 1994)². As described

¹ Gossip tells that during the discussions about this reorganization, the president would have said: “let’s put women, Indians and all minorities together and let’s call it gender, ethnic, etc., the World Bank will like it.” It is worth noting here that Indians are certainly not a minority in Bolivia and that before these reforms neither ethnic nor women’s issues had ever been addressed in terms of “minorities” or minority issues. When inquiring about the reasons why such progressive state secretaries had been created, one staff member of the office of gender affairs gave me an answer that could also apply to the case of the other secretaries. According to her, “the department of gender affairs came to be because of the happy coincidence of external factors,” by which she meant that international agencies had it on their agendas and were willing fund it, “internal factors” (for the last 20 years, professional women working in research institutions and development NGOs have been addressing theoretical and practical issues related to women’s rights, women and development –urban and rural, gender and development and gender equity), “and a President willing to please both sides.”

² This document, *Plan General de Desarrollo Económico y Social de la República: El Cambio para Todos* delineates the foundations for the reforms undertaken by the government. The quote comes from the presentation page, which is not numbered. It is worth noting that “social equity” includes explicitly gender and ethnic equity and that sustainable development implies and explicit concern with environmental issues. An earlier version of this document, *El Plan de Todos* was presented during the electoral campaign in 1993 and is more extensively analyzed in Lagos 1994. As she points out, this document consistently overlooks

throughout various official documents the “New Bolivia” was to be a modern, democratic, pluricultural, and multiethnic state with an efficient, decentralized state administration, a strong civil society, and a new responsible and actively participant citizen.³ While modernization has been the chief concern in all governments’ official agendas since the 1950s --a goal never achieved but always recast as if for the first time-- the combination of modernization with state decentralization and pluricultural, multiethnic democratization was indeed an innovation. A brief comparison with the discourse of the state reforms undertaken after the 1952 nationalist revolution will give a historical perspective and background to the nature of the 1990s reforms.⁴

In the context of Bolivian history, the revolution of 1952 marked the end of the liberal cycle and the beginning of the populist one.⁵ The purpose of the revolution, according to its ideologues, was the construction of a modern, democratic, thus socially integrated and culturally homogeneous mestizo nation. The task of the revolution was,

class relations and differences while the mobilizations that have taken place during those years persistently showed that class differences were a central concern for many movements.

³ These terms are used not only throughout the *Plan General de Desarrollo Económico y Social de la República*, but in the texts of the many laws promoted during those years, the vast documentation produced by the newly created State Secretariats of Popular Participation and of Ethnic, Gender and Generational Affairs and in the new articles of then modified Constitution.

⁴ This comparison is relevant for at least two reasons. First, the 50’s were also a decade of significant reforms aiming at the transformation of the relations between the state and society and the creation of a modern society. Second, the political party that governed between 1952 and 1964, the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR: Nationalist Revolutionary Movement), was also at the head of the governmental coalition that carried out the reforms between 1993 and 1997. As we will see below, it is also an MNR government that carried out the economic policies of structural adjustment imposed by the IMF between 1985 and 1989. Interestingly enough, the economic policies implemented in the 50’s were also the outcome of negotiations with and pressure by the IMF see, for example, Klein 1992: 238-244. This is not the place to explain the relevance of this comparison or to discuss the significant differences between the international – historical context of the immediate post WWII and the immediate post Cold War.

⁵ I am following here Rivera’s historical periodization. As she explains (Rivera 1990:99), “The colonial cycle, which began in 1532, left a legacy of ethnic domination which continues to the present. The liberal cycle began with the reforms of the late nineteenth century, which set forth the notion of citizens as ‘free and equal individuals’ without communal links or solidarity. (...) Finally, the most recent cycle began with the 1952 nationalist revolution. I call this populist cycle, in view of the large-scale incorporation of the

then, to liberate the nation from the oppressive forces of the oligarchic elite who had perpetuated colonial, backward (pre-modern) forms of domination, discrimination and racial categorization (see, for example, Montenegro 1943). The program of capitalist modernization and democratization implemented by the MNR governments throughout the 1950s was based on the nationalization of the mines, the agrarian reform, and the universal vote⁶. The state model established after 1952 was characterized by a strongly centralized state administration, state ownership of national resources, and a state led program of economic development.

The hegemonic discourse of modernization / development that legitimized this centralized state model was inscribed within a discursive field organized around the ideological axis of the *nacionalismo revolucionario* (revolutionary nationalism). Operating as an arch connecting the two extremes of the Bolivian political spectrum, the revolutionary nationalism defined the field of meanings where discourses made sense and political and social objects were organized and identified (Antezana 1983). Within this discursive field, the state was constituted as a sort of guarantor of the “nation” against the “anti-nation” (either communism or imperialism), the guardian of the national patrimony and the protector of “the people.” Thus, the state came to be seen as the only legitimately authorized agent to undertake, on behalf of the nation (and thus the people), the process of economic development and socio-political modernization. In other words, the state

hitherto excluded masses of workers and indigenous peasants into the political arena, through universal suffrage and parastatal unionism.” 1985 marks the beginning of a new cycle, the neo-liberal one.

⁶ Until 1952 the right to vote was restricted to literate adults thus excluding the majority of the population and especially the Indian / rural population. For an examination of the changes brought about by the revolution see, for example, Malloy 1970. For insightful discussions of populism see Zavaleta 1986 and Laclau 1977.

model established after 1952 represented the only legitimate form of exercise of power because it was seen as the necessary condition for the development of the nation.⁷

Thus, the reforms implemented throughout the 1950's aimed also at constructing a new modern and democratic Bolivia. However, the meanings, implications and requirements of that project were quite different from those of the 1993 New Bolivia project. From a discursive point of view, it is not just a replacement of words (i.e. 'nation' or 'the people' for 'civil society') but the whole grammar that has changed. Back in the 50's the statements used to characterize the 1993 state project would have been perceived as a contradiction in terms. Back then a country could not be modern without being a culturally integrated – homogeneous nation; without having a centralized state to protect the interests of the people – the nation; and it would not become modern without a centralized state to lead the nation on the road towards development. It would seem that being modern has ever-shifting meanings and requirements for those peoples of the world whose modernity is permanently under suspicion and who, in spite of the efforts of their quest, just seem not able to get it right.

This historical digression strongly shows that the statements officially used to describe the 1993 project for a "New Bolivia" do not belong to (don't make sense within) the discursive field of the "revolutionary nationalism." Or perhaps is it that, as Lesley Gill puts it, "turn of the century neo-liberals are less concerned with nation building than with managing the country's balance of payments and maintaining the order necessary to create a favorable investment climate for foreign companies. (...) Governability

⁷ This connection between the discourse of development and the legitimation of state power was identified by Chatterjee in his analysis of the Indian case (Chatterjee 1993: 203). For an extensive discussion of development as discursive and institutional practices crucial in the making of the "Third World" since the 50's see Escobar 1996. From a different theoretical perspective, Malloy (1977) provides an interesting

increasingly becomes an issue for national and international policy makers” (Gill 2000: 8). As we will see in the next section, the decade of the 1980s was not only characterized by the transition out of military regimes but, more generally, by the transition out of the populist cycle.

II. The Decade of the 80s: From Insurrection to Correction

Like in many Latin American countries, the 80s in Bolivia were the decade of the transition to democracy after a long period of military dictatorships and of the implementation of structural adjustments and neo-liberal economic policies in response to the debt crisis and pressures from international financial institutions. One particularity of the Bolivian case is that these two processes did not occur at the same time. The process of transition started with a hunger strike organized by miner women in 1977, while the first decrees corresponding to structural adjustment were passed in 1985.

This gap in time reveals discontinuities in what is often perceived as a continuous, smooth, and unilinear process of redemocratization. While it is possible that in some regions of Latin America the transition to democracy was also the “resurrection of civil society” (O’Donnell and Schmitter, 1986), I suggest that in the case of Bolivia we should rather speak of an “insurrection” before 1985 and of a “correction” afterwards. Thus, I propose to approach the ‘civil society’ promoted by the 1993 – 1997 reforms as a “new civil society” resulting from a disciplining and reordering processes that took place after 1985.⁸

analysis of Latin American political systems in the context of what he calls “delayed dependent development.”

⁸ I am borrowing the term new civil society from George Yudice to refer to the 1990’s organization of civil society, which, as he argues, “is not an uncontradictory feature of progressive action. It is to a large degree

A. The Early 80s: Insurrection

The overthrowing of the dictatorship was the outcome of long years of clandestine opposition during which a variety of groups, associations, movements, political parties, workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, men and women, Indian and mestizos gathered their forces around the most urgent common goal. Facing increasing internal and external pressure, in 1977 the military announced that presidential elections would be held in 1980, but they were forced to hasten the transition. As mentioned above, in December 1977, a small group of women, wives of mine union leaders, began a hunger strike in the Cathedral of La Paz demanding total amnesty for political leaders in prison or exile and complete freedom for union organizing. With the support of the church and human rights organizations, 1000 persons had joined the strike from all over the country within a month, and the military were made to accept the strikers' demands. Upon returning, the old leaders seized the unions from the control of government appointees and re-organized the miners' federation (FSTMB: *Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia*) as well as the national confederation of workers' unions (COB: *Confederación Obrera Boliviana*) with virtually the same leadership that had existed before the 1971 military coup (Klein 1992). From that moment until 1982 three national elections and four military coups took place.⁹

During these years, the COB achieved the unity of the labor and the peasant movements and coordinated the struggle of the wide movement opposing military regimes. Following its historical tradition of not only expressing the economic interests

imposed by neo-liberalism, and as such its success can only be limited." (Yúdice, 1998: 372). For an insightful discussion of the ambiguities in the usages of the concept of 'civil society' in Latin America over the last decade see Pearce 1997. For a thorough and extensive literature review of the debate on 'civil society' in Latin America, see Biekart 1999.

of the labor movement but also articulating its political demands, the COB played a decisive role in defending the process of democratization. For example, the military coup of November 1979 was defeated after 17 days of popular insurrection resulting from the national general strike organized by the COB. As “the soul of civil society,” the COB demanded that the results of the presidential election be respected (Zavaleta 1983:21).¹⁰

Furthermore, considered the most organized expression of the oppressed and the exploited, the COB also constituted the main interlocutor for the political parties forming the left coalition that repeatedly won those elections that were not fraudulent as well as for the non-governmental organizations created at that time. The people running these organizations were young professionals returning from exile in Europe where they had been able to secure a funding network. The purpose of these early local NGOs was to support the labor and peasant movements through education and communication projects (Arellano and Petras 1994). They coordinated activities with the local levels of the COB, the workers’ and peasants’ federations. Many of them constituted sort of brokers between grassroots organizations and the political parties that had been banned during the military regimes. In sum, in those critical transition years, the labor movement appeared to be the articulating core for an alternative political project.

The democratically elected government that finally acceded to power in 1982 was a coalition of leftist parties (UDP: Union Democrática y Popular) representing this wide opposition movement. The excitement of new beginnings gave the illusion that the past could be erased and that no obstacles would block the road to articulating economic

⁹ The UDP won these elections with the exception of the first one which was proven to be fraudulent.

¹⁰ In the early 80’s the use of the concept of civil society was restricted to academic discussions. At that time the term most widely used was “movimiento popular”. It is only during the 90’s that the term “civil society” became popularized. By then, however, not only had the COB lost its central position but was

equity with political democracy. However, as if the force of this vast movement had been exhausted in the struggle to oust the military, once this goal had been achieved, the unity of the movement fractured into a multiplicity of competing groups with different visions of democracy, both political and economic.

At the beginning, the labor and peasant movements fully supported the government. Aware of the decisive role they had played in the transition period, they considered not only that it was their obligation to defend the democratic process but also that it was their right to fully participate at the highest level of governmental political and economic decisions (Laserna 1985:14). The failure to reach an agreement over some form of “co-government” gave rise to serious internal conflicts and divisions within the COB as well as within the UDP coalition. This marked the separation between what was then called “the popular movement” and the governmental coalition. Between 1983 and 1985, strikes, demonstrations and roadblocks became part of the daily life. This social and political instability unfolded in the context of severe droughts and one of the worst economic crises in Bolivian history, which was linked to the heavy external debt inherited from the military governments and the international economic recession. Caught between increasing opposition of right wing parties, pressures from the labor movement for jobs and living wages, and an external debt inherited from the military governments, the UDP was unable to reverse the economic crisis and halt astronomical inflation. Defeated and divided, the left stepped down. Elections were called for one year ahead of time, in 1985.

often referred to as undemocratic because of its corporatist character and its strong opposition to neo-liberal policies.

Retrospectively, what is important about the crisis of those transition years is that it revealed the disintegration of the hegemonic order that had characterized the populist cycle initiated with the revolution of 1952. Indeed, the early 1980s can also be viewed as that critical moment between and betwixt two states of order or, even more to the point, two orders of the state. In this tumultuous moment of liminality, as it were, any utopia could be imagined, all repressed voices could emerge, those which had been explicitly forbidden under dictatorships and, those which had been implicitly, but more fundamentally, silenced within the discursive field of the “revolutionary nationalism.” Indeed, what could be also read in between the lines of the popular insurrection of the late 70s - early 80’s were the voices of “the other people.” That is to say, that “rest” which had not been represented by “the people” of the mestizo nation, and whose constitution could only occur outside the field of the “revolutionary nationalism” (Antezana 1983:84). In new and different forms, these “other voices” were expressing old issues related to colonial mechanisms of exclusion recast again and again throughout Bolivian history. Thus, for example, surged in the late 70’s the “Indian” question. A question the construction of a “mestizo nation” had maybe silenced but certainly not solved.¹¹ Denouncing the endurance of colonial structures within post-colonial Bolivian society, the Indigenist movement that emerged in that period challenged the hitherto hegemonic nationalist ideology of the mestizo nation.

The emergence of an Indigenist movement in the mid-1970s was closely related -- though not exclusively-- to the consolidation of the peasant organization in the Andean

¹¹ For insightful discussions of the many ways in which in the construction of a modern mestizo nation “modernizing traditional peasants” became and euphemism for “civilizing backward Indians” (or equality meant that in order not to be discriminated one had to stop being an Indian), see, for example, Ticona, Rojas and Albo, 1995; Rivera, 1993; and 1996.

region of Bolivia, and especially in the Aymara region. In the highlands, where the Qheshwa and the Aymara comprise more than 50 percent of the population and the “peasant” and the “Indian” questions have been historically intertwined, the strength of the Aymara Katarist¹² ideology was to articulate the class dimension of peasants economic exploitation and the ethnic dimension of the oppression of Indians. Rooted in peasant union organizations, by 1979 the Katarist movement achieved the unity of the national confederation of peasant unions (CSUTCB) and its autonomy from governmental control. Furthermore, the peasant union confederation became part of the national confederation of Bolivian workers (*Central Obrera Boliviana*: COB).

The articulation of ethnic and class claims constituted a significant factor in the consolidation of the *Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB). In relation to the COB, the Indigenist ideology held strategic value in questioning the relevance of “proletarianist” views according to which the peasantry (somehow a backward and awkward class) could only be a subordinated branch in a revolutionary movement led by a proletarian avant-garde. In relation to the state and the control the latter had exerted over peasant unions since the 1953 Agrarian Reform, it was both, the class alliance with the COB and the identification with Indigenist claims, that contributed significantly to achieve the autonomy of the peasant unions confederation (see Albo 1987; 1993; and Rivera 1986).

In the lowlands, the indigenous population, while only 3 percent of the total, consists of diverse groups spread throughout the Amazonian rain forest and the Chaco region. During the early 80’s, these groups started to organize with the support of church

¹² This movement, initiated among the Aymaras of La Paz in the early 1970s, took the name of Tupac Katari, leader of the Aymara rebellion of 1781. For the history of the movement see Hurtado 1986 and

related NGOs. As we will see in the next section, the consolidation of the lowlands indigenous organization followed a different path.

Beyond the significant differences between lowlands and highlands, the Indigenist movement became the main protagonist of the new social movements. However, by the end of the decade, the class – ethnic articulation and the connections with the labor movement had, to say the least, faded away. This was not an exceptional case; it rather revealed a general trend that started in 1985.

B. The Late 80's: Correction

In 1985, the newly elected government introduced the “New Economic Policy” by launching Supreme Decree 21060. Imposed as the only exit to the mounting economic crisis, this decree laid the foundations for the neo-liberal economic reforms which aimed at privatizing state enterprises, opening the market for imported goods and international capital, and loosening employers’ obligations towards their employees. Inflation was curbed but most national industries were forced to close, unable to compete with the lower prices of imports.¹³ Alarming levels of unemployment went unchecked. This ‘structural adjustment’ program entailed not only the transformation of the economy but also a radical reconfiguration of social and political arenas.

Decree 21060 enabled the government to close state mining centers, leaving 23.000 out of 30.000 workers unemployed, and thereby provoking serious dislocations within the labor movement (whose main constituents had been mine workers). Massive

Rivera 1983.

¹³ The newly elected president in 1985 was Victor Paz-Estenssoro, the same who, in the context of the 1952 Revolution, had signed the law for the nationalization of the mines and, thus, the creation of the state mining Minister of Planning, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada. He was elected President of Bolivia in 1993.

demonstrations were organized by the COB and forcefully repressed by the government. The Federation of Mine Workers' Unions outlined an alternative plan for the reactivation of mining centers that would not reduce the number of workers, but their petitions were ignored by the government. In 1986 they organized the "March for Life and Peace:" thousands of workers and their supporters walked for several days to reach the capital city. The government ordered the military to deploy tanks and troops on the road connecting the mining centers with La Paz, and the march was stopped a few kilometers away from the city. Hundreds of workers were arrested, some leaders were sent into 'exile' in an isolated village of the Amazonian rainforest, and a curfew was declared (Nash 1992).

Thus started a process of correction which also took less confrontational --though not less effective-- forms. Introducing key modifications into labor laws, Decree 21060 abolished a series of workers' rights thereby redefining the terms in which the labor movement could frame their claims. As a former union organizer told me in an interview,

" it was most disorienting to realize that the issues around which we had been mobilizing factory workers suddenly became non-issues. What was the point in asking the government to raise the level of minimum wages if the state was not responsible anymore for fixing it and if the right to a minimum wage was not even legally recognized? Labor contracts became a private matter between employers and employees, and employers back in the late 80's would tell their employees to put up with low wages because otherwise factories would have to close."

More generally, the "new economic policy (...) disciplined peasants' and workers' unions through the harsh realities of the market, while orienting their demands for participation towards the sphere of electoral clientelism of new and old political parties" (Rivera, 1993:103; my translation). Although strikes and demonstrations continued to take place, the labor movement in general, and the COB in particular, progressively lost the position from which it could have expressed different demands for

economic redistribution, cultural recognition and political participation coming from different sectors of the “popular movement.” If the possibility, for the labor movement, to articulate these demands around a political project had been an imaginable and mobilizing utopia between 1979 and 1983, by the end of the 80’s it had become, for most sectors of the fractured left, a forgotten dream. In the space of these fragmentations, a diversity of new social movements progressively gained visibility as well as a variety of new political parties that, together with the old parties, addressed to different degrees the demands expressed by these new social movements. The latter ranged from elite-led regional movements demanding greater regional autonomy, to urban popular movements struggling for a better quality of life in the shantytowns, to the indigenous movement fighting for ethnic recognition, land redistribution and citizenship participation.

In the highlands, although the dominant role of the Katarists within the CSUTCB had eroded, the diffusion of Katarist ideas beyond the Aymara movement to different sectors of Bolivian society gave rise to political parties and a variety of indigenous organizations (Albo 1993). In the lowlands, the consolidation of the indigenous movement came with a historic forty-day walk, the *Marcha Indígena por el Territorio y la Dignidad* (Indigenous March for Territory and Dignity), in 1990. Starting in the Amazonian forest situated at sea level, thousands of indigenous peoples walked all the way up through the Andean mountains to La Paz. In contrast with the 1986 miners ‘March for Life,’ this march arrived at the gates of the presidential palace. Indigenous leaders met with the Bolivian president and obtained from him a formal commitment to initiate the process leading to legal recognition of indigenous territories in the lowlands.

By the early 90's, indigenous organizations had become recognized actors in most social and political debates. This also entailed, however, co-optation, distortion and “instrumental use of ethnic issues” by non-indigenous sectors (Rivera, 1993:107). More importantly, the struggle for identity recognition gained greater visibility at the expense of the struggle for redistribution.¹⁴ Class issues related to economic or land redistribution have confronted tremendous obstacles; nonetheless, “the issue of class inequality always creeps up and stubbornly refuses to leave center stage” (Lagos 1997:7). By and large, the ‘democratization’ process after 1985 entailed a strong tendency towards the disjunction between the social and the political, and the disarticulation of the struggle for ethnic recognition from the struggle for economic redistribution.

In the context of these reconfigurations, the political debate within the left also underwent important shifts. The majority of leftist intellectuals and activists who supported the UDP government of the early 80s belonged to a generation who in the 1960s had believed in the revolution and in the 1970s had been persecuted by the military regimes and went into exile in Mexico or Europe.¹⁵ After the defeat of the UDP in 1985, part of the left occupied academic or research positions and engaged the debate about the conditions for a viable democracy in which the possibilities and impossibilities of combining representative and participatory models of democracy were discussed at length. This debate included a critique of the centralized state administration that prevailed since the nationalist revolution of 1952. Their discussion turned around the

¹⁴ My analysis here is inspired by Nancy Fraser’s discussion of the recognition – redistribution dilemma in the context of what she critically defines as the “post-socialist” age (Fraser 1997).

¹⁵ A large part of leftist activists and intellectuals throughout Latin America followed a similar trajectory. Lechner’s critical essays provide also a compelling account of the intellectual transformations undergone by the Latin American left (Lechner 1988). For a systematic discussion about the influence of Gramsci’s work since the 80’s, particularly in relation to uses of the ‘civil society’ concept, see Dagnino 1998.

possible ways for political and administrative decentralization and the necessary conditions for the consolidation of a ‘civil society’ where different forms of popular organizations would be entitled to express their claims.¹⁶

The larger part of the leftist militants, however, moved into the terrain of the NGOs and engaged the debate about sustainable development, gender and development, local empowerment, and grassroots participation in development projects. This move corresponded to a political strategy through which some leftist parties intended to overcome the obstacles that led to the UDP’s defeat and develop, from the bottom up, the building blocks for a viable socialist democracy. As a former director of a rural development NGO explained to me,

“the idea was to work with local grassroots organizations at the level of rural communities and focus on finding specific solutions for specific problems. That is how the idea of participatory planning started. We wanted to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of each region and explore alternative models of development that would then serve as building blocks for an alternative model of state. We thought that it didn’t matter where the money for the projects was coming from as long as we would use it to the ends of our alternative political strategy. But little by little we got caught in the technicalities of each development project and we lost sight of the bigger picture.”

It is in this way that the left contributed to the proliferation of non-governmental organizations and the transformation in the nature of their role. From providing support to grassroots organizations linked to the labor movement, the NGOs gradually changed their activities to implementing development projects on behalf of government and international development agencies. The new economic policy promoted since 1985 was accompanied with a poverty alleviation program run by a state funding institution, the Social Emergency Fund (Fondo Social de Emergencia). This institution called upon the

¹⁶ For a more detailed history, see Barrios 1993; Rivera 1993; Calderon and Laserna 1995; Ticona, Rojas and Albó 1995; and Molina 1997.

NGOs to help palliate the cost of structural adjustment policies and funded them thus greatly contributing to change the nature of their engagement (Gill 1997 and 2000). The Social Emergency Fund was one of the first poverty-alleviation-during-adjustment experiences in Latin America (for a comparative description, see Graham 1994). In 1989, it became the Social Investment Fund (Fondo de Inversión Social) still operating today.

Between 1985 and 1993 there were two democratically elected governments. Both endorsed neo-liberal economic policies but failed to reach a consensus around a project of institutional democratization. During the 1993 electoral campaign, alternatives to the neo-liberal model were not at issue. Most candidates coincided in defining as their priority the decentralization of the state to guarantee larger political representation and citizen participation. Working with a group of independent young professionals, coming from the left and the right, the MNR candidate, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, presented a vast program of reforms that seemed to address both the demands expressed by the new social movements and the agenda of international development agencies.

Thus, many of the new reforms launched in 1993 represented a convergence of neo-liberal concessionism and elements of the democratizing, leftist, and Indigenist tendencies shaped during the 80's. It is significant that while the president elected in 1993 was the same person who in 1985, as minister of planning, promoted the neo-liberal economic policies mentioned above, the elected vice-president was an Aymara, leader of the Katarist party, who, in the early 80's, had played a key role in the organization of the Indigenist/peasant movement. In 1993, governmental agencies in charge of formulating social policy recruited academics, independent intellectuals, left militants, and NGO activists, thereby incorporating into the state apparatus a large sector of what had been

hitherto considered the opposition. It is worth noting that the exception to this inclusionary program was the labor movement, which remained in the opposition and referred to the three 'pillar' laws as "the three damned laws"

III. The Law of Popular Participation

Promoted as part of the project of decentralization, the law for popular participation (LPP) was the least controversial and most celebrated of the reforms. Even large sectors of the labor movement, and especially peasant unions, eventually accepted it while continuing to oppose the capitalization law and the educational reform. Because it creates a new layer of elective local government, the LPP was envisaged as the framework for blending Western representative democracy and Andean participatory democracy (Booth, David et al 1997). Because it defines local populations as agents of their own development, the LPP was perceived as the most efficient vehicle through which to ultimately achieve the development of the marginalized underdeveloped, or at least to enhance their management. The effective application of the LPP was substantially supported --both financially and politically-- by multilateral and bilateral development agencies.

What, then, is this law about? On the one hand, the LPP augments the power and autonomy of municipal governments through a transfer of funds and responsibilities, and the expansion of the municipal jurisdiction (formerly limited to urban areas) to the whole territory of the provincial section comprising all surrounding rural / indigenous communities. On the other hand, the LPP establishes the mechanisms for a greater participation of the rural / indigenous population and more effective "social control" over

local government actions by representatives of grassroots organizations. Thus, municipal governments are now responsible for the planning and provision of public services such as education, health, and infrastructure such as roads, irrigation canals, and for the elaboration and implementation of a five-year municipal development program that ideally will incorporate peoples' demands and follow the criteria of "integrality," "sustainability," as well as "socio-economic, ethnic, and gender equity." Rural and urban community organizations must identify their needs and express their demands through a process of participatory planning. Their representatives have the right and the obligation to monitor the process to ensure that funds are spent according to the municipal development program (Secretaría Nacional de Participación Popular, 1995).

According to the leftist academics, intellectuals, and former NGO activists who enthusiastically took charge of the law's design, promotion, and implementation, the fundamental purpose of the law was to establish the legal framework for the consolidation of civil society and the advancement of a responsible, active citizenry. In a seminar organized by the National Secretary for Popular Participation, a staff member explained the law by first presenting two drawings that ostensibly illustrated the law's fundamental purpose. The first drawing depicted a crowd underneath a huge umbrella, though too small to cover everyone. The second drawing depicted the same crowd, but in this case each person carried his or her own umbrella.

The first drawing represented the situation before the enactment of the LPP, in which the state played a patronizing and protective role. Its inability to perform this role efficiently is symbolized by the inadequacy of the single umbrella. As the staff member put it, "this role was unsustainable." As different voices had emerged from "civil

society” demanding recognition and greater participation, it was thus necessary to modernize this massive, antiquated model of state administration. The solution, and the “philosophy behind the law,” as he put it, was represented by the second drawing: that of every Bolivian citizen carrying his or her own umbrella. By that he meant that citizens were responsible for expressing their demands and participating in an “organized way” in the formulation of development initiatives and projects to meet those demands.

The big, inefficient umbrella unquestionably represents the obsolete corporatist state, but, does the individual umbrella represent the only alternative for greater citizens’ participation? What are these individual umbrellas? Who designs, produces, distributes them? Are all sizes, shapes and colors allowed? What if it doesn’t rain? And, what happens to the state? Does it disappear, “wither away,” or is it internalized by every individual? Does it become a ubiquitous, invisible hand? As I will argue throughout the following chapters, in the movement of shrinking its responsibilities and enlarging “popular participation,” the state ended up enlarging the sphere of its hegemonic control.

Even the most critical appraisals must acknowledge the importance of the new space opened by this law and especially the implications for the countryside; for those who were left unprotected by the big umbrella.¹⁷ For administrative purposes, the Bolivian state is divided into departments, departments subdivided into provinces and these further divided into provincial sections. Prior to the LPP, the territorial jurisdiction of a municipality was circumscribed to the urban area, town or city, located within the provincial section. The LPP expands this jurisdiction to include the rural area, that is, the peasant / indigenous communities. Thus, the law creates a new layer of autonomous

¹⁷ For a comparative perspective on how the challenge of rural democratization has been addressed in other parts of Latin America, see Fox 1990 and 1992.

elective local government, thereby implying a potentially significant extension of citizenship rights. Today peasants / 'Indians' living in rural areas can not only vote in municipal elections but, more importantly, they can be elected as mayors and members of the municipal government.

The LPP also mandates that resources be transferred from central to local control, providing a core budget for municipalities amounting to a 20 percent share of national taxes distributed in proportion to the local population. Furthermore, as mentioned above, municipal governments are expected to assume responsibility for public investments, thus becoming the main site of decision making for development planning. As a consequence, they gain access to a range of development funds, including soft loans. To get the funds established they must present an annual operating plan with corresponding budget. This plan must be derived from the above mentioned five-year municipal development program. The LPP's complementary regulations call for a process of participatory planning in the drafting of both plans, and the training manuals on municipal planning prepared by governmental offices place strong emphasis on building plans upwards from community-level appraisals.

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of the LPP is the legal recognition of territorially based organizations representing the entire population of a rural village or urban neighborhood. These organizations are explicitly identified as "peasant communities, indigenous peoples, or neighborhood councils" and their authorities designated according to the corresponding "customs, practices and statutes." Upon registration, these organizations can claim legal rights and enter contracts. Through these legally assigned rights and duties they are made collectively responsible for participating

in and exercising scrutiny over the municipality's planned use of the assets and income. In addition, the law also establishes the means by which these territorially based organizations oversee the conduct of the municipal government: the 'oversight committee.' This committee, elected by the local organizations, must approve the municipality's budgets and accounts and, more generally, follow closely the implementation of the development plan.

Other institutions of 'civil society' (listed under this title in article no. 34 of the LPP) are encouraged to coordinate and cooperate with territorially based organizations and oversight committees in promoting local development. Thus, for example, non-governmental organizations are recognized as *entidades ejecutoras* sort of contractors for carrying out rural development projects in compliance with the municipal plan. Finally, the law also foresees the formation of a 'provincial development council,' a sort of public forum where provincial and municipal authorities, members of oversight committees, representatives of the territorially based organizations and "other institutions of civil society" meet to discuss local needs and demands and reach agreements over development priorities.

It is not difficult to imagine that, in those impoverished rural areas lacking adequate human and material resources, the application of this law required substantial, external, institutional, and technical support. Multilateral and bilateral aid agencies financed all sorts of programs to foster the LPP implementation's process. Also governmental agencies published abundant documentation containing useful information, accessible explanations of the law, and detailed methodological outlines for every step of the participatory planning process. But, actually putting the law into practice was carried

out by development institutions, mostly NGOs. Evaluations of the progress made in the application of the law show a huge gap between those municipalities that received external support and those that did not (Secretaría Nacional de Participación Popular, 1996; 1997a; and 1997b). The case of Arque is representative of the former and thus illustrates the possible actual implications of popular participation following the law.

Before the German funded program for nutritional security PROSANA entered the region in 1990, Arque was a “forgotten” province, at least by state development institutions, NGOs, and even by the rains (severe droughts caused increasing emigration rates during the 80’s. When the LPP was passed in 1993, PROSANA had already produced extensive studies about the socio-economic and ecological conditions of the region, promoted the construction of some roads and health centers, and started to work with some communities (e.g. nutritional information workshops with women and agricultural production with men). More importantly, in relation to what would come later, PROSANA had promoted the consolidation of the peasant union organization at the community, supra community and provincial levels and the coordination with the regional branch of the Bolivian peasant confederation (CSUTCB). It is within the context of this organization that PROSANA had launched an experiment of participatory planning gathering the demands of the different communities. As I will argue in the next chapter Arque started being remembered, visible again, when extreme poverty became the focus of development agencies and a national survey identified it as one of the worst cases.

IV. International Development Agencies

Before closing this chapter I will briefly outline the main trends in the orientations of the vast international network of development agencies that, since the 50s has insured the proliferation of planning offices, research centers, experts and technicians, projects and programs throughout the ‘developing’ world. Looking at the history of the development apparatus, we can identify three major shifts in the ways development priorities have been defined and projects designed:

1) The 1950s and 1960s strong economic orientation focused on economic growth under the assumption that the social and political modernization (or “progress”) of “Third World” societies would follow. In this context development aid was oriented toward technical assistance, technological modernization, infrastructure development and industrialization. Development projects were very large in scale and were conceived and designed by experts and bureaucrats in national and international planning offices.

2) By the late 1960s recognition of the failure of growth to trickle down to the poor led to a shift of orientations towards “growth with equity”: “poverty alleviation” became an important concern. This shift entailed changes in the focus and mode of operation of the development apparatus. The approach was centered on “basic human needs,” and significant resources were devoted to programs targeting the urban and rural poor. In this frame, projects had to be socially relevant, involving their direct beneficiaries in a significant fashion. Thus social scientists were increasingly invited to play a significant role. Although in the phases of identification and design the top-down model still prevailed, participation of the local population in the implementation phase became an important requirement.

3) In the face of failures, crises, and criticisms throughout the 1980s, the orientation of development interventions was recast in terms of ‘sustainable development,’ ‘grassroots development,’ and the like. On the one hand, the International Monetary Fund imposed structural adjustment programs onto its debtors, and the World Bank pointed to the urgency of modernizing and decentralizing state administration. On the other hand, bilateral and multilateral development aid agencies showed greater interest in the critiques voiced by NGOs and applied researchers that pointed to the urgency of “putting people first” (Chambers 1983). Since then we have witnessed the emergence of new approaches in which projects have to be not only socially relevant, but also gender sensitive and environmentally and culturally sound. Development advocates began to see non-governmental organizations and small-scale projects as more efficient means by which to achieve desired goals. The early, top-down style of project design and implementation gave way to a bottom-up style seeking to promote not just local participation but also local initiatives and ‘grassroots empowerment.’¹⁸

By the 1990s international agencies and official policy designers had incorporated these issues into their agendas. Sustainable and participatory development as well as gender equity and indigenous rights became part of the larger package of social policies concerned with ‘good governance,’ rule of law,’ and ‘the strengthening of civil society’ that agencies like the World Bank promoted as a complement to structural adjustment programs. It is thus not surprising that the reforms launched by the 1993-1997 Bolivian government combining neo-liberal economic policies with democratizing social policies

¹⁸ Stirrat (1996) refers to this orientation that emerged since the 1980s as “the new orthodoxy.” Pottier (1993) refers to terms such as ‘participatory development,’ ‘grassroots development,’ indigenous knowledge as the new “buzzwords” of development.

and a rhetoric of sustainable and participatory development received the approval and wide support of bilateral and multilateral aid agencies.

Crucial to these new orientations was the rhetorical and tactical shift from defining local populations as “targets” to defining them as “beneficiaries,” and eventually as “agents” of their own development.¹⁹ But how does this shift affect the mode of operation of a development project, what are the effects of development interventions that seek to promote local agency and what could ‘local agency’ possibly mean in the context neo-liberal economic policies? These questions guide my analysis of PROSANA’s work in Arque.

While recognizing that the ambiguity of the terms (local agency, sustainable, participatory, etc.) leave them open for manipulation and contestation, one may indeed ask what could be the possibilities be for local agency or local autonomy in a world where the sources of capital and technology are increasingly concentrated in the centers of a worldwide economic system and where an increasingly flexible regime of capitalist accumulation brings about new forms of division of labor and of marginalization which increasingly contribute to the decline of local economies and the loss of subsistence security in the “First” as well as in the “Third” worlds.

¹⁹ Different institutions have different variations around this theme. In one of the GTZs publications (Schneider-Bertholdt, Gagel et al 1995: 6), development experts write: “Growing reservations are being expressed about the use of the term [target group], because it reflects a conception of development which sees these persons as passively accepting the actions of others. Although the term ‘beneficiaries’ is sometimes used, it cannot eliminate the objections raised to the expression target group. [We employ] the terms *users* and *partners in action*.”(emphasis in the original). In the context of 1990s neo-liberal policies linking free trade, privatization, deregulation, and democratization, these ‘beneficiaries/agents’ were cast as key players in ‘strengthening civil society.’

CHAPTER THREE

UNEQUAL ENCOUNTERS: THE HISTORY OF PROSANA

The problem [of development agencies and bureaucrats] is to find the right kind of problem; the kind of ‘problem’ that requires the ‘solution’ they are there to provide. This is the institutional context within which “development” discourse is located. (James Ferguson 1994:70)

I. Introduction

“Development,” as Mexican critic Gustavo Esteva provocatively defines it, “is one of these words without recognizable denotation which one cannot use without evoking powerful connotations. And what development connotes is always at least, one thing: escaping from a vague, unspeakable, undignified condition called *subdesarrollo* or underdevelopment, a term which was invented by Harry Truman on January 10, 1949” (Esteva 1987:144).¹ The history of how such particular ‘powerful connotations’ came to be attached to the notion of ‘development’ can indeed be traced to the aftermath of World War II and the ‘new world order’ outlined in the 1944 Bretton Woods agreements.² Since the 1950s, ‘development’ has been a key word used to refer to a particular type of societal change, namely the planned socio-economic transformations through which

¹ For a discussion on the “invention of underdevelopment” see Esteva’s (1992) discussion of ‘development’ in *The Development Dictionary* edited by Wolfgang Sachs (1992). See Williams 1983: 102-103 for ‘development’ as a keyword.

² The United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference took place at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire (USA) in July 1944. As part of the agreements reached was the creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, today known as the World Bank.

countries of the 'Third World' were supposed to consolidate themselves as modern nation-states thanks to the assistance of the 'developed' countries of the 'First World.'³ Like an expanding machinery, a vast international network of agencies has insured the proliferation of planning offices, research centers, experts and technicians, and projects and programs throughout the areas labeled as "underdeveloped."

As mentioned in the previous chapter, since its inception the development apparatus has undergone several modifications. Shifts and transformations appear in the identification of new and different causes for underdevelopment, orientation and priorities of development programs, the style of project design and implementation, and, more generally, the ways of talking about its mission. Conceived in the late 1980s, the Program for Food and Nutritional Security in Arque (PROSANA) was shaped by the new orientations that emerged since the 1980s emphasizing sustainable and participatory development. The implementation of PROSANA's development projects throughout the 1990s illustrates the practical meaning these orientations took in the context of 1990's neo-liberal economic trends.

The study of PROSANA's case sheds light on how new styles and trends in development discourse have affected the modes of operation of development projects. It could be argued, as Ferguson (1994: 74) points out, that the influence of development ideologies is confined to the offices and libraries of development agencies; as if the official discourse in which a country is constructed as 'underdeveloped' were just "a sort

³ Development ideas are certainly linked to the idea of progress and can be traced back at least to liberal ideologies of the Enlightenment. Moreover, as Grosfoguel (2000: 2) reminds us, "[t]he 1945-90 development debates in Latin America, although seemingly radical, in fact form part of the *longue durée* of the geoculture that has dominated the modern world system since the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century." The invention of 'underdevelopment' and 'Third World' as labels to refer to certain countries, and the emergence of a vast international network of modernization theory promoters, are

of polite but necessary fiction or justification not determining the concrete ways in which experts and projects operate in the field.” However, Ferguson (ibid) counter-argues, “in fact the ‘development’ problematic does indeed preside over both the design and implementation of actual ‘development’ projects. (...) The ‘rural development project’ thus appears not as some ‘practical’ sphere, far removed from the theoretical machinations [of development reports], but as the site where the elaborate conceptual apparatus of ‘development’ is first put into play, and has its most concrete and visible effects.”

A development project involves people living in different places and working at different levels. On the one hand are the professionals who, as policy makers, administrators, technical experts, or assistants are in charge of funding, designing, and carrying out a development project. On the other hand is the population to whom the work is addressed, portrayed as beneficiaries of the professionals’ work. In spite of many debates and re-conceptualizations of the ‘target population’ as agents actively participating in the development enterprise, the development encounter presupposes their marginality in relation to the ‘developed world.’ I visualize a development project as a field delineated by the conceptual and institutional constraints of the development apparatus. In this sense, it is a highly regulated and hierarchically structured field with specific rules and procedures. These rules and procedures organize the practices of the actors engaged in the field defining their movements and providing them with the categories to designate their roles and functions. This perspective draws on Mueller’s notion of ‘project grid’ (1986) as well as on Dorothy Smith’s methodology for an

specific to the period from the 1950s on (see Wood 1985 for an analysis of labeling and the politics of development policy).

‘institutional ethnography’ (1987). While in this chapter I examine what Mueller has named “the project grid” -- mechanisms of “delineation”-- in chapters 4, 5, and 6 I will further discuss the ways different actors read and used the grid, positioned themselves within the field, and traced different “trajectories” across the lines of the grid (de Certeau 1984).

This chapter presents the history of PROSANA.⁴ Section II discusses the context in which the project was conceived and recounts how the project was designed, funded and organized, and what it was expected to accomplish. Section III describes the main characteristics of the three phases of the project—orientation (1991-1994), implementation (1994-1998), consolidation (1998-2001)—and examines PROSANA’s transformations between 1991 and 1998, the relations it established with different local and regional actors, and the ambivalent and contradictory effects of its practices.

II. The Origins of the Project

A. Background

In August 1988, the president of Cochabamba’s regional development corporation, CORDECO, asked authorities in the Bolivian Ministry of Planning to intervene before the German Government and request Germany’s technical assistance in assessing the feasibility of a development project in the most depressed provinces of the Department of Cochabamba (Arque, Tapacari and Bolivar). In July 1989 the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation—through the German Embassy in La Paz) accepted

⁴ The history of the region presented in the appendix is the complement /counterpoint to this chapter because it traces the history of PROSANA’s “target population.”

the request and assigned the German agency of technical cooperation (GTZ) to collaborate with CORDECO on the feasibility study.⁵ In September 1989, a joint mission comprising GTZ and CORDECO staff members as well as free-lance consultants surveyed Arque, conducted planning workshops, and prepared a project proposal to promote food and nutritional security in Arque. The mission outlined the main components of a 10-year program for an estimated cost of 4.5 million Deutsche Marks (in 1990, equivalent of US\$ 2,725.621). Project planners called on the German government for 3.5 million DM (US\$2,119.927), and assigned responsibility for the remaining 1 million DM (US\$ 605.694) to the Bolivian government. Final approval came with a bilateral treaty for development cooperation in April 1991. Later on, after judging the first phase (1991-1994) successful, the GTZ expanded the scope of the project to cover the neighboring provinces of Bolívar and Tapacarí and increased the program's budget to 10.5 million DM (approximately 7 million dollars).

Under the 1991 bilateral agreement, the German/GTZ contribution consisted mainly of technical advice to be provided by long term and short term development experts, equipment (ranging from cars and tools to equipment for the city's office, Arque's operation centers, and the health centers to be built); salaries for local experts to be hired; the organization and implementation of training workshops and courses; and the financing of the construction of small communal public works in Arque's peasant

⁵ The German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit, BMZ) in charge of handling all matters related to the German governmental cooperation to Third World development. In contrast to other 'First World' governmental modalities of cooperation, the German government makes a clear distinction between financial and technical cooperation. While financial cooperation (loans, credits and donations) is directly implemented by the ministry, technical cooperation is implemented by a separate agency, the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, GTZ) which belongs to the German state, but functions with a certain autonomy as a German limited liability company (in German: GmbH). 85% of the GTZ's budget is funded by the German state and 15% through contracts with "third parties" such as the European Union, the World Bank, etc.

communities. As the Bolivian counterpart, CORDECO was to assign the necessary members of its staff for the administration and implementation of the project, cover infrastructure, maintenance and operation costs, and coordinate with other local institutions.⁶

Like all development projects, PROSANA's initial plan was modified several times throughout its implementation. Beyond the usual modifications, there were two major transformations related to state legal reforms launched by the 1993 – 1997 administration of President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada. First, the Popular Participation Law established the direct transfer of funds to municipalities thereby increasing their responsibilities and autonomy. Shortly after, another law also passed to encourage decentralization ordered the dissolution of all regional development corporations. As a result, CORDECO ceased to exist and PROSANA required a new national counterpart, which emerged in Cochabamba's general government, the *Prefectura*. In mid-1995 PROSANA became a project of the *Prefectura*'s division of municipal empowerment (Dirección de Fortalecimiento Municipal). To better understand the implications of these shifts, it is best to go back to PROSANA's beginnings in 1989.

The request for a food security project in Arque by an institution such as CORDECO was an unusual initiative that requires some explanation.⁷ CORDECO's

⁶ In order to get a sense of proportions and of PROSANA's part within German aid, it is worth noting that, in 1996, for example, Germany's total governmental aid (financial and technical) to Bolivia amounted to US\$ 46 million (Embajada de Alemania 1996) and the amount assigned to PROSANA was of US\$600.000 (PNUD / UNDP 1995: 191). That is, PROSANA's budget for 1996 represented about 1.5% of the total German governmental aid.

⁷ The creation of state development corporations goes back to the 1960s. At that time, the purpose of these corporations was to promote industrialization, in the context of state led development initiatives. When in the early 1970s regional planning became an important concern of development policies, these corporations were organized as regional state agencies (one in each one of the 9 departments of Bolivia). The regional

regional development plans were not concerned with food security or, even less, poverty alleviation of economically marginal areas. Because of its lack of 'potential' for commerce and economic development, until the mid-1980s, Arque had been a forgotten, invisible province in the eyes of development experts. Arque started receiving some attention from development institutions when, after the embrace of neo-liberalism in 1985, the Bolivian government launched poverty focused programs to counterbalance the impact (social cost) of structural adjustment measures. PROSANA was the first long-term, comprehensive development project to enter the province.

In the eyes of CORDECO's development planners (not to mention private entrepreneurs) Arque offered no comparative advantages in relation to the more fertile central temperate valleys or El Chapare tropical rainforest. With its dry steep slopes, eroded deep canyons, alarming low levels of agricultural productivity, and alarming high levels of ecological degradation, Arque's land is not really suitable for large-scale cash-crop production. From a geographical and ecological point of view (not to mention the

development corporation of Cochabamba (CORDECO) was created in November 1970 and its mission was "to promote the regional socio-economic development by means of planning, conducting studies, and elaborating development programs and projects" (CORDECO 1988: 3). CORDECO received funds from the central state (Tesoro General de la Nación, National Treasury) as well as from both types of donors, multilateral (e.g. Inter-American Development Bank, United Nations) and bilateral donors (e.g. US, Japan, Switzerland, Germany, etc.). Throughout the 70s, German experts worked in CORDECO designing guidelines for development planning and training local staff. Following these guidelines, CORDECO then carried out a series of regional studies to identify the main problems and potentialities for the development of Cochabamba. On this basis, CORDECO then implemented all sorts of programs and projects ranging from infrastructure development (e.g. road construction), agricultural and fishing industries (production of fertilizers, improved seeds, cheese, canned fruits), irrigation systems, to urban planning. The main focus of planning activities in the 80s was the identification of 'micro-regions' according to their 'economic potentials' or 'productive vocations.' What struck me when reviewing CORDECO's plans was that Arque was hardly ever mentioned. Besides the construction of small dust roads, among the few entries I found there was one which made reference to the possible existence of an iron reserve but no studies were made to assess its potential. By the late 1980s, CORDECO, as all the other regional corporations, had become a rather large, heavy, and quite inefficient bureaucracy. By the mid-90s, all regional corporations were dissolved in the context of state decentralization reforms. The offices that were not closed and the personnel that was not fired were relocated into the *Prefectura Departamental*, i.e. the highest level of governmental administration at the departmental level. Part of the national treasury funds that had been hitherto channeled through the corporations were to be handed directly to local municipalities

ethnic identifications of its population) the highlands of Arque (as well as Tapacari and Bolivar) have more in common with the high plateau or *altiplano* and its adjacent inter-Andean valleys than with the rest of the Department of Cochabamba (see appendix).⁸

In contrast to Arque, large areas of the *altiplano* and inter-Andean high valleys did receive quite some attention from the regional corporations of La Paz, Oruro, and Potosi as well as from a variety of development NGOs. The results, however, have been either difficult to assess or rather disappointing: 30 years of development aid did not succeed in reversing existing trends towards increasing impoverishment among peasants households, decreasing levels of productivity in the production of the main crops, and increasing degradation of the natural resources (Van Niekerk 1997). Van Niekerk, a Dutch development expert who has worked in Bolivia for several years, identifies two distinct positions in the controversy among major donors concerning the impact of rural development programs and the economic 'viability' or potential of agricultural production in these Andean highlands. On the one hand, European agencies that have entered in the region since the 80s (the European Union, some governmental agencies, e.g. Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany; and a vast number of NGOs often financed by European governments, e.g. Belgium) considered that the purpose of development aid should be to improve the conditions for the sustainability of small scale Andean peasant economies (van Niekerk 1997). On the other hand, agencies such as US

⁸ The Bolivian *altiplano* originates northwest of Lake Titikaka (southern Peru) and extends about 950 kilometers (600 miles) southeast to the southwestern corner of Bolivia. Its width varies from a few miles to about 160 kilometers (100 miles). The cities of La Paz, Oruro, and Potosi are located on this high plateau. With an average altitude of 3,650 meters (about 12,000 feet) this enormous tableland is created by an opening of the Southern Andes into two distinct mountain ranges: the Western range which today marks the border between Bolivia and Chile and the Eastern range which is far broader and much more broken containing fertile plains and river valleys at altitudes from about 4500 meters (14000 feet) down to about 500 meters above sea level. These are the above-mentioned inter-Andean valleys that also provide access to

AID, the World Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank, which during the 70s had launched large programs of Integral Rural Development, drastically reduced their financial support to rural development projects in the 1980s considering that agricultural production in the Andean highlands in general, and in the *altiplano* in particular, had no economic viability (van Niekerk 1997, World Bank 1991, BID 1995). By the early 90s these agencies had shifted their attention towards the Eastern lowlands where they financed the development of private commercial agriculture producing cash crops for export (van Niekerk 1992).

By 1991, a World Bank report, “Bolivia, Agricultural Sector Review,” recommended that governmental interventions in the Andean highlands should mainly consist of poverty alleviation programs (World Bank 1991: 58-59). But what is the World Bank’s approach to poverty alleviation? Poverty alleviation has been an issue present in World Bank development discourse since MacNamara’s presidency in the 1970s.⁹ The fact that the Bank’s 1990 report on world development deals at length with the issue of poverty represents a renewed effort to explicitly express the Bank’s concern with poverty, probably in response to the to multiple criticisms against the impact of 1980s structural adjustment programs (van Niekerk 1992: 79). The World Bank acknowledges the need to accompany these economic policies with poverty alleviation programs that should consist of the temporary provision of services to the poor in order to help them in the transition towards a free market economy (World Bank 1990). Thus, the World Bank doesn’t question the pertinence of free market economic policies, but proposes ways to

eastern foothills (tropical hills known as the *montaña* region or *yungas*) and the eastern lowlands (Amazonian basin to the north east and Pilcomayo basin to the south east).

⁹ For a critique and brief history of the way the development discourse operationalized ‘poverty’ and defined abstract universal indicators, see Rahnema 1992.

contain poverty: social policies to manage poverty and prevent social unrest. In other words, the World Bank's approach to poverty does not entail specific economic policies to directly attack poverty it rather encourages a certain divorce between social and economic policies. Poverty alleviation programs are free from addressing economic solutions because supposedly the invisible hand of the market would, in the long term, provide those solutions.

It is in this context that in the early 1990s the Bolivian government undertook the task (with the financial support of US AID and UNESCO) to map levels of poverty throughout the country (Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano 1993). The purpose of this study (*Mapa de Pobreza: Una Guía para la Acción Social*) was to identify areas of critical levels of poverty and to provide information for the design of social policies. Consistent with the ways in which development discourse has operationalized poverty, the study measured 'poverty' solely on the basis of variables indicating levels of satisfaction of basic needs, e.g. shelter, running water /sewage, education, health, and social security (ibid: 7), this map of poverty identified Arque as a paradigmatic case of extreme poverty, the second poorest province of the country (ibid: 75).¹⁰ The concern with poverty alleviation as part of the strategy to manage poverty in the context of free market / structural adjustment policies was one of the reason why remote Andean areas like Arque suddenly became so 'visible' for the development apparatus in spite of a largely shared skepticism regarding the economic viability of peasant's agricultural production in the Andean highlands. Another reason was related to the fact that the impoverishment of the Andean highlands caused massive emigration to the coca

¹⁰ For a critique of the way needs are defined in the context of the development discourse and a brief discussion of the very long debate on basic needs, see Illich 1992.

production region of El Chapare. Implementing poverty alleviation programs in the highlands was seen, by policy makers and development experts, as a way of preventing highland peasants from emigrating to El Chapare to grow coca leaves. It was part of the strategy to decrease coca-leaf production.

It is against the above-described background that we can better grasp the conditions of possibility for a project like PROSANA. However, behind every development project there is also a story of personal interests. Indeed, this particular project would probably not have seen the light were it not for the fortuitous encounter between engineer Raul Meneses and Dr. Hans Schoeneberger in Peru about 10 years earlier. The two men conferred upon a strategy drawing on their own experiences and interests that would bring the leguminous plant tarwi (*lupinus mutabilis*) to the region. Eventually Meneses was excluded from the project in its ultimate conception, leaving a bitter personal anecdote in the record of this supposed collaboration.

Raul Meneses' story about the origins of PROSANA: To trace the origins of PROSANA, you have to go back to the seventies, to the Germans' project in Peru. In those days the Germans were interested in processing tarwi for vegetable oil production. In 1977 they got the idea of extending the project to Bolivia. (...) In those days I was working for the institution in charge of developing tarwi production in the Andean zones. (...) In 1980 I went to work for CORDECO, running the tarwi production project; by this time the project was no longer devoted to vegetable oil production, but to growing tarwi as a source of food, because it is very high in proteins. (...) As part of this project I went to several seminars organized by the GTZ in Lima, and there I met Hans. In one of those seminars I heard an expert say something very important, something I had always thought. This expert, also a German, said that the best way to encourage tarwi cultivation among small farmers was to guarantee them a market and a reasonable price. As a result I began thinking about how to put up a factory, so as to buy tarwi from the farmers, process it and sell it. (...) I managed to get some support from Germany, and they also gave me a scholarship to go to Germany and study. (...) In 1988 I went to Germany, and visited Hans, who was working in the GTZ's German offices at the time. I told him about my plan to expand the industrial production of tarwi to a commercial scale. He told me they could help with the expansion of a factory, but that they would be more interested in supporting a broader program that dealt with health and nutrition, focused on a single province (...). What could I say? (...) As a Bolivian I wasn't going to get all egotistical and say "I want my project" when they were suggesting broader support that could help my country. So I said, forget about the factory; let's do what you're suggesting. He told

me that CORDECO had to apply to get technical assistance for a feasibility study and if I wanted him to be part of the team I should make sure to say in the application that we needed a nutritionist. When I got back I started writing the application; in CORDECO no one was interested in the proposal and I had to develop it on my own and then convince my superiors to sign it. In order to complete the proposal I had to run all over the place to get information. I established that Arque, Tapacarí and Bolívar suffered from extreme poverty. I eliminated Tapacarí because there were already NGOs working there, and I eliminated Bolívar because it was very hard to reach, with few roads. That's how I finally chose Arque. In our proposal we asked to do a nutrition improvement program in Arque province for two reasons: first because of the high levels of chronic malnutrition there, and second because of the extreme poverty which provokes a high level of migration to the city and to El Chapare.

The story according to Hans Schoeneberger: In reality, PROSANA came out of a request by the Cochabambino agronomist Raúl Meneses (...) He was a técnico with CORDECO who was always very interested in Andean crops, like tarwi. I knew him before; we met in Peru, when I was doing my thesis research, about tarwi. I was in Lima and he came to the congresses there. (...) When we saw each other in Germany I explained to him that in the GTZ, and throughout the world, ideas had changed. Now we didn't see the problem of nutrition as simply a problem of food production, we weren't talking about producing more food, because there was plenty of food. (...) Now we talked about food security, and even of nutritional security. Now it wasn't a matter of working at the technological level – that wouldn't solve the problem; you can have industrial production of food and have the products, but most people don't have full access to those products. The point, then, is to work with *campesinos* [peasants] on the problem of access to food. He told me that if the factory plan wasn't practical he was ready to work on something else and asked what I suggested. I told him that nowadays people were thinking that nutritional problems would be solved through a process of rural development, regionally integrated, not as a matter of a single crop. (...) Within a broader idea of development, we have to locate our work on a map of poverty based on data about infant mortality, malnutrition, etc.

B. The Feasibility Study and the Project Design

The mission in charge of the 1989 feasibility study was comprised of Hans Schoeneberger, representing the GTZ, Raul Meneses, representing CORDECO, three other members of CORDECO's staff, and three consultants hired by the GTZ (a Peruvian economist, a Swiss agronomist who lived and worked in Bolivia, and a Spanish anthropologist who also lived and worked in Bolivia). The mission carried out a preliminary research in Arque in order to identify the main geographic, ecological,

demographic, and socio-economic characteristics of the area and make a rapid appraisal of the conditions, problems, and potentialities for development. Another part of the study consisted of identifying the institutions and agencies that could be involved in the future project and assessing their respective competencies and capabilities for contributing to the implementation of the future project. Preliminary results and project ideas were then discussed with CORDECO's president. In the conversation I had with Hans Schoeneberger in 1997 about the origins of PROSANA I asked him what he remembered about his first visit to the region and the preparation of the study. This is what told me:

Meneses had everything ready for us; he prepared the expedition to Arque with every detail perfectly in place. We went in through the Valle Bajo, through Capinota, and from there we followed the river's course to Arque. (...) During the first days we were on the verge of terminating the mission because we could tell that the area had no potential. You know how serious problem sedimentation is. The people told us that every year there was a meter more of sediment and that not long ago the river was 10 meters below the train bridge, and today the bridge is almost at water level. The agronomist, as well as the economist, a Peruvian, and I thought that there was nothing to do there; that what was needed was an emigration project to move the people somewhere else. The amount of erosion that you can see, particularly in the lower areas when you travel by the river, is really depressing. We were on the verge of canceling the mission, but we changed our minds when we met some leaders in Arque who told us that it wasn't all like the lower parts, that we had to see the other parts; they took us to see La Comuna and the upper part. (...) We traveled partly on foot, partly by truck. In order to get to La Comuna we had to go out and come around through Oruro and Bolivar. (...) When we visited the upper zones we could see that all was not yet lost, there are lands that are still usable, there are springs, and what impressed us the most, and this is very important: the perseverance of the people, the people who told us "no, we want to stay here, we don't want to migrate; this is our land and there is potential here; we need irrigation, we need better schools so our children can learn more, and we need some kind of health service and a few roads; if we get that, we want to stay." People also told us about the trips to El Chapare, and said they didn't want to go to El Chapare because they were mistreated there, and there is the whole problem with Mopar.¹¹ Then we talked about the city, many had gone to the city, but there also many had problems, they couldn't find work, they end up in the market as porters and so on. The leaders told us that it was the first time someone offered to work with them in Arque. (...) And that was how they convinced us, and took us to places where things were really not as terrible as in the lower part; this altered our first impression. Later we met the priests in Arque and Tacopaya, with Father Luis and Father Mario, and they told us "this land needs help, and you must help at least so that someone will stay and something will begin to change. (...) Interesting, isn't it? Of course, we didn't only travel around Arque, but also to many other institutions.

¹¹ Mopar is the name of the military police or army's special unit that controls the region.

MACA [Ministry of Peasant Affairs] didn't have the slightest interest in any of this, they simply told us, "we're not going to work over there." (...) Since we'd established that many people from there migrated to El Chapare we also went to talk to the folks of alternative development, and do you know what they told us? Ingeniero Rocabado, who was the director of their programs, told us, "send those people to El Chapare for me – they could be planting bananas, rice, yuca; there's potential in El Chapare." Imagine, he didn't even know what to do with the coca-growers who are already there, and he was telling me, "send all those people for me! Why are you going to work in Arque?" (...)CORDECO was the most divided. (...) I'll tell you a story if you like – this was very funny. When we presented the results of our feasibility study to the president of CORDECO, we mentioned the problem of excess goats in Arque. (...) He listened carefully to our presentation and then said: "Your proposal is excellent, but I have a counter-proposal. This is an excellent zone for goats; what's needed is to raise goats, produce milk, make cheese and send it to France, because they really appreciate goat cheese." (...) Can you imagine anything more absurd? Raise goats to export cheese to France! (...) But apart from a few such stories, afterwards people in CORDECO always showed interest. The problem then was that the Bolivian government had no clear policy for the area; in those days no one talked about anti-poverty programs – that didn't exist.

We gather from this account that the idea of a project in Arque represented an uncertain challenge. Not only were local development institutions skeptical but the experts themselves were initially very discouraged. Schoeneberger's account would seem to suggest that the experts were able to carry on developing a project proposal because the people they met in Arque motivated them and convinced them that something had to and could be done.

In the 270-page document (PROSANA 1989) containing the results of the study and the project proposal, the experts described Arque in the following terms.

The province of Arque has approximately 25,341 inhabitants (...) the majority of these are dispersed throughout the rural area.¹² There are around 188 villages with an average of 27 families per village. Most are concentrated in the heads of valleys and high altitude zones. (...) 66% of the population is monolingual Qhishwa, nearing 80% for women. Only 32% of the inhabitants are bilingual in Spanish and Qhishwa... (...) the rates of illiteracy...were registered at 74% for women and 57% for men. In the province there are three rural educational centers with 56 schools...The majority of the villages only offer education through a second grade level (pp 5-6).

¹² According to official numbers established by the 1992 national census Arque province had 18,249 inhabitants, Bolivar 7,081 and Tapacarí 19,202 (INE 1992).

The accumulative annual rate of [demographic] growth is 0.56, ..., that is, the population decreases slowly. The primary migration destinations are El Chapare, Cochabamba and the mining centers of the province. Some peasants...work their own land in el Chapare; most migrations, however, are of a seasonal nature (...) and only in a few cases are there migrants who leave definitively and do not come back to cultivate their land of origin (p.25).

Currently, peasant economies are the principal form of production. Arque is fundamentally a rural farming province that produces crops such as potato, wheat, barley; these activities employ around 78% of the economically active population (...). Other economic activities that should be noted include mining, which currently [only employs] 270 people, (...) construction, centered around riverbank protection and railroad maintenance, and bread making (ibid).

The remoteness of the area and its proximity to the ayllus territory (of Tapacari, Bolivar and Oruro) has resulted in a milder hybridization (mestizaje) than the one in the valleys of Cochabamba, and has allowed for the survival of the original structures of the ayllus (micro-territorial membership, traditional authorities, communal control of the land in the highest zones), even when these communities were formally incorporated into the hacienda system. In general, it is an atypical province that-along with the neighboring provinces of Tapacari and Bolivar- has more differences than similarities with the rest of Cochabamba. (...) On an organizational level, the new systems of representation (state and peasant unions) have superseded the traditional, or coexist and overlap with them in diverse ways (pp 26-27).

Farming and herding are the most important activities in the province. They are primarily oriented towards subsistence, or reproduction. Only in good years is there excess for commercialization. Potato and livestock are almost exclusively interchangeable in monetary terms and the other products through bartering. A central principle of the farming system is risk distribution, therefore each peasant sows the same crop in various parcels situated throughout various microclimates and also plants different crop combinations. (...) The techniques applied in the agricultural production are traditional. The peasants have a profound knowledge of their resources and technologies. However they are completely unaware of other technologies such as the use of chemicals or pesticides. (...) The predominant livestock are sheep and goats. (...) Animal overload is a problem, in varying degrees, throughout the region and causes low yields. The extreme elimination of vegetation layers due to overgrazing (...) triggers a process of erosion. The degree of erosion increases as it reaches the lower parts of the river basin; at the banks of the river Arque flat and irrigable lands have disappeared. Erosion is much more due to poor livestock management than farming. (...) Overall, we can affirm that the Arque peasant is a good farmer and a bad herder. Undoubtedly, in the province there is agricultural and stockbreeding potential to amply cover the necessary principal nutritional requirements (pp 29-30).

The nutritional situation in the province of Arque is alarming. The gravest nutritional problem is a protein-calorie deficiency. (...) Undoubtedly, the principal cause of such low rates of malnutrition is low food consumption. (...) This precarious nutritional situation creates an alarming health situation. The infant mortality rate is 250 to 1000 in the department of Cochabamba (one of the highest in Latin America) and most likely, in Arque the rates are even higher. (...) In light of this situation, the health care and nutrition programs in the province of Arque are completely insufficient. There

is only one doctor in Arque, one volunteer nurse, one auxiliary nurse and one health center. There is a grave problem of mistrust or misunderstanding by the peasants towards western medicine, deemed as a service that the population perceives to be deficient. The majority of the peasant population resorts to local healers or witchdoctors that exist in almost all peasant villages (pp 30-31).

Besides providing the standard information with the usual indicators that serve to represent a region as underdeveloped: high levels of illiteracy, infant mortality, subsistence agriculture and the like, it is interesting to note recurrent references to the persistence of 'traditional' practices (e.g. *ayllu* organization, technologies of agricultural production, or 'non-western' medicinal practices). While still keeping binary oppositions traditional / modern (or Andean / western) rooted in modernization theory, 'traditional' is not anymore represented as that which has to be overcome in order to become modern and developed.

The information provided in the experts' reports was further analyzed in a planning workshop in which problems were identified and prioritized, and objectives defined. The participants to the workshop were the members of the joint mission that conducted the study, other staff members of COREDCO, the priest of Tacopaya's parish, a representative of the Ministry of Planning, and representatives of other governmental agencies (e.g. health, education, agriculture). Following GTZ regulations, the planning method used at the workshop was the famous ZOPP (*zielorientierte Projektplanung*) which stands for objectives-oriented project planning (see Figure 1 for a visual representation of this method's components).¹³ The main documents resulting from a

¹³ Elaborated by GTZ experts on the basis of the logical framework approach used by professional planners and managers, this planning instrument became a binding regulation in 1987 and has constituted since then a GTZ trademark. The ZOPP method is defined as a planning instrument to be used in both planning and implementation stages. The ZOPP method involves 5 steps: 1) participation analysis (to determine participants' expectations concerning the project); 2) problem analysis (to identify major problems and represent their causes and effects as a hierarchy of problems); 3) objectives analysis (to transform "the

‘ZOPP workshop’ are the problems tree, the objectives tree, and the project-planning matrix.¹⁴ Following this procedure, the definition of project goals derives from the analysis of problems. That is to say, the first step is to list the problems of the target area, establish their causal relations, and identify the top priority problem and its main causes. The proposed solutions to these problems become the objectives of the project.¹⁵ At the first ZOPP workshop in 1989, the main problem of Arque was defined as chronic malnutrition or undernourishment and the main objective was to achieve food and nutritional security. (See Figure 2 for the list of the problems and their causes identified at this workshop and Figure 3 for the list of goals and expected results).

cause effect relationships ... into means – ends relationships”); 4) discussion of alternatives (to select a project strategy); and 5) the project planning matrix (to establish “what means are to be used to achieve the end and how this can be checked later on”) (GTZ 1991: 5-6). The discussion at each planning step is documented and moderated by an expert not associated with the project. As a good planning expert, the moderator knows that “planning means simplifying” (GTZ 1997: 9) That is to say, planning “is not a question of digging down to the roots of all complex situations, because this causes confusion and puts the actors off the track. The issue at hand is to select the few very important interconnections ... and to turn the complex picture into a simplified concept so that action becomes possible in the first place.” (GTZ 1997: 9).

¹⁴ Summarizing the relevant aspects on a single sheet, this matrix shows “what project **activities** are intended to produce what **results/outputs** and what **project purpose** is to be achieved in this way. It also indicates how this project purpose is relevant to a (national) **overall goal** in the development policy field” (GTZ 1991: 6). As it will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5, planning methodologies are one of the key preoccupations of the development machinery. All development agencies have their own guidelines for project planning, all derivations of the above mentioned ‘logical framework approach’ developed as a modern management tool in the US in the 1950s. See GTZ 1997 for a summary of the multiple revisions of GTZ’s ZOPP. For more details on GTZ debates on the matter see Foster 1996 and Schoenhuth and Kievelitz 1993. I did not attend any of PROSANA’s ZOPP workshops but observed three ZOPP workshops for other GTZ projects.

¹⁵ Later on, i.e. after the initial proposal is accepted, the objectives are broken down into more specific and tangible outcomes for the fulfillment of which specific activities have to be planned. That is shown in a very detailed planning matrix. PROSANA’s first planning matrix had 14 pages, see PROSANA 1992a.

Figure 1: Components and Stages of a Project Planning Cycle according to the GTZ's Planning Methodology. (Source: GTZ 1991: 7)

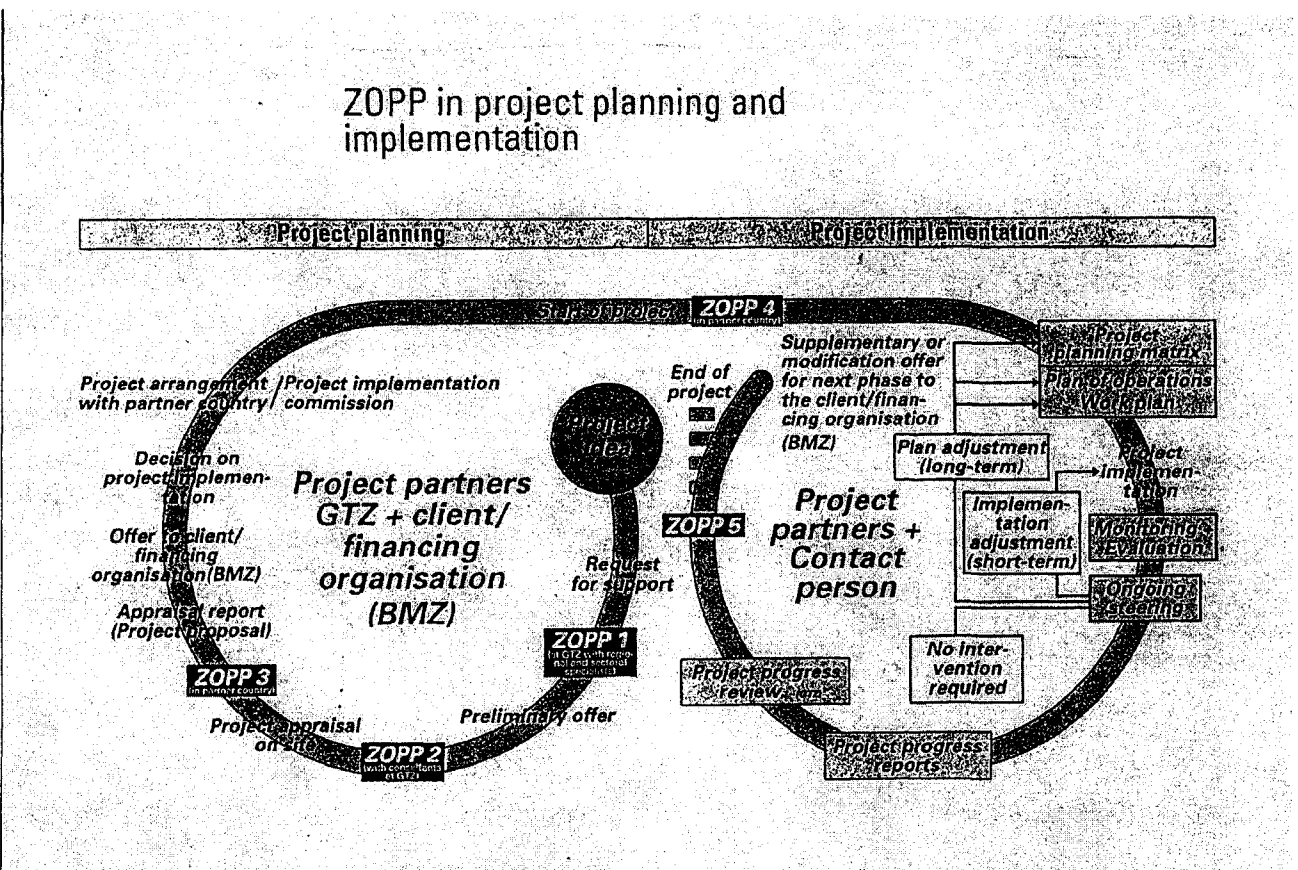


Figure 2: The Problems and Causes Identified in 1989

Problems	Causes
Food scarcity (there is not enough locally produced food; not enough in terms of quantity and nutritious quality)	High nutritional value crops are not prioritized (people lack information about nutritional value of food) Agricultural and livestock outputs are too low (deterioration productive bases, no funds for productive investments, lost of traditional environmental knowledge, etc.)
Insufficient access to highly nutritious food	The little surplus produced is misused. Low purchasing power (There is little agricultural production for the market; terms of exchange in markets are not favorable)
Inadequate food habits	Little knowledge about an adequate and balanced diet Substitution of highly nutritious traditional food for lower nutritional value foods Food donations end up substituting formerly locally produced foodstuff
High incidence of illnesses	Drinking water is insufficient and of bad quality Traditional and modern medicines are not well integrated Inadequate information about hygiene No understanding of the concept of health Lack of health services and professionals

(Based on information from PROSANA 1989)

Figure 3: Overall Goal, Project Purposes, and Results in 1989

Goal	Purposes	Results	Assumptions
Arque's level of nutrition has been improved	1. Highly nutritious foodstuffs are available in larger quantities	Self-training of peasants and their organizations They prioritize nutritious crops Agricultural and livestock output has increased There is infrastructure to improve water use	Project's staff respect traditional organizations Peasants are willing to work w/ project Landowners don't interfere with project's activities Emigration doesn't increase There is enough water
	2. Peasants acquire highly nutritious food produced locally	Production of larger surplus improves purchasing power	Terms of exchange do not worsen
	3. Eating habits have been improved	Knowledge about balanced diet has been improved Arrangements to rationalize food donations have been made	Local communities accept agents of change Donors are willing to have a dialogue
	4. High incidence of illnesses has been reduced	Health programs are being implemented Increased knowledge about keeping healthy Initial integration of traditional and modern medicine Increased availability of drinking water	Local communities are predisposed to assimilate the acquired information / knowledge

(Source: based on information from PROSANA 1989)

The project proposal submitted in 1989 was formulated as follows:

The high rate of chronic malnutrition of the infantile population, of pregnant and nursing mothers, particularly in rural areas or marginal urban areas, constitutes one of the causes for the backward socio-economic development of the region because it negatively effects human resource preservation, health and work.

One of the principal factors of this reality is the lack of high protein calorie nourishment and the growing dependence on food from the outside, due to the lack of incentives for internal production, this being one of the reasons for the growing peasant migration toward the city and El Chapare.

These specified aspects demonstrate the necessity and importance of formulating a development project that tends towards increasing agricultural production and productivity and improves the nutritional level of the populations, particularly in the dejected rural areas. (...) (PROSANA 1989: 10)

Later on in the report, the experts define the objectives of the proposed project as follows:

The proposed project aims at achieving food security in the province of Arque by enlarging the local agricultural basis through a rational management of resources, improving health conditions, and increasing the knowledge basis of the local population. (Ibid: 36).

Finally, the experts acknowledged that there could be other ways of improving the nutritional level of a population,

- a) *by increasing the amounts of food donations,*
- b) *by promoting the production of cash-crops in order to generate higher income which would then allow people to buy food in the market, or*
- c) *by promoting emigration either to urban centers or to the expanding agricultural frontier in the tropical lowlands.*

They consider however that, in the case of Arque, none of these alternative ways could be viable or sustainable.

[The first one] creates dependency on external sources of charity and changes food habits. [The second one] is difficult because local crops do not present any comparative advantage in relation to national or international agro-industry; in addition, unequal terms of exchange, and also market-generated income will not necessarily be spent in highly nutritional items. The third alternative, emigration, is not viable because there are neither jobs in the cities nor productive alternatives in the tropical agricultural frontier. (Ibid: 37)

Judging from these documents, it appears that the project proposed to solve the problem of malnutrition by promoting the local production (and consumption) of nutritious crops and thus the development of a sustainable almost self-reliant peasant agriculture. That a rural development project would have such a goal stands in sharp contrast with the kinds of goals development projects had in earlier decades. Indeed most rural development projects in the 1970s and 1980s aimed at ‘modernizing’ agriculture, increasing the production of cash crops, and facilitating the integration of peasants into the market, thereby turning supposedly ‘traditional peasants’ into ‘modernized’ market oriented farmers. Integration of peasants into the market was also a goal explicitly stated in the official 1989 document presenting the government’s 10-year national development strategy (Ministerio de Planificación 1989). This document was CORDECO’s main frame of reference for the design of regional development policies and was cited as such in the document containing PROSANA’s first proposal (PROSANA 1989: 13-15). And yet, in tune with the various criticisms against the disadvantageous dependency that resulted from ‘market incorporation’ projects or food donations, the experts who designed the food security program for Arque seemed to pursue the ideal of sustainable local autonomy. That a governmental project would pursue such an ideal revealed the extent to which large development agencies like the GTZ had, by the early 90s, incorporated the debates and claims voiced by various non-governmental development organizations and social movements that proposed alternative models for ‘Third World’ development throughout the 80s.

In sum, PROSANA’s initial design contained a combination of different elements representing different and even contradictory standpoints within the development debate.

By proposing to address the problem of food and nutritional security through the combination of health services or educational workshops with agro-ecology and agricultural production, the project embarked into walking on the thin line between different conceptions of what it means ‘to fight extreme poverty’ (i.e. providing basic services or improving productivity levels and sources of income). The challenge was thus to combine both. My discussion of what happened in the different phases of the project will show that this challenge was not met. Before I turn to that, it is necessary to describe the institutional organization of the project.

C. Prosana’s Institutional Organization

As mentioned earlier, PROSANA was first placed under the institutional umbrella of CORDECO, the state agency in charge of Cochabamba’s regional development. In the context of the bilateral agreement, CORDECO was committed to assign the necessary funds to guarantee continuous implementation of the project, assign members of its staff to work in the implementation of the project, cover operational costs, and coordinate the implementation with other institutions. CORDECO was thus responsible for establishing the necessary institutional agreements with other state agencies that could be relevant for the implementation of different components of the program (e.g. board of health, board of education, rural development services attached to the then called ministry of peasant affairs) as well as with other private institutions or non-governmental development organizations. The GTZ was committed to assign three experts to work full time in the program providing technical assistance for planning, organizing, and implementing the different projects comprised in the program, provide short term experts as consultants for

specific aspects, hire the supplementary personnel necessary for the implementation of the program (supplementary to the one provided by CORDECO), provide the necessary material and equipment for the establishment of four operation centers in the rural area; provide financial support for small infrastructure projects in pilot peasant villages; and organize and fund the implementation of training workshops / courses for experts and *técnicos* of the institutions and organizations participating in the implementation of the program.

It is important to note that given the separation between financial and technical assistance within the German development aid, the role of the GTZ was (and still is) limited to providing technical assistance to train local experts and strengthen local institutions. That is to say, the contribution of the GTZ to development programs is fundamentally one of technical assistance: experts, training, applied research. The GTZ pays the salaries of experts, the expenses of a research, the operation costs of the office where the experts work, the organization of training workshops. In the case of PROSANA it also provided small amounts for pilot experiments that can be considered part of applied research and that were part of the strategy of providing technical assistance to rural communities in Arque. However, it is not within its competencies to provide financial support for actual development works.

As for the running of the program itself, the organization was as follows. There was an executive direction which comprised the national coordinator (from CORDECO) and the main advisor (from the GTZ). The latter was Dr Schoeneberger, the former changed over time, but from 1995 on was economist *Licenciado* Filemon Iriarte. There were two administration assistants, one to handle expenses covered with GTZ money and

the other one to handle expenses and operation costs covered by CORDECO. At the beginning, following the initial design, there were three technical units, health, education, and agro ecology. Experts hired by the GTZ worked with CORDECO's *técnicos*. Shortly after the project took off, a fourth unit was created to take care of socio – economic and organizational issues. From the three permanent GTZ experts, two were Germans (Hans Schoeneberger, the nutritionist, and Alberto Vega an agronomist) and one was Bolivian (a sociologist or anthropologist, three different people succeeded in this office, by the time I was there it was sociologist Jorge Lozano). Other German experts came for short periods over the ten years. Also Bolivian experts were hired by the GTZ for short-term assignments. Besides the executive directors, experts and *técnicos*, the rest of the staff was formed by secretaries, drivers, etc. The number of people working in the program varied constantly. At its peak PROSANA had about 60 workers. All the Bolivian staff, whether experts or support staff, were fluent in Qhishwa.

Following the original design, the project had three phases (orientation, implementation, and consolidation). As it is customary with GTZ projects, at the end of each phase there was an evaluation performed by external consultants and a new ZOPP workshop to redefine or adjust the objectives and plan the activities of the following phase. The purpose of the first phase--or orientation phase (1991 – 1994)-- was to test on the ground the validity / viability of the nutritional security strategy and to design in further details the specific activities, technologies, and methodologies to be used in its future implementation. The purpose of the second phase or implementation phase (1994 – 1998) was to carry out that strategy with the technical assistance of the GTZ. Since the role of the GTZ is limited to technical assistance, it was understood that CORDECO was

the institution that should be in charge of the implementation. That is, CORDECO should provide the money (either its own or through loans or agreements with other institutions) to cover the actual cost. The purpose of the third phase or consolidation phase (1998 – 2001) was to strengthen the financial and institutional mechanisms to guarantee the continuation of the program after the withdrawal of the GTZ.

As we mentioned earlier, one of the consequences of the decentralization reforms launched by the 93 – 97 government in Bolivia was the closing of regional development corporations. From 1996 onwards, the Bolivian counterpart of the German – Bolivian bilateral agreement for the Arque nutritional security program was the Prefecture of Cochabamba. More importantly, the transformations triggered by the popular participation law included new roles and responsibilities for local municipal governments. It is of particular relevance here the fact that municipal governments became responsible for planning, deciding and coordinating the development of their jurisdiction. In other words, the role that CORDECO played in coordinating, planning, designing and implementing the food and nutritional security program, that role was split between the Prefecture's unit for municipal empowerment and the municipal governments of Arque. The implications of these transformations for the project will be described below and discussed in more detail in chapters 4 and 5. In the following section I will analyze the history of the first and second phases and briefly present the goals of the third phase that began after I left 'the field.'

III. The Phases of the Project

A. Phase I: Orientation (1991 – 1994)

During this phase PROSANA's staff was organized into four technical and one administrative units. The technical units included health, nutrition, agro-ecology, and socio-economics. The staff working in the technical units consisted of CORDECO's employees (public civil servants) and short term hires of the GTZ. The latter, for the most part, while they might have similar training as agronomists, sociologists, or economists had previous experience working with non-governmental organizations, were more flexible about working outside of bureaucratic regulations, and in many cases, brought to the project a passionate commitment to the work.

For the GTZ hired Bolivian staff, this initial 3-year phase was a period of exploration, experimentation and preparation. First, the preliminary findings of the feasibility study were further explored through a variety of detailed baseline studies about the land and its people: ecological characteristics (properties of native and non-native vegetation species, biodiversity, soil quality, and causes for erosion; see PROSANA 1992b, 1992d, 1993e, 1993f, 1994e); local agricultural methods and techniques of soil conservation (PROSANA 1992e, 1993a, 1994c, 1994d); land tenure system (PROSANA 1992f); causes for malnutrition, food availability; eating habits, and child rearing practices (PROSANA 1992c, 1993c, 1993g, 1993h, 1993i, 1994g); health conditions and services; healing practices and beliefs (PROSANA 1993d).¹⁶

¹⁶ Part of the research was done by PROSANA's *técnicos* in the context of testing technical alternatives in pilot rural villages; e.g. terracing techniques, reforestation methods (PROSANA 1992d, 1992e; 1993a). Another part of the research consisted of surveys and 'diagnosis' studies to inform projects' designs; see for example PROSANA 1992c, 1993c; 1993g; 1993h; 1993i; 1993j; 1994g. University students undertook

Second, the general strategy for nutritional security outlined in the project proposal described above was further developed and the specific steps required for its implementation were designed and tested (see Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8). For example, one of the purposes outlined for the agro ecology component was “to increase the productivity and stability of the agro ecosystems” by stopping erosion, improving soil conservation structures, and increasing soil fertility (PROSANA 1992a; see Figure 5). The agronomists’ task during this orientation phase was to identify the specific ways these goals could be achieved in the different ecological zones of Arque. Following a methodology defined as ‘action – research,’ PROSANA’s *técnicos* and short-term consultants tried out different technical alternatives and methods of work—including those based on local traditions and knowledge-- in some 10 peasant villages.¹⁷ In these pilot villages, agronomists and villagers built different forms of terraces, developed plant nurseries and experimented with native and non-native trees, tried out different types of seeds and different cultivation methods (see chapter 6 for a detailed description of a pilot experiment in Totorá Pampa).¹⁸ One of the

more comprehensive studies as part of their thesis research. These students could be both German and Bolivian and were either hired by PROSANA as part time consultants or received logistic support from PROSANA. For example, Totorá Pampa was the object of three such studies: one conducted by a German graduate student for a doctoral degree on nutrition; another one by a Bolivian student majoring in economics (Fernandez 1995); and a third one by another Bolivian student who graduated as agronomic engineer (Garcia 1996). The latter was later hired as full time staff in PROSANA’s agroecological division, but was assigned to work in a different area (see chapter 6). Another important example is the case of Pierre Ibisch, a biology doctoral student from Germany, who produced the first and more comprehensive inventory of native and non-native plants in the whole province of Arque. Arguing that the ecological crisis could eventually be overcome, he proposed to use local resources, mainly native tree species to reconstitute the agroecological balance (Ibisch 1992). His contribution was one of the main inputs in the design of the agroecological strategy to be implemented in the second phase.

¹⁷ The term action research has a long history and different connotations in the different contexts in which it has been used. In the context of GTZ projects, the use of the term is part of the multiple debates about participatory development planning (about which I will say more in chapter 5). For a discussion of GTZ views about action research and development projects see Schneider-Barthold, Geigel et al 1995).

¹⁸ Ideally, the selection should follow three criteria: accessibility, ecological representativeness, and availability. That is, pilot villages had to be easily accessible from PROSANA’s operation centers, the sample had to include villages from the three main ecological zones—i.e. puna, high riverhead valley, and

agronomists who worked with PROSANA during the orientation phase remembered that experimentation period in the following terms:

From the feasibility study and the general guidelines of the project design we knew that the concept of food and nutritional security involved strengthening local production and increasing the availability of locally produced food. But we did not know how to meet those goals; we were a bit disoriented. Little by little, visiting different communities and testing different aspects of the strategy in the pilot communities, through trial and error and long conversations among ourselves, we came up with the idea of 4 main lines of work for the agroecological strategy: 1) **soil conservation** (which involved mainly agro-forestry because of the serious erosion problems); 2) **irrigation** (mainly micro-irrigation systems); 3) **livestock** management (mainly in relation to overgrazing); and 4) the local production of highly **nutritious crops**. (...) [Concerning the latter,] we realized by the end of our research that the problem was not so much the lack of locally produced nutritious food (in many areas they did produce a variety of nutritious crops, though not everywhere) but that they were not well utilized. The problem was in the ways of using or not using those products, it was a question of habits. That is how we realized that education was a fundamental component of the agro-ecological strategy.¹⁹

valley--, and villages whose population was available / willing to work with PROSANA. In practice, the most determinant criterion was villagers' willingness.

¹⁹ This is an excerpt from the long conversation (semi structured interview) I had with Ismael Condori in 1997. Condori was the Bolivian agronomist hired by the GTZ to work in PROSANA together with Alberto Vega, the German GTZ expert and the agronomists members of CORDECO's staff. He resigned from his position in 1995 during the implementation phase, more details below, but was often hired for short term consultant assignments. When I interviewed him in 1997 he was experimenting with a new participatory planning methodology for the design of land management systems.

Figure 4: Tree of Main Problems as Defined in 1992

Source: PROSANA 1992a (my translation)

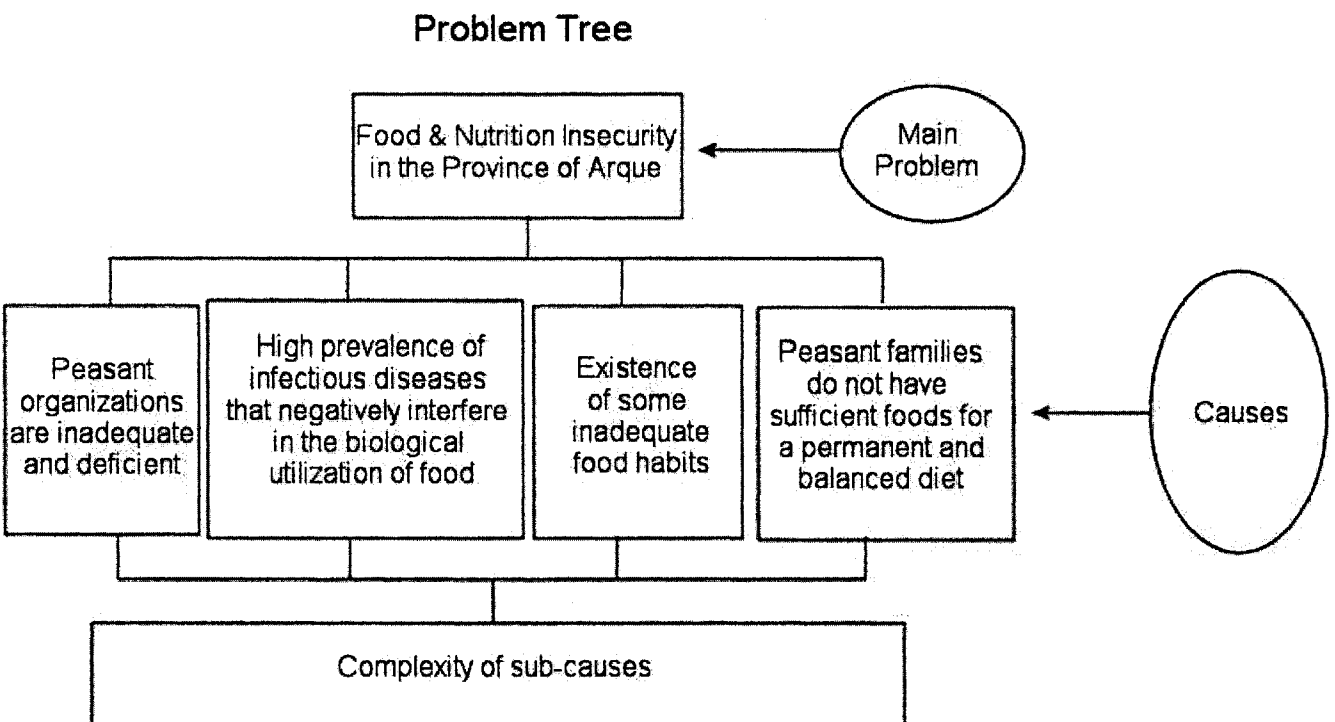


Figure 5: Tree of Problems as defined in 1992 – Complete Version

Source: PROSANA 1992a (my translation)

Figure 6: Tree of Main Objectives as Defined in 1992

Source: PROSANA 1992a (my translation)

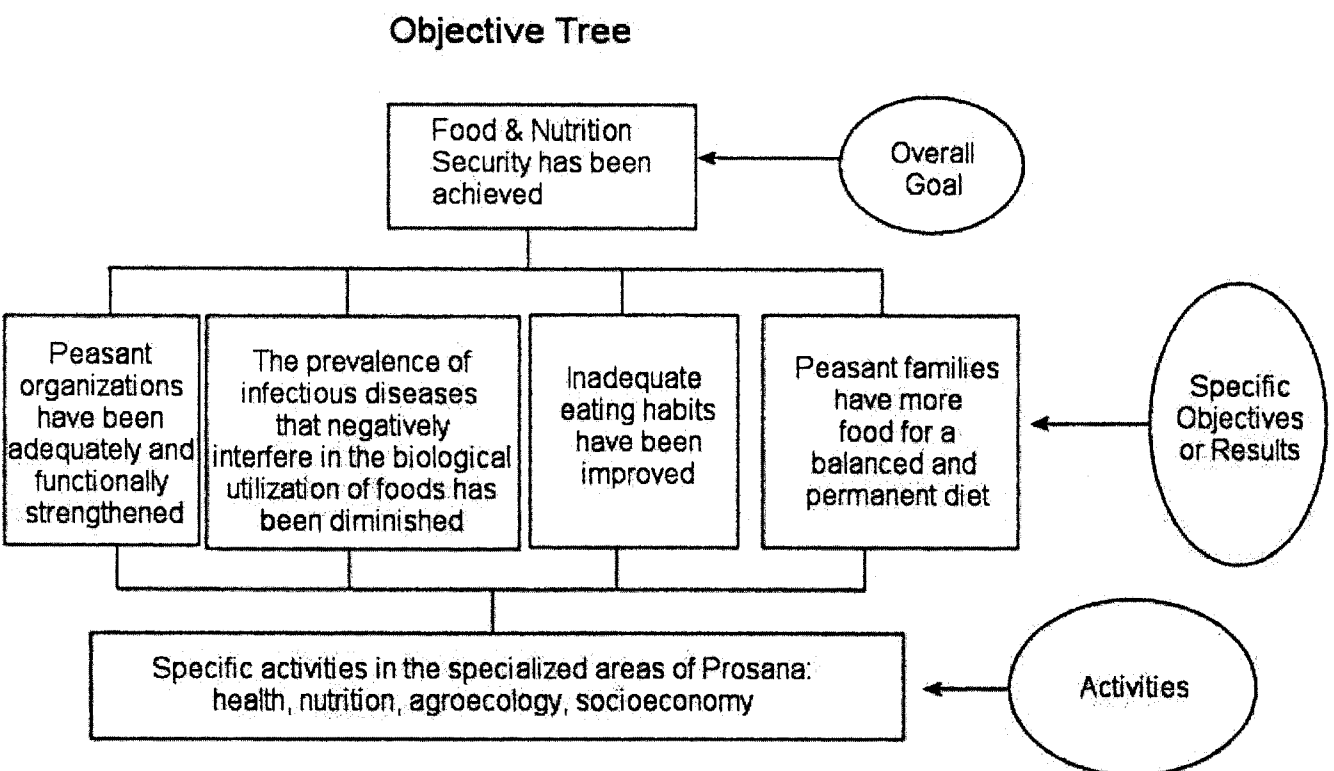


Figure 7: Tree of Objectives as Defined in 1992 – Complete Version

Source: PROSANA 1992a (my translation)

Figure 8: PROSANA's General Planning Matrix as Redesigned in 1992

	Summary of Goals/ Results	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Sources of Verification
Overall Goal	The standard of living has risen for peasant families in the Province of Arque.	The infant mortality rate has decreased by 30%.	Registers in the Unidad Sanitaria. Registers in the Unidad Sanitaria.
Project Purpose	Food and nutrition security has been achieved in the Province of Arque.	Peasant families have guaranteed access to adequate foods and basic health care throughout the entire year.	Project's Monitoring System.
Results/ Outputs	Prevalence of infectious diseases has been diminished. Eating habits have improved. The peasant families of Arque have access to more foods for a balanced and permanent diet. Peasant organizations have been strengthened.	Diminished respiratory illnesses and diarrhea by 30%. 50% of peasant families consume an improved diet. Increase of food production by 20%.	Registers in the Unidad Sanitaria. Monitoring system. Monitoring system. Monitoring system.

Source: PROSANA 1992a (my translation)

Third, PROSANA set up the conditions to operate in such a remote region by building a minimal physical infrastructure and by establishing institutional networks with government agencies and NGO's in neighboring provinces. They established PROSANA's main offices in the city of Cochabamba as well as three centers which included an office, a conference room, and residential facilities for the staff. In the towns of Arque and Tacopaya, PROSANA bought and renovated two houses from landowners who now lived in the city. These facilities were equipped with radio communication and solar panels for electricity and hot water. For the third center, located in Huancani - Changolla, PROSANA utilized a small house built by CORDECO in the 1970's – formerly part of a now defunct iron deposit project. PROSANA also promoted the construction and improvement of roads, which was undertaken by CORDECO's infrastructure and transportation division and financed by the Japanese cooperation agency (JICA). As for the institutional networks, they contacted the Regional Secretariat of Health and the Secretariat of Rural Education and non-for-profit organizations that worked in neighboring provinces. Coordination with the regional health district was particularly effective for the population because PROSANA provided services that the state had been unable to provide adequately such as vaccination campaigns. The collaboration also ensured that local facilities were built, renovated, and equipped.

Unquestionably the most challenging aspect of the project during this orientation phase was to gain the trust and interest of the "target population." From the standpoint of development experts, local peasant participation was a key condition for the efficacy of the project and an explicitly stated goal. As Hans Schoeneberger explained to me in 1997, "the point of the orientation phase was to work out, along with the institutions and the target group, that is the peasant organizations, the concept, the strategy, and the methodology;

what we were going to do and how.”²⁰ To meet this challenge, PROSANA’s *técnicos* faced two major obstacles. The first and immediate obstacle to overcome was the resistance / mistrust encountered in many pilot villages where reluctant villagers questioned PROSANA’s intentions and refused to work and ‘experiment’ with the *tecnicos*. The other obstacle to overcome was the lack of a provincial peasant organization, that is a peasant organization that would represent all peasant villages of the province and thus become a legitimate interlocutor for PROSANA.

When PROSANA’s staff first visited the selected pilot villages, they encountered reluctant villagers who were suspicious of the motives outsiders could have to work in the region. Some villages refused altogether, others accepted after several ‘community meetings’ (*asambleas comunales*) during which villagers asked many questions, silently listened to the answers, and said they needed more time to consider their proposal. Some villagers wanted to know why Germany was so interested in ‘helping’ them,²¹ other

²⁰ In her critical analysis of development programs, Carmen Ferradas identifies two types of development projects: those relying “heavily on expert knowledge” and those “emphasizing participation, communication and planning from the bottom up” (Ferradas 1990:10) The former corresponds to an “authoritarian model” of social intervention, the latter to a ‘neo-populist’ model of social intervention. The authoritarian model “emphasizes expert knowledge in decision making and favors the autonomous functioning of planning bureaucracies.” The neo-populist model encompasses attempts “to empower ‘people’ by promoting communication and participation in a restricted manner with the purpose of achieving predetermined goals. Such a model relies on theoretical assumptions that maintain that actors freely make rational choices” (Ferradas 1990:12-14). This model, she argues, was rarely enforced by development agencies because of its “politically subversive potential. (...) The collective discussion (...) of some issues may lead to collective opposition to the change itself or to demands which the agency is not willing to meet” (Ferradas 1990: 14-15). I would argue that the case of PROSANA is a good illustration of this neo-populist model and that, furthermore, the transformations undergone by PROSANA after 1995 can be understood as different attempts at taming the ‘politically subversive potential’ of participatory development interventions.

²¹ In the interview I conducted with Hans Schoeneberger in 1997 I asked him how did he handle the question concerning Germany’s interest for Arque. This is what he told me. “I told them that Germany went through two terrible wars. After the second war, the country was totally destroyed, there was no single factory left, nothing but ruins. Friendly countries helped Germany to get back on its feet. Since then, and especially now that the country is very rich, Germany decided to help those countries that are going through a difficult situation. That is what I told people in Arque and they perfectly understood what I meant because it makes sense within the frame of the Andean vision of reciprocity. After that, the question never came up again.”

villagers demanded tangible proof of PROSANA's good intentions, e.g. corrugated zinc to replace the church's roof or working tools such as wheelbarrows, shovels, etc. To overcome villagers' resistance, PROSANA's staff answered their questions, acceded to their demands, and eventually signed written agreements specifying the project to be implemented by PROSANA with contributions from the community (e.g. a certain amount of hours of work per household). Remembering those difficult beginnings, Ismael Condori, the agronomist hired as a GTZ expert several months after the orientation phase had started, justified what he called PROSANA's concessions in the following terms.

At the beginning there were tremendous barriers to overcome. I was not in PROSANA when they started, but I know that, for example, the peasants of the village of Vila-Vila did not want to receive Hans, Alberto and other members of the staff that were changed soon after. They asked them to come back several times and finally imposed certain conditions on PROSANA's entry. In the third visit they said that if PROSANA wanted to work in the village they should provide them [the villagers] with tools and corrugated zinc for the church's roof. PROSANA's staff gave in and even signed a written agreement. I personally think that those concessions betrayed the original principles of PROSANA's proposal. On the other hand, I understand that PROSANA's staff had to give in to that pressure. The project had to take off one way or another and PROSANA's staff knew they had no legitimacy in the area, not even as representatives of CORDECO, because CORDECO had never done anything for the people of Arque. (...) I was hired around the time of that third visit. It seemed to me that the problem was bad communication, PROSANA's staff had not been able to convey the message and philosophy of the project.²² So I went to Vila-Vila, because I am fluent in Qhishwa I was able to explain to them clearly that distributing presents is not conducive to sustainable development. I explained in depth PROSANA's modality of work. They perfectly understood what I meant. (...) At the end of that meeting they dropped the demand for corrugated zinc and asked for potato seeds. Alberto and I sorted out different forms of agreements so that it would not look like yet another present. We came up with the idea of a communal seed fund. (...) The idea of signing formal agreements with the villages responded to the problems of mistrust and constant fluctuations we faced in the pilot villages. The agreements worked very well at the level of those individual villages. But once that was secured, the question was how to work at the provincial level. It is at that moment that we realized the importance of working towards strengthening the peasant organization at the provincial level.

²² Like Condori, most members of PROSANA's staff made constant efforts to improve the quality of communication with peasant villagers. However, as Ferradas (1990:11) points it out, "neither participation nor communication [can] be regarded as neutral media. Both are inscribed in a context of asymmetrical power relations and both, quite often, if not always, serve to reproduce the existing relations of domination or to generate new ones."

Indeed, strengthening local grassroots organizations was not a major concern in the initial project design (see Figures 2 and 3 corresponding to problems and goals as defined in 1989). More specifically, it was not defined as a project goal, but it was assumed that Arque peasants would be willing to participate in the project (see ‘assumptions’ column in Figure 2). It is during the orientation phase that “insufficient peasant organization” was identified as a problem and the empowerment of grassroots organizations (*fortalecimiento organizativo*) was defined as a major project goal. In other words, local participation and active engagement in development interventions could not be taken for granted. Signing formal exchange agreements with isolated villages was not enough to achieve the main goal set for this orientation phase, i.e. “to prove, with the participation of Arque peasants, the viability of the strategy for nutritional and food security in the Arque province” (PROSANA 1992a). Thus, it was deemed necessary to carry out specific activities aiming at achieving “a minimal structure of peasant organization at the provincial level, motivating and mobilizing [Arque] peasants to participate in the activities of the project” (PROSANA 1997c: 8). Social scientists were hired to organize a social-economic unit responsible for developing a strategy to achieve this goal.²³ During the orientation phase, this unit’s staff conducted studies to catalog the existing organizational forms in Arque’s peasant villages, identify major regional social actors, and explore social and power relations among them. More importantly, they organized numerous events, workshops, and meetings to foster leadership skills and build a strong local peasant organization. (More about this in chapters 4 and 5.)

²³ Ironically providing continuity within this unit proved to be a huge challenge. Between 1992 and 1993 four different *técnicos* cycled through this position due to their own radical interpretation of their role or due to limitations in their ability to communicate in Qhishwa. It is only in 1993 that sociologist Jorge Lozano and his assistant, Johny Zambrana, arrived into the scene and gave continuity to this unit’s work. They played a central role in the creation of the provincial Central Sindical Campesina and of the Provincial Development Council, the history of which is extensively discussed in chapter 5.

This work led, in 1993, to the peasant congress that inaugurated the first provincial peasant organization gathering all of Arque's peasant *sindicatos*, the *Central Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Arque*, and attached to Cochabamba's departmental peasant federation (*Federación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba*) (PROSANA 1993b and 1994a). Finally, at the end of the orientation phase, PROSANA was able to hold its first participatory planning workshop where representatives of the provincial peasant organization discussed PROSANA's strategy for the implementation phase (PROSANA 1994b).

By the end of the orientation phase (1994), PROSANA was firmly established in the province. It had implemented small agricultural projects in some 10 pilot villages (small irrigation systems, terracing, seed improvement, plant nurseries); actively supported the creation of a peasant organization gathering all peasant villages of the province; and, in collaboration with the regional health secretariat, it had secured the construction of a couple of health centers, the provision of medication and the hiring of medical personnel. Representatives of other villages began to knock at PROSANA's door asking 'Doctor Hans' to get the same attention pilot villages were getting or to help them obtain for their village the school they had asked from the regional secretariat of education. Overcoming the barriers of the beginning, PROSANA had gained the trust of many people and raised tremendous expectations among peasant villages. PROSANA seemed not only a solid institution ready to commit to solve Arque's problems but also a powerful broker to the outside world. (As I will argue in chapter 4, peasants could for the first time count on somebody else beside the town dwellers to obtain favors from services located in the city and the larger Bolivian society.)

By 1994 PROSANA was indeed a solid institution with three relatively well equipped operation centers in Arque and a main office in Cochabamba City, a stable and well trained staff of about 20 *técnicos*, and an administrative personnel of 10 to 15 people (drivers, secretaries, accountants, housekeepers, etc.). More importantly, after three years of experiments and studies--during which *técnicos* had been encouraged to creatively try out different technical alternatives-- PROSANA had a carefully spelled out strategy for attaining the overall goal of food and nutritional security. Following the guidelines of German technical cooperation, the GTZ supported CORDECO's institutional development by providing it with trained personnel, and a well-designed plan to be implemented in this hitherto left out province.

B. Phase II: Implementation (1994 – 1998)

The goal of this 4 year second phase was to implement the strategy laid out during the orientation phase. This strategy comprised four sub-strategies developed by the four technical units of PROSANA; each one addressing one of the four results the project expected to achieve. The sub-strategy of the **agro-ecology unit** contained projects related to water management (mainly irrigation systems); soil management and conservation (terracing and erosion control); reforestation; farming (potato fertilizers and plague control, production of highly nutritious crops like quinoa or tarwi); herd management; and training (management of new technologies and recuperation of traditional technologies). Moreover, this unit had also new proposals for future projects related to non-agricultural income generating activities (e.g. carpentry, textiles, and other handicrafts). The sub-strategy of the **nutrition unit** consisted mainly in a training program addressing nutrition and health issues

for which the unit's staff had developed a curriculum, outlined the methods, and prepared the supporting material. The sub strategy of the **health unit** was articulated to different health program designed by the regional health agency and aimed at providing support to this governmental agency. Most of this unit's activities aimed at guaranteeing, facilitating, and making more efficient the provision of primary health care in the region (e.g. vaccination campaigns, chagas prevention, mother –infant health). This unit also designed a training program for local human resources as 'nurse auxiliaries' and health workers.²⁴ The sub strategy of the **socio-economic unit** proposed activities such as grassroots organizing, training workshops, and the organization of peasant meetings to consolidate Arque's peasant organization and to carry out a process of participatory planning (see chapter 5). See the project's planning matrix, problems tree, and objectives tree as defined in 1995 (Figures 9, 10, and 11).

For the implementation of this comprehensive and ambitious plan / strategy, PROSANA underwent a thorough reorganization. First, the units' structure and areas of competency were modified. The socio-economic unit became the 'unit of institutional empowerment and peasant economy, the nutrition unit became the 'unit of education and training,' and a unit of infrastructure was created to carry out construction works (e.g. micro- irrigation). Second and more importantly, three field teams were organized to work on a more permanent basis at the "operation centers" established in the three areas of the Province: Arque, Tacopaya, and Changolla. Each field team had one or two agronomists, a nutrition- health trainer and an organizer. (See Figure 12.)

²⁴ The training program was implemented in 1995. The newly renovated house in the town of Arque served as boarding school. Seledonio, the nurse in charge of Totorá Pampa's health center was trained through this program and thus benefited from this initiative.

Figure 9: PROSANA's General Planning Matrix as designed in 1995

	Summary of Goals/ Results	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Sources of Verification
Overall Goal	Conditions for a life standard above the absolute poverty line have been created by promoting production, education, primary health care and support to organizations and institutions	A 30 % decrease in infant mortality A 30% decrease in malnutrition	Registers in Health District
Project Purpose	Necessary conditions for food and nutrition security in Arque have been created		Project's monitoring system
Results/ Outputs	Peasant families have access to more and better food in a sustainable way Eating habits of the target group have been improved Arque's population has access to health care Grassroots organizations and local institutions have been strengthened in a sustainable way		Project's monitoring system Registers in Health District

Source: PROSANA 1995 (my translation)

Figure 10: Tree of Problems as defined in 1994

Source: CIDPA – PROSANA 1994 (my translation)

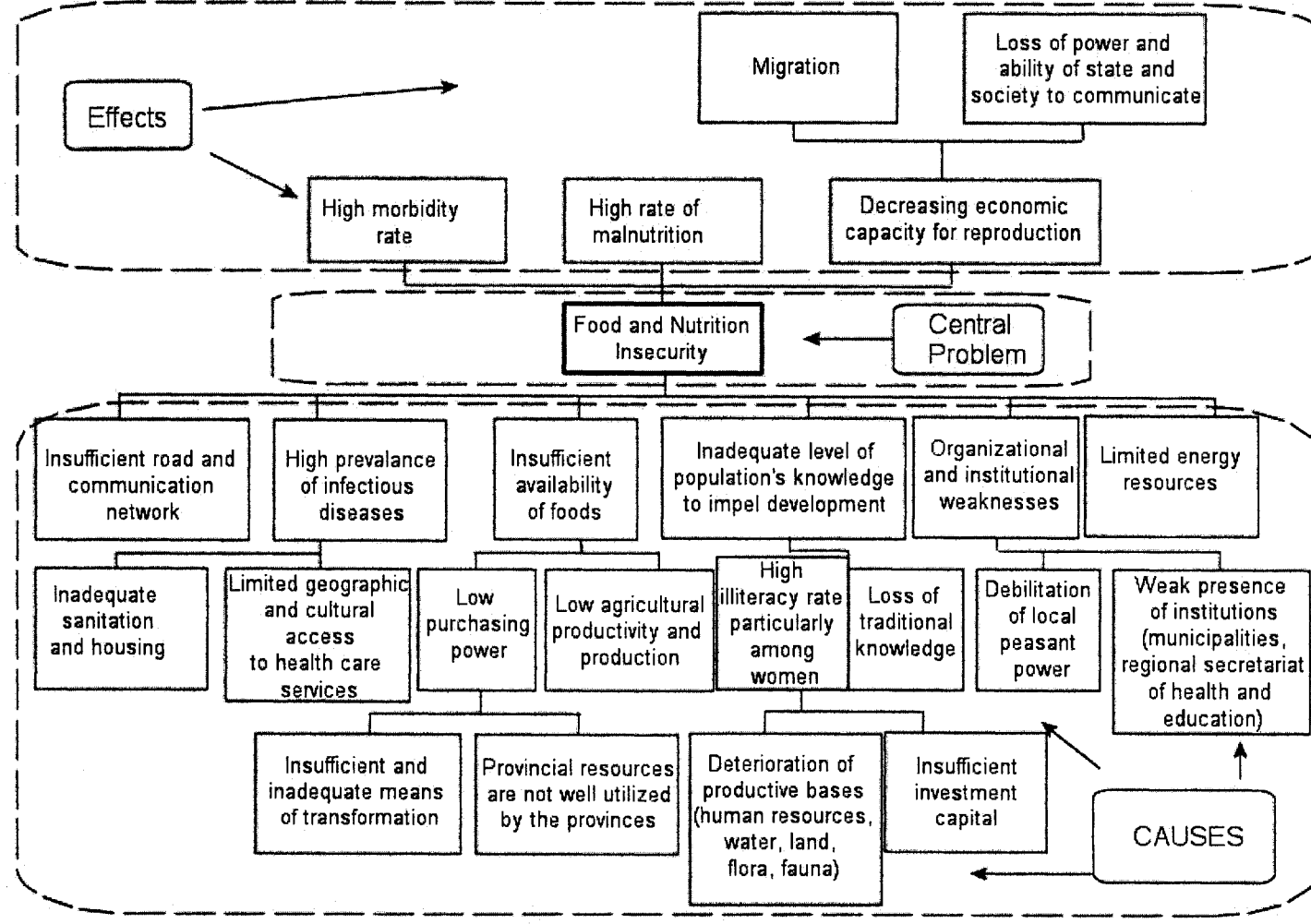


Figure 11: Tree of objectives as Defined in 1994

Source: CIDPA – PROSANA 1994 (my translation)

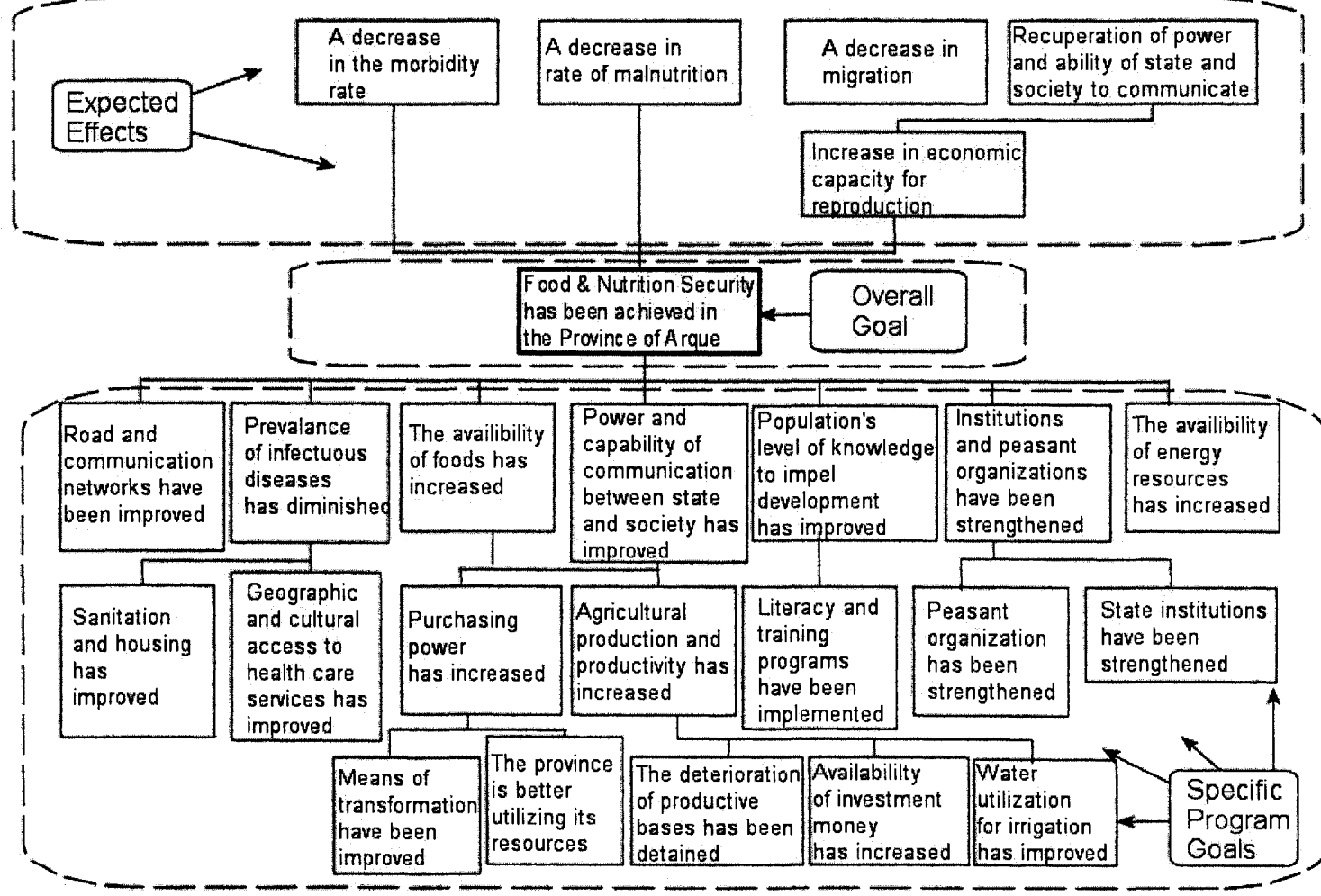
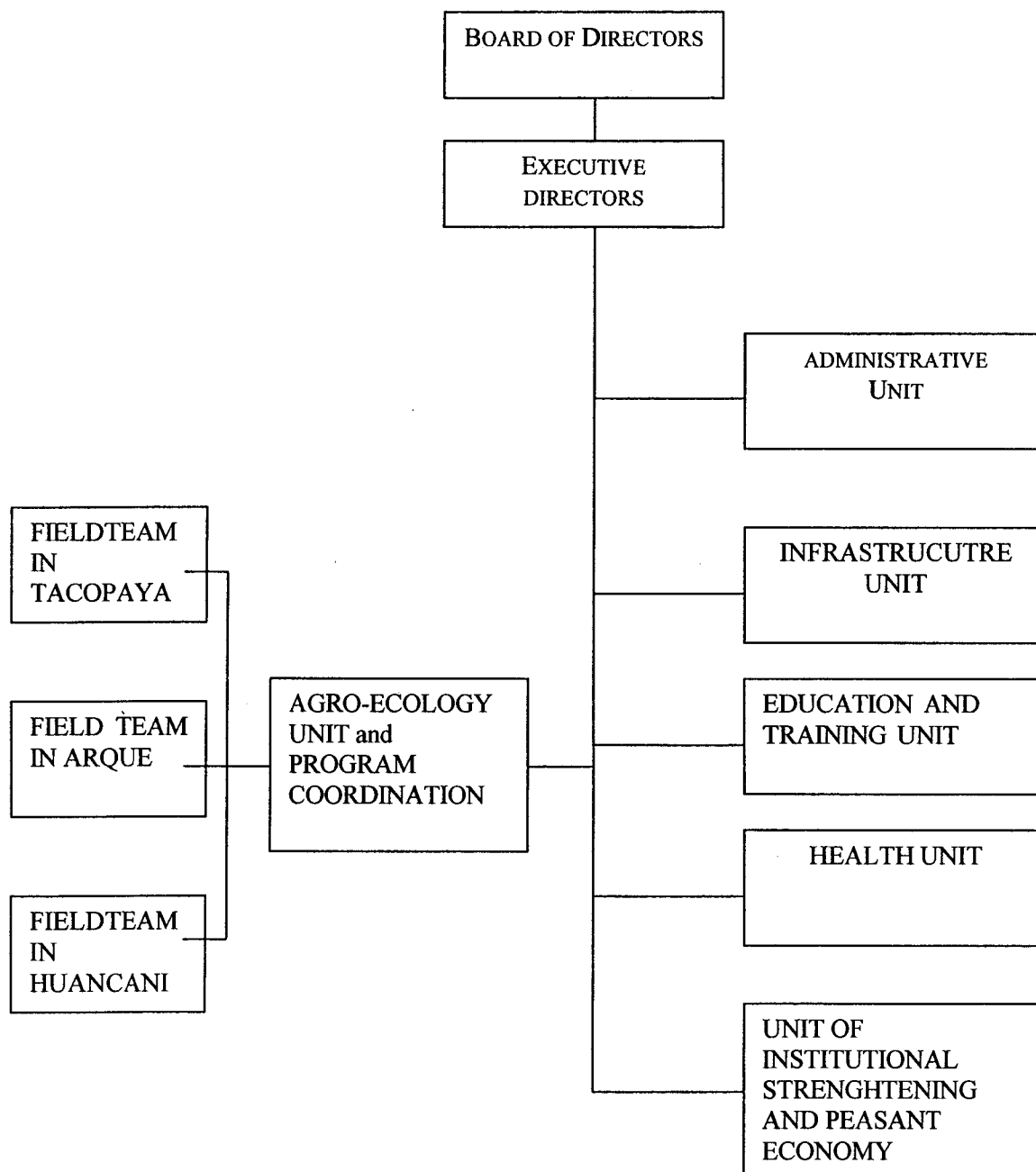


Figure 12: PROSANA's Internal Organization for the Implementation Phase

Source: based on information from PROSANA 1995



One aspect that was not clearly spelled out in the formulation of this food-security strategy was the price of its implementation. All along it had been assumed that the implementation of the plan was CORDECO's responsibility. However, as the experts of the mission in charge of evaluating the achievements of the orientation phase and the feasibility of the implementation phase immediately pointed out, CORDECO lacked the financial capability of supporting such an ambitious development plan. For better or for worse, the way out to this impasse was provided by the changes brought about by the popular participation law promulgated in April 1994.

Part of a vast array of legal reforms aiming at the decentralization of state administration, the popular participation law realigned state institutional relations at the most local levels expanding the power and autonomy of local municipal governments. The law mandated that resources be transferred from central to local control, providing a core budget for municipalities amounting to a 20 percent share of national taxes distributed in proportion to the local population. In turn, municipal governments (*alcaldías*) were expected to assume responsibility for public investments, and for the planning and provision of public services and infrastructure (health, education, roads, irrigation canals). A precondition for the release of the funds established by the law was the presentation of an annual operating plan with corresponding budget. This plan should derive from a five-year municipal development program that ideally should incorporate peoples' demands. Complementary regulations called for a process of participatory planning in the drafting of both plans and training manuals on municipal planning prepared by governmental offices placed a strong emphasis on building plans upwards from community-level appraisals. In this new context, local municipalities became the main focus of decision making for development planning and project implementation; as such, they gained access to a range of development funds, including soft loans (for a general description of the LPP see chapter 2).

As Heike Kuehlwein-Neuhoff, the head of the mission that evaluated PROSANA's progress in 1997, put it, "the popular participation [law] fit the project like the proverbial glove, it set up the stage for the participation of new social actors, it opened new funding possibilities and it provided the project with the opportunity to institutionalize in situ the process they had launched" (PROSANA 1997:3). That the LPP came in the nick of time (or was 'just what the doctor ordered') for the project was indeed part of the official history of PROSANA, as the following excerpt from my interview with Hans Shoeneberger clearly shows.

At the beginning of the implementation phase, before the Law of Popular Participation, we had field teams to implement the strategy; a team in Huancani - Changolla, one for Arque and another for Tacopaya. At that time we thought CORDECO would have to implement the strategy, but then the *municipios* were formed and obviously the whole situation changed, didn't it? (...) That was the start of our good luck with the Law of Popular Participation and with the design of provincial development plans, because until then it was only a PROSANA strategy worked out with the target group. It was very participatory, but it was still just a PROSANA strategy. With the appearance of the Provincial development plans it became a Provincial development strategy, no longer just PROSANA's. Then PROSANA changed its role, and no longer implemented the plan, but was the organ that helped the institutions to implement their own plan. (...) We probably could have done it, but with a lot of difficulty, of course, because all this wasn't sustainable. Because to develop Arque you don't need a project of 3 to 4 or even 10 years, you need 50 or even 100 years, so if you have field teams which you know are going to work for 5 or 6 years, this isn't sustainable. This was even the conclusion of orientation phase evaluation. After the orientation phase the evaluators said, "you have an excellent strategy. (...) But it has two big problems: one, who is going to implement it? And two, there's no money, because this will cost millions of dollars, and all you have is technical support from the GTZ; the GTZ doesn't provide any financial support. And just when we were getting to the project evaluation, the Law of Popular Participation was promulgated and all the experts said that now everything had changed for PROSANA. Because they were about to recommend termination of the project, that it not go on, because it was neither sustainable nor doable – there was no money. But then the issue of a poverty map came up, and development funds were re-directed [towards areas identified in the map as extremely poor].²⁵ The FIS [Social Investment Fund] and the FDC [Peasant Development Fund] were obliged to invest at least half of their money in zones of poverty, and they realized that the funds went to areas of lesser and greater poverty. (...) So then, Goni [President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada] decided that the funds had to be invested in the areas that need it most. (...) He always said in his speeches, how is it possible that a country as poor as Bolivia should have the highest level of foreign resources per person, and poverty levels don't change? And we could see

²⁵ He is referring to the study I mentioned before: *Mapa de Pobreza Una Guía para la Acción Social*, see Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano 1993

why in this poverty map, because the money went to the places that needed it less, and for this reason didn't have any impact on poverty. (...) The changes introduced by the popular participation law] solved our two biggest problems: the local executive entity was created, and money started pouring in through tax co-participation and through funding agencies like the FDC and FIS. From that point, our whole thinking changed. We would no longer be directly in charge of implementation. In reality, we didn't need to call it the "implementation phase", because PROSANA was not going to do any implementation. So we said, since the institution already exists, although it is extremely weak, let's put all our efforts into strengthening the recently established local institutions.

In other words, while PROSANA could continue to operate in Arque thanks to the changes brought about by decentralization reforms, its role in the region shifted from implementing rural development projects to providing advice for the implementation of those projects. As the implementation phase was to begin, donors, experts and evaluators doubted its feasibility because the institution supposed to be responsible for it lacked the required funds. The prospect of a local autonomous government having access to diverse funding sources led evaluators to believe that the implementation of the food security strategy would eventually be possible. Thus, they approved the continuation of the project, i.e. PROSANA's staff could continue to work but the purpose of their work had to change and the goal of the project's second phase to be redefined. PROSANA would no longer be directly involved in the implementation of the strategy it had designed, but would advise and train those who would eventually do it in a hopefully near future. Hence, the implementation of the strategy was postponed and thereby the confrontation with a very simple fact: the amount of money that would arrive to the province through tax co-participation --\$388.000 in 1995, \$457.000 in 1996, or \$522.000 in 1997-- would certainly not suffice. By a magical tour of logical force—that only official histories can afford to claim logic-- the implementation of PROSANA's strategy was deemed feasible not because the cause for doubting it was solved but because in the new context of the

reforms to come PROSANA's experts could do something else, e.g. support the application of those reforms.

The shift of focus / role from direct implementation to indirect advising did not take place right away for it required of a long period of transition. When the law passed in 1994, remote areas like Arque lacked the institutional, technical, and human resources necessary for municipal governments to assume the new responsibilities established by the new law. If PROSANA was going to advise local institutions and organizations that would be directly responsible for the implementation it had first to help creating them. In the meantime, PROSANA's staff and especially the field teams continued working in the province and being directly involved in the implementation of the few projects for which funds had been already obtained. It is only in 1996 that PROSANA officially withdrew from the direct implementation of projects and dissolved its field teams. This coincided with the dissolution of CORDECO and all regional corporations following the 1995 administrative decentralization law. Thus, the four-year second phase of PROSANA, or implementation phase, consisted of two very different periods. During the first one (1994 – 1996) PROSANA was actively and directly involved in the implementation of the strategy designed in the orientation phase. During the second period (1996 – 1998) PROSANA withdrew from this role and became a general overseer and advisor for the municipal governments and other local organizations involved in the development of three neighboring provinces of Cochabamba's southwest: Arque, Tapacari, and Bolivar. Since I started my fieldwork in early 1996, I was able to observe the last months of PROSANA's field teams in the province and to witness the transition moment when PROSANA's directors officially announced the change. Most of my fieldwork in Arque

(and, thus, most of the ethnographic material presented in this dissertation) took place when PROSANA acted as supervisor and advisor for the application of the popular participation law and the implementation of development projects endorsed by the municipal governments of Arque and Tacopaya.

a) First period of the implementation phase 1994 – 1996:

When the orientation phase finished in early 1994, PROSANA's staff was ready to start replicating the experience accumulated in the 10 pilot communities. While the evaluation mission prepared its report and representatives of the German and Bolivian governments renegotiated the terms of the bilateral agreement for the second phase, PROSANA's field teams were already getting organized to settle down in the centers (renovated houses) of Arque, Tacopaya, and Huancani respectively. In October 1994 Arque was selected as one of the pilot provinces that would receive governmental funds (from a World Bank loan) to help municipal governments in undertaking the tasks required for the application of the popular participation law.²⁶ In this context, PROSANA received funds to carry out the preparation of a development plan for the two municipalities of the province (see chapter 5). Between October and December PROSANA's staff and field teams were intensively involved in conducting village surveys and provincial meetings to discuss and prepare a provincial development plan. The field teams continued working until mid 1996 implementing a development strategy that by then was not just PROSANA's but part of the official plan of the municipal governments. The teams would meet in the main office (Cochabamba city) every Monday

²⁶ This was part of a project to support the development of rural communities (Proyecto de Desarrollo de Comunidades Rurales – PDCR) for which the World Bank lent US\$12.9 million for the period 1995 – 1998.

to exchange reports, coordinate their weekly activities, and discuss them with the office staff. Working in the villages surrounding their respective operation centers from Tuesday to Friday or Saturday, they were to replicate the successful experiments and experiences tested in the pilot villages. The experts in charge of the units would remain in the city but make frequent trips to supervise the teams or to carry out special events (meetings, inauguration of new works, etc.).

At the same time, PROSANA's staff continued its work with the provincial peasant unions organizing workshops to discuss the new reforms and in particular the popular participation law. Furthermore, because municipal governments lacked the technical and human resources to perform their new tasks, Arque's and Tacopaya mayors had to rely on PROSANA's administrative staff to carry out their work. During 1995, municipal official letters, project proposals and financial reports were prepared by PROSANA's personnel in PROSANA's computers. As we will see in chapter 4, this gave rise to tensions and conflicts, especially with Tacopaya's mayor who resented PROSANA's overarching intervention in municipal affairs.

Paradoxically, while aiming at setting up the institutional framework to withdraw from its implementation role and limit itself to an advising role, the activities carried out by PROSANA's field teams and city staff alike ended up strengthening PROSANA's presence in the province and raising the expectations of a growing number of peasant villages and peasant leaders. By 1996 PROSANA had become a sort of mini para-state, a powerful institution apparently able to provide the province with the services that the Bolivian state had not provided in a long time. Thus when PROSANA's directors officially announced at a provincial meeting that NGOs would be hired by the municipal

government to carry out development projects and that PROSANA would limit itself to supervise and advise as a representative of Cochabamba's prefecture, the news caused disappointment and confusion among Arque peasants as well as among PROSANA's *técnicos*. The shift was felt as sudden and abrupt. While some *técnicos* and staff members of PROSANA agreed with experts and evaluators and saw the change as a positive move, others disagreed and even resigned; one who resigned explained his position in the following terms.

During the orientation phase we gathered a lot of information, we tried out several possible solutions to agro-ecological problems, we analyzed the information, discussed the results, and little by little we put together a very concrete strategy. It was like an open field, at the beginning we did not know what to do, we were a bit in the dark. But then we were able to take advantage of the fact that this was an open field in which we were free to create. Eventually we could see clearer, and we were able to define what to do and how to do it, and so we put together a team, we trained it and we were ready to play. At that very moment we were told that the game was over, just when we were really ready to work. We had finished the orientation phase and we were at the beginning of the implementation phase. This second phase was supposed to be the phase during which we would apply and replicate all the things we had prepared ourselves to do during the orientation phase. We were so enthusiastic, we had learned so much from our pilot experiments and we were ready to apply all that on a larger scale. It was like we were holding something that was burning our hands and we said now we are ready to do it on a bigger scale. We had studied the region for such a long time, we had tried out different experiments for such a long time, it was now time for action, and that is what we did. And so we organized three teams of *técnicos* who would live in the province. Each team would work intensively with 10 communities and start contacting new ones for the future. So we tripled the coverage. It was really starting to work well and nicely, we were taking off and then suddenly everything was interrupted and we were told that other institutions would continue our work. The idea was that NGOs would now be in charge of implementing the strategy that we, as PROSANA, had designed. Strangely enough, it was PROSANA itself that cut everything out. It did so by simply not giving enough money to the NGOs. PROSANA found a way to get some \$70.000 to each NGO [there were 3]. But then it tells them to prepare grant proposals to submit to different funding institutions.²⁷ PROSANA proposes to help these NGOs in preparing the proposals, but in the meantime the work had to stop. Hans explained over and over again that the GTZ was not a source of financial aid but an institution of technical assistance. So that was a big problem, the NGOs that were invited to implement the strategy did not have enough funds to do it. Another deficiency was that these NGOs were not really well trained to do what the work. I was in total disagreement with the way things turned out to be. I expressed my disagreement, I did not want to be part of that move, I resigned.

²⁷ This situation also illustrates the shift towards the 'professionalization' of NGOs which has become a hallmark of the development apparatus in neo-liberal times.

I was really disappointed with this institutional system. There is too much talk and people are deceived and there is no real predisposition. When at the beginning we went to the different communities with Hans and the other *tecnicos* and we offered so many things, people started hoping, so much so that they said it did not matter that PROSANA was a state institution. They said it did not matter because they could see that PROSANA was on their side. And all that has been broken. Now the new institutional system put in place is very deficient. For example, of every \$100 that PROSANA would put, \$90 reached the countryside, now, in this new institutional arrangement, maybe \$10 will reach the countryside, the rest goes for the salaries of the NGO personnel or other operation fees. Peasants are becoming aware of this deficiency. That is why they are throwing stones, and they are expressing their disagreement with the changes.

b) Second Period of the Implementation Phase: 1996 – 1998

In 1996, after CORDECO was dissolved, PROSANA became part of the *Prefectura* of Cochabamba and was attached to the division in charge of overseeing the institutional transformations for the enforcement of the popular participation law in the municipalities of the department of Cochabamba.²⁸

In this context, PROSANA's official role was to provide advise, training, and technical support to the local institutions and organizations recognized by the law as key actors in the newly reconstituted municipalities of the southwestern provinces, i.e. Arque, Bolivar, and Tapacari. In Arque, PROSANA played a double role. It supervised the creation and consolidation of new local institutions on the one hand and on the other hand it advised those same institutions in matters related to the implementation of the strategy

²⁸ Following the law of administrative decentralization, the *Prefectura* was reorganized to mirror the structure of the central government at the departmental level. That is, as the departmental government, the *Prefectura* had departmental secretaries corresponding to the central state secretaries. The departmental secretary of popular participation was in charge of supervising the implementation of the institutional changes mandated by the law. In this context, PROSANA was attached to the 'dirección de fortalecimiento municipal' (a division in charge of supporting municipalities of rural areas in their efforts to organize their offices to assume the new tasks). As seen in chapter 2, the law redefined the territorial jurisdiction of municipal governments as well as their responsibilities and competencies. It established the mechanisms for a greater participation of grassroots organizations in the affairs of local governments. Thus, the law defined the legal status / rights and obligations of territorially based organizations and oversight committees and promoted the formation of local development councils formed by organizations and representatives of 'civil society' (a term widely used in the legal reforms launched in Bolivia in the 90s). For a discussion of the law of popular participation in relation to the civil society debate, see Medeiros 2002.

for food and nutritional security. By then, this strategy had become the official development strategy of the municipalities of Arque and Tacopaya.

The link between the new and the old roles or between the old PROSANA and the new one was precisely this development plan which was based on the food and nutritional security strategy developed by PROSANA in its first phase. Since in the new context of decentralization reforms (of which the popular participation law was a central piece) municipal governments were responsible for planning, supervising and coordinating the implementation of development programs in consultation with grassroots organizations and other representatives of 'civil society,' providing technical advice to the mayor, the municipal council, local grassroots organization and other local entities was the specific way in which PROSANA fulfilled its role as technical advisor for the implementation of development projects in Arque. In this new capacity, PROSANA trained local authorities, representatives of grassroots organizations, and personnel of municipal offices and with all of them conducted periodical development planning and monitoring meetings and workshops. Furthermore, through its contacts with development agencies and thanks to its expertise in designing projects and writing grant proposals, PROSANA helped municipal governments obtain supplementary financial support from various funds for carrying out specific development projects contemplated in the municipal development plan. Figure 13 shows the new division of institutional roles as conceived by PROSANA during the second period of the implementation phase.

Figure 13: PROSANA's chart of institutions involved in Arque showing the new division of institutional roles defined during the implementation phase

Source: PROSANA 1997b

The process of actually carrying out these development projects was entrusted to local non-governmental organizations (Bolivian NGOs) which were selected through public bids and which signed a tripartite contract with PROSANA and the municipal government. The territory of the municipality of Arque was divided in two micro-regions (or working areas) and Tacopaya into three micro regions. In each one of these areas a team of at least 3 *técnicos* (one in charge of agro-ecological work, one for the organization and empowerment of grassroots organizations and a woman to work on educational projects with women villagers) was in charge of carrying out the development projects foreseen in the municipal development plan for the peasant villages of the area. PROSANA supervised and provided the technical advice and channeled some of the funds, the municipal government provided the rest of the funds. In other words, the work of these NGOs was to mirror, take over, and expand the work that had been done by PROSANA's field teams. PROSANA's field teams were dissolved in June 1996 and the process of selection was conducted in July 1996.²⁹ First, there was a reduction of personnel. As we mentioned earlier, the contracts of the *técnicos* that formed the field teams were terminated, although some of them were re-hired for temporary consultancies (and of course, those who formed PURISANA –6 out of 9- received all the support but were not PROSANA's employees anymore). Second, there was a reorganization of the

²⁹ The NGOs selected were: INDICEP and MOSOJ CAUSAY for the municipality of Arque and PAFKUM and PURISANA for the municipality of Tacopaya. PAFKUM was in charge of the area of Totora Pampa. PURISANA, whose *técnicos* were ex-PROSANA workers, presented itself for two areas, Tacopaya and Huancani, and won both bids. As we will see later, except for the areas where PURISANA worked (i.e. the same people), the shift from PROSANA's field teams to new *técnicos* working with small NGOs who hardly knew the area and had little room for maneuver outside the strict terms of their tripartite contract, was a dramatic shift and gave rise to a lot of confusion and inefficiency. In some cases peasant villages complained, in others, the NGO gave up trying and withdrew. (Chapter 6 will show part of this problem).

²⁹ As one of the members of the evaluation mission put it in the evaluation report "the shift of paradigm from 'PROSANA ejecutor' to 'PROSANA asesor' gave rise to an institutional earthquake" (PROSANA 1997a).

units. The socio-economic unit was reorganized as the Institutional Empowerment Unit (Unidad de Fortalecimiento Insititucional) with two divisions: one for community empowerment and one for municipal empowerment. In charge of the former was sociologist Jorge Lozano, assisted by Johnny Zambrana. Both had been working with peasant villages and the peasant *sindicatos* and had earned the trust of most peasant leaders. They were to advise the NGOs and the peasant organization in matters concerning the application of the LPP and related legal reforms. Also, they were in charge of overseeing the continuation of the process of participatory planning and to conduct training workshops for members of the 'oversight committees' and for peasant leaders at the higher levels of the peasant organization. New personnel, two economists, Mary and Raul were hired to work with the municipal governments and advise them in all matters concerning financial administration, project coordination / management, and development planning. They advised mayors in the process of hiring qualified staff and trained this staff. The Agro-ecology Unit was in charge of advising and supervising the implementation of agro-ecological projects by the newly hired NGOs and adjusting the agro ecological strategy to the new institutional framework. Since Ismael Condori declined the offer to head this unit, two new agronomists, Carlos Espinoza and Margot Cabrera were hired to work together with Alberto Vega, the German agronomist. The Health Unit headed by a woman doctor, was to oversee the formation of local health committees (as mandated by the popular participation law), advise the municipal governments for the implementation of municipal health programs and policies in coordination with the health centers and the Regional Health District. The Unit of Education and Communication underwent several changes of orientation and personnel

between 1996 and 1998. At the beginning this unit was only in charge of adjusting the materials for training workshops in nutrition and health, expanding the content of these materials to include agro-ecological aspects, and supervising the good application of these materials by the field teams first and later by the NGOs. However, as PROSANA consolidated its new advising role, education and communication became central to inform and train local institutions and grassroots organizations in exerting the rights bestowed by the new laws in general, and in particular in carrying out processes of participatory development planning. These new challenges made of this unit what an evaluator called a rich laboratory of pedagogical experimentation. Hiring special consultants and changing personnel the unit produced several documents containing theoretical discussions about the meanings of popular education, education as a “proposal for transversality, i.e. a proposal that incorporates intercultural, intergenerational, and gender perspectives” (PROSANA 1997a). The main practical activities of this unit were to supervise the NGOs (nutrition and health training workshops), coordinate with the regional district of education, and the municipal governments the creation of a local education committee and the application of the educational reform law, and coordinate with other institutions the implementation of adult literacy programs.³⁰

In sum, in its new role PROSANA was not just a development advisor but also a coordinator and supervisor of the application of the new legal reforms, a substitute to temporarily perform the tasks that local institutions and authorities were not yet ready to undertake, a broker between local institutions and regional and national governmental agencies, and a fund raiser with powerful connections to national and international

³⁰ For example UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund) which supported a literacy program for women in Qhishwa.

development funding institutions. As we mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, until the late 1980s, Arque was a remote rural region that had hardly received any attention from development institutions. Between 1991 and 1994 PROSANA's técnicos implemented small projects in only 10 pilot peasant villages, but their presence in the region, their commitment to empowering grassroots organizations by consolidating the provincial peasant *sindicato*, and their promises of future replications of the pilot experiments throughout the province raised enormous expectations. By 1994 it was clear that these expectations and the magnitude of Arque's problems (e.g. alarming levels of environmental degradation and deterioration of the agricultural productive basis) were beyond PROSANA's means. The major legal reforms launched by the 1993-1997 Bolivian government in general and, in particular, the law of popular participation provided PROSANA with the institutional and financial framework to continue in the province without being directly responsible for the implementation of development projects and thus without being directly responsible for having to meet the expectations it had raised. Following these reforms and PROSANA's active involvement in bringing to the region all the resources made available by the government and the international agencies that supported the government's reform, Arque became the GTZ's star project and the best model for the application of the popular participation law. By 1997 PROSANA was a sort of conductor leading a large orchestra of governmental and non governmental institutions engaged in the concert of local development.³¹

³¹ Between 1991 and 1994, PROSANA directly implemented small development projects in 10 communities. Between 1994 and mid 1996, PROSANA's field teams were able to expand the coverage to 32 communities. The incorporation of new development institutions allowed it to extend the coverage to 41 communities by the end of 1996 projecting to reach 135 communities (out of the 178 total in the province) by the year 2000. However, the type of project and the intensity of the work were not the same. An example of the contrast between the engagement of PROSANA during the first years and the difficulties of the NGOs that replaced it will be discussed in chapter 6.

By then, the strategy of nutritional and food security elaborated by PROSANA during its first phase had expanded and became the official development plan (program) of the municipalities of Arque and Tacopaya. Every year PROSANA's *técnicos* helped the staff of these municipal offices to translate this plan into an operational yearly plan which had to be submitted to the treasury department in order to obtain the 'co-participation funds,' i.e. the funds assigned following the popular participation law. These co-participation funds covered the functioning of the municipal offices and part of the implementation of development projects. The following table shows the amounts received as co participation funds.

Table 1: Co-participation Funds for Arque and Tacopaya 1994 – 1997

	Population *	Amount received from co-participation funds per year				
		1994	1995	1996	1997	Total
Arque	8,978	67.000	145.000	218.000	257.000	687.000
Tacopaya	9,271	112.000	243.000	239.000	265.000	859.000
Total Province	18,249	179.000	388.000	457.000	522.000	1.546.000

Based on information provided by governmental documents (Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano 1997: 7). * According to 1992 census.

To complement these meager amounts the municipalities (thanks to PROSANA's help in preparing grant proposals) were able to obtain supplementary funds from national funding agencies.³² PROSANA channeled additional funds from national and international sources.³³ Table 2 shows the amounts obtained through these different

³² The most important among these agencies were: the Fund for Peasant Development (FDC), the Social Investment Fund (FIS).

³³ For example: the Sub-Secretariat for Rural Development (SSDR) in charge of coordinating the application of participatory planning methodologies for the elaboration of municipal plans in the rural areas; the National Fund for the Environment (FONAMA); the Research Center for Regional Development (CIDRE), this was an NGO that received food donations, sold them and invested the money in micro-

sources. It is clear that PROSANA was, by far, the one able to obtain the larger amounts, which contributed to enhance PROSANA's power in the region, and consolidated its conductor's role.

Table 2: Comparative summary of external funds raised

Municipality	Funds Raised by PROSANA	Funds Raised by Others	Total
Arque	1,090,820.06	74,444.99	1,165,265.05
Tacopaya	1,830,776.78	65,575.00	1,896,351.78
Total Arque Province	2,921,596.84	140,019.99	3,061,616.83

Source: PROSANA 1997b

In other words, the ability to capture the largest amounts of external funds gave PROSANA a position of power in relation to the provincial authorities, institutions and organizations. However, the projects implemented with these funds had to comply with the conditions and priorities of the funding agencies. Thus, for example, the priority of the funding agency FIS (Fondo de Inversion Social) was to build schools: 22 school facilities were built in the province of Arque between 1995 and 1997—which does not necessarily imply functioning schools. The priority of peasant development fund (FDC) and of CIDRE was to finance the construction of irrigation systems: irrigation projects were carried out in 15 communities (out of 178) while other components of the agro-ecological strategy received hardly any attention. One of the outcomes of this

irrigation systems. An important international source was provided by the European Union through its Support program for food security (PASA).

dependency on diverse funding agencies (each one with different interests) was the fragmentation of PROSANA's originally comprehensive and holistic proposal. This fragmenting effect was particularly threatening for the agro-ecological strategy. At least in theory, the agro-ecological strategy was a comprehensive scheme that aimed at reconstituting the productive basis and diminishing the ecological degradation by addressing simultaneously closely-related factors (herd management, agricultural methods, terracing, soil conservation, reforestation, complementary income generating activities, etc.).

According to the evaluation conducted by external experts in 1997, the Agro-ecology Unit was the most affected by the change in PROSANA's orientation and role. From the evaluators' standpoint, the major and most difficult challenge in the new context was to preserve the integral character of the agro-ecological program (PROSANA 1997a).³⁴ In their view, fragmentation of agro-ecological programs due to disconnected funding sources was not the only factor threatening the comprehensiveness and feasibility of the agro-ecological strategy. Another important threat concerned the

³⁴ In the part of the evaluation report concerning the activities of the agro-ecological Unit, Anne Piepenstock, the agronomist – evaluator, observes that “The objectives formulated at the beginning of the implementation phase fully expressed the integral character of the agro-ecological strategy. The activities initially planned were: 1) construction of micro-irrigation works; 2) agro-forestry and soil conservation systems; 3) supporting the integral management of irrigation systems; 4) controlling in tubers; 5) improving the production of native potato-species; 6) high energy-density crops; 7) integral management of herding / cattle (proposal to be elaborated with the peasant organization); 8) to increase the production of fodder; 9) animal health and hygiene; 10) to improve food transformation and storage; 11) develop the agro-ecological curriculum for the education integral strategy. [From this long list] only micro-irrigation and soil conservation were carried out with due attention, the rest was left out or put in the back burner” (PROSANA 1997a: agro-ecology section, p 7). Piepenstock (ibid.) then lists those components of the strategy that were never translated into viable projects: “integral management of herding; value-adding transformation of agricultural and animal products; alternative cooking technologies to replace firewood.” She furthermore considers that the main problems concerning agricultural production (i.e. low fertilization and plagues) barely received any attention and no solutions were found. She praises the quality of the educational materials developed for an agro-ecology curriculum but laments the lack of any training plan. She also approves of the terracing experiments in the area of Huancani but laments the lack of diffusion and replication.

limitations of the new institutions replacing PROSANA for the direct implementation of the agro-ecological projects. Thus, according to the agronomist member of the evaluation mission,

[With PROSANA's shift from implementing projects to just advising] municipal governments became the main protagonists of local development and because of their lack of technical resources they hire NGOs to be in charge of the design and implementation of projects. These entities have difficulties in assuming their new roles and PROSANA has difficulties to withdraw its central role. (...) PROSANA continues to be the main reference for peasant communities and that weakens the position of the NGOs. (...) Municipal governments lack the technical capacity to assume future responsibilities (...). The peasant organizations have done some progress in the process of participatory planning but their participation in the implementation of projects is limiting to providing labor force. (...) The NGOs are not capable of handling negotiations with funding agencies or managing funds effectively. It is necessary to expand and intensify the training of peasant villagers. Providing training to the municipal governments will be useful only if they hire a staff capable of applying what they learn. Municipal governments and NGOs lack the necessary skills to follow up and evaluate programs. PROSANA has prepared guidelines to structure the work of municipal administrations and NGOs but has not been able to transfer all the necessary skills for an independent management of development programs. (Summarized from PROSANA 1997 a)

Reflecting on the main challenges PROSANA would face in the third phase, the experts evaluating PROSANA's second phase identified the two main problems that remained to be solved and should thus become PROSANA's priorities: the alarming levels of ecological degradation and the fragile institutional framework for the implementation of the comprehensive food and nutritional security strategy originally designed by PROSANA. Insisting on the fundamental centrality of these two problems, the evaluators questioned the pertinence of PROSANA's original main focus on nutritional security. In their view,

The precarious situation concerning food and nutrition [identified in the original project design] is not so much a central cause for the region's desolate situation but rather an important consequence of this desolation. Since the revised methodological guidelines [ZOPP] don't require anymore the identification of a single central problem, future analyses of [Arque's] problems should focus on two main axes: the constant erosion of agricultural land and the currently insufficient capabilities of the local institutions (governmental, non-governmental, or target groups' sociopolitical organizations) for

improving the survival conditions in these three provinces [Arque, Tapcari, and Bolivar] (PROSANA 1997a).

In spite of recognizing the gravity of these two issues (environmental degradation and institutional fragility) the final recommendations in the report were limited to matters of internal reorganization and preparations for PROSANA's eventual departure. They insisted on PROSANA's taking a back seat and discontinuing the practice of 'filling in' for local agents' deficiencies. They recommended a) to reorganize the existing discipline-area units (i.e. agro-ecology, health, etc) into multi-disciplinary teams assigned to the different micro-regions or geographical areas and b) to devote the last three years to training the staff of local institutions.

In other words, while their critiques and reflections show a comprehensive understanding of Arque's situation in their specific recommendations for PROSANA's concrete operations in the last phase the evaluators seem to lose sight of the bigger and more complex picture. The contrast between a complex understanding of the problem and the very limited practical recommendations sheds light on the constraints inherent to development institutions. As James Ferguson had already pointed out when analyzing the World Bank development report on Lesotho (Ferguson 1994: 67-71), most development experts are trained in the same way as academics and can produce the same academic thoughts and analyses that academics produce. However, analyses that are too academic, too complex, and /or too political are discarded as useless within development discourse.³⁵ As he puts it (Ferguson 1994:69), "an academic analysis is of no use to a

³⁵ Ferguson's argument is that the difference between academic discourse and development discourse is not an epistemological difference but the different institutional contexts in which they are inserted (Ferguson 1994: 67-68).

‘development’ agency unless it provides a place for the agency to plug itself in, unless it provides a charter for the sort of intervention that the agency set up to do.”

Furthermore, there is a question that the evaluators did not raise in their report and that in my view points to a key problem: were there ever enough funds to implement the comprehensive strategy PROSANA designed? Summarizing the information provided in Tables 1 and 2, Table 3 shows that the funds received by the municipal governments of Arque and Tacopaya for the implementation of the development projects contemplated in the provincial development plan for the period 1994 to 1997 amounted to US\$4,607,616.03-- that is \$ 1,151,904.21 per year.

Table 3: Funds received by the Municipal Governments of Arque and Tacopaya for the implementation of projects contemplated in the Municipal Development Plans 1994-1997

	Co-participation Funds	External Funds	Total
Arque	687,000.00	1,165,265.05	1,852,265.05
Tacopaya	859,000.00	1,896,351.78	2,755,351.78
Total for Arque Province	1,546,000.00	3,061,616.83	4,607,616.03

(From Tables 1 and 2)

It is difficult to imagine the sustainability of a development plan that only has at its disposal little more than a million dollars per year to cover all the projects in an impoverished region (a surface of 415.832 square miles) lacking basic infrastructure and presenting alarming levels of environmental degradation—which in turn threaten the only economic activity still going on, namely peasants’ farming and herding. The guaranteed

funds are only a third (30%) of the funds, the other 70 % are funds obtained from funding agencies for specific projects. Almost all of these funds (more than 90%) were obtained by PROSANA. It is not difficult to imagine that under such conditions, the implementation of such a development plan will necessary depend upon international agencies, development funds, or institutions like PROSANA that have the skills and connections (social – symbolic capital) to obtain funds from those agencies. No matter how many training workshops PROSANA could do, the staff hired by the municipality of Arque for a low salary (a salary far below the expert's salary) will hardly be able to produce the grant proposal writing and networking that PROSANA did during its years in Cochabamba.

C. Phase III: Consolidation (1998 – 2001)

Shortly after the evaluation mission handed its report, towards the end of 1997, PROSANA's staff had a 4-day internal ZOPP workshop to plan the third and last phase of the project. The event took place at a tourist resort in the exuberant tropics of El Chapare. Since at that time I was living in Totora Pampa, I did not attend it but heard many accounts from Bolivian members of the staff with whom I talked a few weeks later in Cochabamba. The *técnicos* with whom I spoke complained about the lack of participation in the final decisions concerning the re-organization of PROSANA's units for the last phase. "This was supposed to be a participatory planning process and yet they [PROSANA's directors] had decided beforehand what the outcome of the workshop would be," one of the *tecnicos* told me. Another one added, "they manipulated us, they let us speak for three days and then the last day they presented their own conclusions that

did not have anything to do with our discussions.” It was interesting for me to see how the very same people who adamantly defended and promoted participatory planning methodologies among Arque peasants had been ‘victims’ of the limits of ‘participation.’ What PROSANA’s directors announced at the end of the workshop was that a total reorganization of PROSANA’s units was necessary and that part of the staff would have their contracts ended in six months.

The main goal of the third phase was, according to Schoeneberger, “to transfer all the functions we fulfill now to the local institutions. (...) This entails that we gradually reduce the personnel and reorganize the units. The main reason for this change is the need to overcome coordination problems we had in the past.” The new organizational structure consisted of two interdisciplinary teams (of five *técnicos* each), one for Tacopaya and one for Arque. Some people were fired, but others were hired, and some got a promotion: Hans Schoeneberger was rewarded for his successful work by going back to Germany where he occupied a higher rank position in GTZ’s headquarters; Alberto Vega was promoted to the position of main advisor, i.e. the German director of PROSANA.

It is worth noting that in their descriptions of the consolidation phase neither Alberto Vega nor Hans Schoeneberger mentioned the issue of nutritional security or environmental degradation. As if the definition of the last phase objectives as primarily educational had strayed far away the initial objective of guaranteed food security. I left Cochabamba in January 1998 and did not follow the development of this last phase, but judging from the way it was planned it seemed that PROSANA’s initial goal was not at stake anymore.

I asked Alberto Vega how he envisioned the last phase and he answered:

The consolidation phase will be exclusively a pedagogical phase and a phase for the institutional strengthening of local institutions. (...) From the four components of PROSANA, education has been so far the less developed one. Now we realize that it is the most important. We will focus on training programs and developing a curriculum for alternative adult education. That is the best way to empower social actors and local institutions.

Responding to the question mark in my face, he added:

The main actor is civil society. In Arque that means peasant communities and their grassroots organizations. It also includes the oversight committees that now have legally recognized rights to participate actively in the process of participatory development planning. Another important actor is the municipal government that under the new legislation plays an important role and also the NGOs in charge of carrying out development projects. We will have to work with the three groups. (...) We will not finish the work but we will create the conditions for the project to continue with the support of other agencies.”

Indeed, he also informed me that they were looking into the possibility of coordinating with an adult literacy program that UNICEF was undertaking in the region and that they had also obtained a commitment from the European Union to fund a possible future project in the region.

Finally, since he had been involved in the agro-ecological strategy all along, I asked him what he thought were the achievements concerning the ecological recovery and preservation of Arque’s land for agricultural production. In his view, there were some positive results, some “facts or demonstrative examples that show that soil preservation is feasible and that productivity can be increased.” Referring to the possibility of future funding from the European Union he added “ if there is funding and there are those demonstrative examples, we hope to see a massive multiplying effect.”

My question to Hans Schoeneberger was more blunt and direct. I wanted to know if he really believed ecological degradation was reversible. This is an excerpt from the conversation we had:

CM: Do you think it is possible to recover land from erosion and degradation? I've heard many people saying it is irreversible, but you are an optimist, aren't you?

HS: I wonder what is the other alternative we have. To send them to El Chapare means pushing them into the coca-cocaine circuit and we certainly do not want to do that. Besides, intensive agriculture destroys the rainforest and nobody wants to do that either. Sending them to the city would be another idea if there were a semi-industrial development but here in the city there no jobs. So I wonder what other alternative is there but to help the people of Arque stay in Arque and try to recover land and help them have a more dignified life.

CM: But do you honestly think it is possible to recover land?

HS: Partly yes, but not all. The part that is already covered by the rivers is lost. Probably the area doesn't have the capacity to carry the whole population living there now. Part of that population eventually will emigrate, probably those who are more innovative, driven, active. But a good part will be able to stay. I think there is no other alternative but to try to do something, if we let it be erosion will get only worse. (...)

CM: Now, after six years in Arque, how do you see the initial approach of PROSANA?

HS: I see things somehow differently now. We think now that probably not everybody will be able to stay in the area, not everybody will be able to satisfy their basic needs in a dignified way, there is not enough potential for all of them to stay. That was not clear to me when we started. (...)

CM: Now, in the sixth year of the project, what do see as the main achievement concerning the area of agro-ecology?

HS: I see as the main achievement an increasing awareness, now people are aware that something can be done, they are not so fatalistic any more. When we arrived most Arque peasant thought that nothing could be done to improve agricultural production. We have shown them examples of how terracing and irrigation can improve agricultural input. That gave them back confidence. They know now that something can be done. There is however another serious problem and it is that many people don't have property titles for their land. If you are not sure that you can claim your ownership of the land because you don't have the legal piece of paper to protect your property, than you don't feel so motivated to invest on it.

CM: I know, many people told me that the lack of land ownership titles was a problem. If you were aware of that why is that PROSANA did not include a legal component?

HS: That would be a titanic piece of work! Do you know what it takes to go through the judicial system in this country?

CM: Recovering Arque's land from erosion and degradation is also a titanic piece of work, isn't it?

HS: I just think that they are two separate projects.

And yet Hans Shoeneberger, as most development experts, was well aware that investing in the preservation of agricultural soils and securing the legal property of that soil were part and parcel of one and the same every day life. However, he was also aware

that in the context of development institutions, soil preservation and land titles were two different, separate, and probably competing development projects. He would probably disagree with me if I told him that I interpret that separation as evidence of the de-politicizing effects of the development machine (to paraphrase Ferguson 1994).

IV. Conclusion

I began this chapter by describing the origins of PROSANA and the initial project design. In so doing I singled out two particularly significant characteristics of PROSANA's initial design. First, the project proposed to address the problem of malnutrition by combining the provision of health and other services with a quite comprehensive agro-ecological strategy to improve and increase agricultural production. By combining services and production, the proposed project embarked in walking on the thin line between two different approaches to dealing with development and poverty in the Andean highlands of Bolivia. One approach promoted by agencies like the World Bank was the 'alleviation of poverty' through the provision of services to meet basic needs. The other approach unevenly supported by some European governmental agencies and NGOs considered that 'alleviation' was not enough and that it was necessary also to address the economic causes of poverty. Second, in contrast to earlier development projects and in tune with 1980s calls for alternative development models, the proposed project did not set out to 'modernize' peasants or incorporate them into the market. Rather, it seemed more concerned with supporting local 'Andean' technologies of soil preservation and with restoring the productive basis to improve the local production and

consumption of food crops. Through my discussion of what happened during the three phases of implementation of PROSANA I have shown that the agro-ecology component (i.e. the set of projects addressing issues of agricultural production) was the one that encountered more difficulties. I have argued that these difficulties and the changes PROSANA underwent after 1995 illustrate the neo-liberal shift within the development apparatus. The provision of services for poverty alleviation approach prevailed over the approach emphasizing production and the economic dimensions of poverty.

Underlying the agro-ecological strategy was the ideal of sustainable, almost self-reliant peasant agriculture. This ideal, to which I believe many of PROSANA's *técnicos* were sincerely committed, included, at least at the rhetorical level, a supportive respect for local practices and knowledge. Many of the activities carried out by the agro-ecological unit during the first four years aimed at recuperating local agricultural methods and ecological knowledge and using local resources to restore peasants' productive basis. The efforts of the experts working within the socio-economic unit were systematically oriented towards supporting the empowerment of peasant grassroots organizations and promoting participatory development planning processes. The resulting comprehensive food security strategy was impeccable as were the commitment and technical qualifications of the majority of the *técnicos* that designed it and were ready to implement it. Why didn't it work? What was the problem, where was the trick?

The main flaws of the project were clearly revealed by the problems that emerged during the implementation phase. After the three- year orientation phase during which PROSANA's *técnicos* together with peasants from the pilot villages carefully put together an agro-ecological strategy it appeared that neither the GTZ nor CORDECO

were able to secure the necessary massive investment required to reverse ecological degradation and restore the productive basis for a sustainable local agriculture.

Furthermore, they were neither able to confront or respond to the demands of a by then more 'empowered' and participatory peasant organization. The changes triggered by the LPP helped PROSANA solve the impasse, as the experts themselves acknowledged it.

The law offered an easy exit. By dissolving large centralized bureaucracies like CORDECO--thus shifting the responsibility for local development to the local municipal government and its participatory local 'civil society'-- the reforms introduced by the LPP lifted the burden from PROSANA's shoulders: PROSANA did not have to respond to the expectations it had raised. Its *tecnicos* could limit themselves to provide technical support and advice. The problem however remained the same: there was no money to finance the implementation of the strategy in its integrality. The strategy was broken in several components and each component was further divided in a variety of mini projects for each village. Which mini project could be funded for which village depended on external funding sources.

In the context of neo-liberal policies it is more likely to find financial support for the provision of basic services (i.e. running water, road construction, construction of health centers, small school buildings) or for charity-like activities (i.e. food donations) than to find financial support for large productive investments. It is especially difficult to obtain financial support for projects aiming at improving peasant agricultural production that will be not be competitive and profitable for the market. During the 10 years that PROSANA worked in Arque, the number of health centers, school buildings, or training workshops grew constantly while the number of projects directed towards restoring the

agricultural productive basis remained very limited. Defining its role as technical assistance (separated from financial assistance), the GTZ only committed itself to providing just that, i.e. technical advice, training and institutional support. That is, GTZ experts provide assistance to local experts and train them in the arts of institutional development, project planning and design, but the financial support for the implementation of those projects is beyond GTZ's commitments. German financial assistance is a separate branch of German cooperation and it only provides credit for profitable investments (i.e. that are more likely to pay back). It would not invest in an area that does not present any competitive advantage for the international – global market. In this sense it is interesting to observe that European cooperation might be more subtle or more sensitive to understanding the reality of Andean peasant life and value their “traditional” agricultural technologies but when it comes to investing on those areas we find the same economic logic that prevails in institutions like USAID or the World Bank. The new role of PROSANA as detached advisors training local institutions and organizations in the arts of grant-proposal-writing illustrates the neo-liberal shift in modes of operation of development projects from the 1990s on.

In the context of the reforms brought about by the LPP and related local autonomy-participation-agency rhetoric, PROSANA omitted any responsibility in the direct implementation of the development strategy its staff had designed and limited itself to the good role of an efficient and generous advisor. PROSANA could provide advice on how to write a grant proposal, where to send it, PROSANA could even write it and send it, PROSANA could supervise the correct implementation of the projects funded by

others but PROSANA could not secure enough funds to prevent the atomization and uneven implementation of the different components of the strategy.

If in this way PROSANA's face was saved in institutional terms, many Arque peasants thought otherwise. They resented the shift and were once again disconcerted: PROSANA had arrived one day out of the blue, Arque peasants did not ask for it, but once it was there, some believed it could bring "development" to Arque. PROSANA had raised huge expectations, then withdrawn from the responsibility of meeting those expectations, and then PROSANA announced its role was limited to technical advice, pretending that the expectations raised would be met locally.

In my last interview with Schoeneberger I asked him to single out the most significant achievement of PROSANA's work in Arque. Without hesitation he said:

Hope! And I realized how important that was when I attended an opening of an irrigation canal and a villager told me that with our work we were giving them back hope that his village could improve. Working in the province PROSANA has shown to the people of Arque that they are not so doomed and isolated; that somebody out there cares for their problems; that it is possible to imagine a better future. They are now motivated to doing something to prevent further ecological disasters they believe it can be done. There are a lot of symbolic facts that are very important for them. (...) The presence of PROSANA has given back hope to the peasants of Arque.

This answer as well as similar statements I heard from Alberto Vega and other PROSANA's *técnicos* can be seen as the optimistic half-full glass view. I guess the pessimistic half-empty glass view would be to say that raising expectations and pretending they can be met without really taking responsibility for it is a way of deceiving, it creates disappointment, confusion, and disconcert (all ingredients in what I referred to as the production of drunkenness' effects in the introduction).

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL RECONFIGURATIONS. NEW CONTESTS OLD STRUGGLES

“[T]he anthropologist is greatly aware of the importance of groups which mediate between the peasant and the larger society of which he forms part. The landlord, the merchant, the political boss, the priest stand at the junctures in social economic and political relations which connect the village to wider ranging elites in markets or political networks. (...) To describe such groups, and to locate them in the social field in which they must maneuver, it is useful to speak of them as ‘classes.’ Classes are for me quite real clusters of people whose development or decline is predicated on particular historical circumstances, and who act together or against each other in pursuit of particular interests prompted by these circumstances. In this perspective, we may ask—in quite concrete terms—how members of such classes make contact with the peasantry. In our accounts, therefore, we must ... seek information also about the larger society and its constituent class groupings, for the peasant acts in an arena which also contains allies as well as enemies. **This arena is characteristically a field of political battle.**” (Wolf 1969: xii, my emphasis)

I. Introduction

Lost at the bottom of the rugged valley lies the town of Arque, a deserted place reminiscent of Rulfo’s ghost towns emptied by heavy emigration to urban centers.¹ The abandonment, related to the long process of regional impoverishment, has been exacerbated by the violent floods that, during the rainy season, race down the valley carrying away everything in their path. The town has thus been reduced to a third of its size in the 1950s. Revealing the legacy of a complex history of class and racial / ethnic differentiation—a history that general impoverishment has not erased—the relationship between town dwellers and peasants from the surrounding villages is still marked by the most blatant forms of racism embedded within clientelistic structures of subordination.

¹ Juan Rulfo is a Mexican writer whose novel, *Pedro Paramo*, and short stories, in *El Llano en Llamas*, poignantly describe rural towns deserted by emigration.

During the years of 1996 and 1997, once every two months, or so, the town was invaded with people and cars. Provincial authorities and development experts from PROSANA and from various NGOs came by jeep from the city of Cochabamba. Arque peasants descended on foot from their villages in the surrounding mountains (some walked more than ten hours). The town hall quickly filled with about 250 peasant villagers, a few town dwellers, about a dozen development experts and NGO workers (mostly urban Bolivians), and sometimes also the priests of Arque's parishes, PROSANA's German experts, representatives of state institutions, and representatives of Cochabamba's peasant organization. Presiding over the meetings were the leader of the provincial peasant union (*Central Campesina*),² the Sub-prefecto of the province,³ the mayors of the municipality of Arque and of the neighboring municipality of Tacopaya, a representative from the oversight committees (*Comités de Vigilancia*), and often a representative from PROSANA. The meetings began with the election of four 'union police' charged with ensuring that no one left the discussion, got drunk, or fell asleep. After the police were elected, the '*secretario de actas*' (secretary of minutes) announced the meeting's agenda and often PROSANA's representative explained further the agenda and laid out the rules for conducting the discussion.

² I will use 'peasant union' or 'peasant organization' as a translation for 'sindicato campesino.' This form of peasant organization has a long history whose origins go back to the 1930s. Today it has the following hierarchical structure: a peasant community is organized as a 'sindicato campesino,' 5 or 6 neighboring communities form a 'sub-central campesina,' and all the 'sub-centrales' of a province are gathered in the 'central provincial.' The 'centrales provinciales' of all the provinces of a department form the "federación departamental." Thus, for example, in the department of Cochabamba we have the Federación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba (FSUTCC: Unified Syndical Federation of Peasant Workers of Cochabamba). All federations gather in a national confederation, the Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB: Unified Syndical Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia).

³ A 'sub-prefecto' is the highest state authority to administer order at the provincial level, sub-prefects are nominated by the Prefect of the Department who in turn is directly nominated by the Bolivian President.

For one or two days the participants received reports from the municipal governments, presented their demands and complaints, and discussed the specific implications of the recent state legal reforms. Of utmost importance were the meetings in which the representatives of the 178 peasant communities located in the Arque province stated their needs and priorities for the development projects to be carried out the following year. These were to be included in the operational plans of the two municipal governments (Arque and Tacopaya) that make up the province. (These planning meetings will be described in detail in chapter 5.)

The sight of a peasant union ‘police’ making sure that town dwellers and peasant villagers alike remained alert by tapping them on their heads with a stick was certainly astonishing. Even more so were the meetings themselves, where peasant villagers -as citizens- felt empowered to state their demands and town dwellers were forced to be silent and listen, although hoping that they would, in the end, prevail, even if they were often thwarted in their intentions by the ever vigilant eyes of PROSANA’s personnel. Twenty or thirty years ago, this complex articulation of constituencies, agendas and agencies was unthinkable in this remote province.

Advocates of the ‘New Bolivia’ reforms would say that this became a possible occurrence in the Bolivian countryside because of the changes brought about by the Law for Popular Participation (LPP), passed in April 1994. Indeed, the law provided the legal framework for the formation of a ‘provincial development council,’ a sort of public forum where provincial and municipal authorities, members of the oversight committees, representatives of ‘territorially based organizations,’ and ‘other institutions of civil society’ (listed under this title in article 34 of the LPP) meet to discuss local demands and

reach agreements over development priorities (Secretaría Nacional de Participación Popular 1994). It is not difficult to imagine, however, that in those impoverished rural areas lacking adequate human and material resources to administrate the municipality according to the law's prescriptions, the application of this law required a substantial external, institutional and technical support. Indeed, as mentioned earlier (chapter 3), in Arque PROSANA not only provided the required technical assistance but carried out the actual activities entailed in the transformations prescribed by the law and monitored the complex process of reforms. Thus, PROSANA promoted the organization of Arque's provincial development council, *Consejo Provincial de Participación Popular de Arque* (CPPPA), and ensured the realization of meetings every other month alternating locations between the towns of Arque and Tacopaya.

However, that the LPP established the legal framework to promote participation of rural villagers in the affairs of municipal governments (until then the exclusive monopoly of town dwellers) and that PROSANA ensured the enactment of these mechanisms in Arque is only part of the picture. (See figures 14 and 15.) Another part of the picture is the organizing process that PROSANA actively supported since 1992 and that culminated in the creation of the provincial peasant organization affiliated to Cochabamba's peasant federation (*Central Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de la Provincia de Arque*) in December 1993 and of the inter-institutional development council (*Consejo Interinstitucional de Desarrollo de la Provincia de Arque – CIDPA*) in March 1994 –that is, before the LPP was passed. As discussed in chapter 3, from the point of view of PROSANA's directors, the LPP and the decentralization reforms came just in time to consolidate the participatory development process PROSANA had started

and guarantee its institutional sustainability. In their view, they supported the application of the LPP because the LPP supported the implementation of their project (at a larger scale, a scale they could not handle). In the new context, PROSANA's role shifted from being directly in charge of project implementation to providing technical assistance and overseeing the administrative and institutional transformations entailed by the LPP.

The creation of CIDPA was a joint initiative of PROSANA and the provincial peasant organization and responded to the need of bringing together representatives of Arque peasants and institutions concerned with development aid. As Jorge Lozano, PROSANA's sociologist directly involved in the creation of CIDPA, explained to me, this council provided a forum for peasants to voice their concerns and discuss with development institutions the possible solutions to their problems. To guarantee that CIDPA would serve peasants' interests, the presidency of CIDPA was assigned to the leadership of the provincial peasant organization. The three first provincial meetings that I attended (May, June and August '96) were CIDPA meetings and were thus presided by Vidal Nuñez, the head of the peasant *Central Sindical*. At the August '96 meeting, PROSANA announced that CIDPA was being reorganized in compliance with articles 22 to 25 of the LPP and that from then on it would be renamed as Provincial Council for Popular Participation (CPPA). Both councils served the same purposes, they were conceived of as a forum for consultation and dialogue, not for decision-making. The main difference, however, was that while CIDPA's president was the main leader of the provincial peasant organization, CPPPA's president was the Sub-prefect of the province. Anticipating the reaction that this news would cause among peasant union members, PROSANA proposed –and the proposal was accepted– to give the vice-presidency to the

representative of the peasant organization. The six provincial meetings that I attended between August 1996 and January 1998 were CPPA meetings. As I will show later on in this chapter, this apparently purely formal change illustrates very well the nature of the shift in the process of consolidation of the peasant organization supported by PROSANA before the promulgation of the LPP.

For the advocates of the LPP –law makers and development experts of the various international agencies that enthusiastically supported its implementation—these meetings were a good example of a public sphere where ‘civil society’⁴ could express itself, the space where representatives of the state and of civil society met to discuss and reach a consensus concerning the course of action for the future development of the province.⁵

For me, these meetings were the perfect occasion to identify local and regional actors and their connections to larger networks, to observe their interactions and follow the process of reconfiguration of local power relations triggered by PROSANA’s intervention and the LPP implementation. The meetings were an ideal window to my understanding of the region as a social field of forces; that is, “a historically configured arena where local and regional actors embedded in social and power relations struggle” (Roseberry 1990:13; see also Roseberry 1995 and Wolf 1969). Indeed, in spite of the efforts of development experts to make of these events privileged moments of communicative action for the participatory planning of development, the meetings rather constituted arenas for the expression of political battles revealing asymmetrical power relations.

⁴ For a discussion of how the discourse of civil society was used in the context of the LPP and the ‘New Bolivia’ reforms, see Medeiros 2001.

My purpose in this chapter is to discuss the institutional and politico-administrative changes brought about by the LPP by exploring the reconfigurations of power relations these changes entailed and the ways in which old social and racial/ethnic tensions were dealt with in the new context. In so doing I will identify the relevant actors on the scene of Arque and present their contrasting agendas. I will begin by describing the old municipal organization and the tensions along the lines of the town dwellers / peasant villagers divide before the arrival of PROSANA and the promulgation of the LPP (section II). In section III I will describe the transformations under way when I arrived in Arque in 1996 and discuss the conflicts and tensions that emerged within the new institutional spaces created by the LPP. I will show that the process of implementation of the LPP was a site of contestation where every step was susceptible of contradictory interpretations and where old social / racial / ethnic tensions were recast in new terms thus revealing the persistence of colonial race/ethnic hierarchies as the foundation of forms of inter-subjective relations of power (see introduction for the discussion of Quijano's concept of colonality of power). I will further argue that while the law opened new spaces for the political participation of peasants / Indians the transformations brought about by the LPP tended to limit the political power of peasant union organizations.

⁵ PROSANA was one of the most successful development project of the GTZ in Bolivia and its efficient work in actively supporting the implementation of reforms in strict compliance with the law made of Arque a sort of showcase.

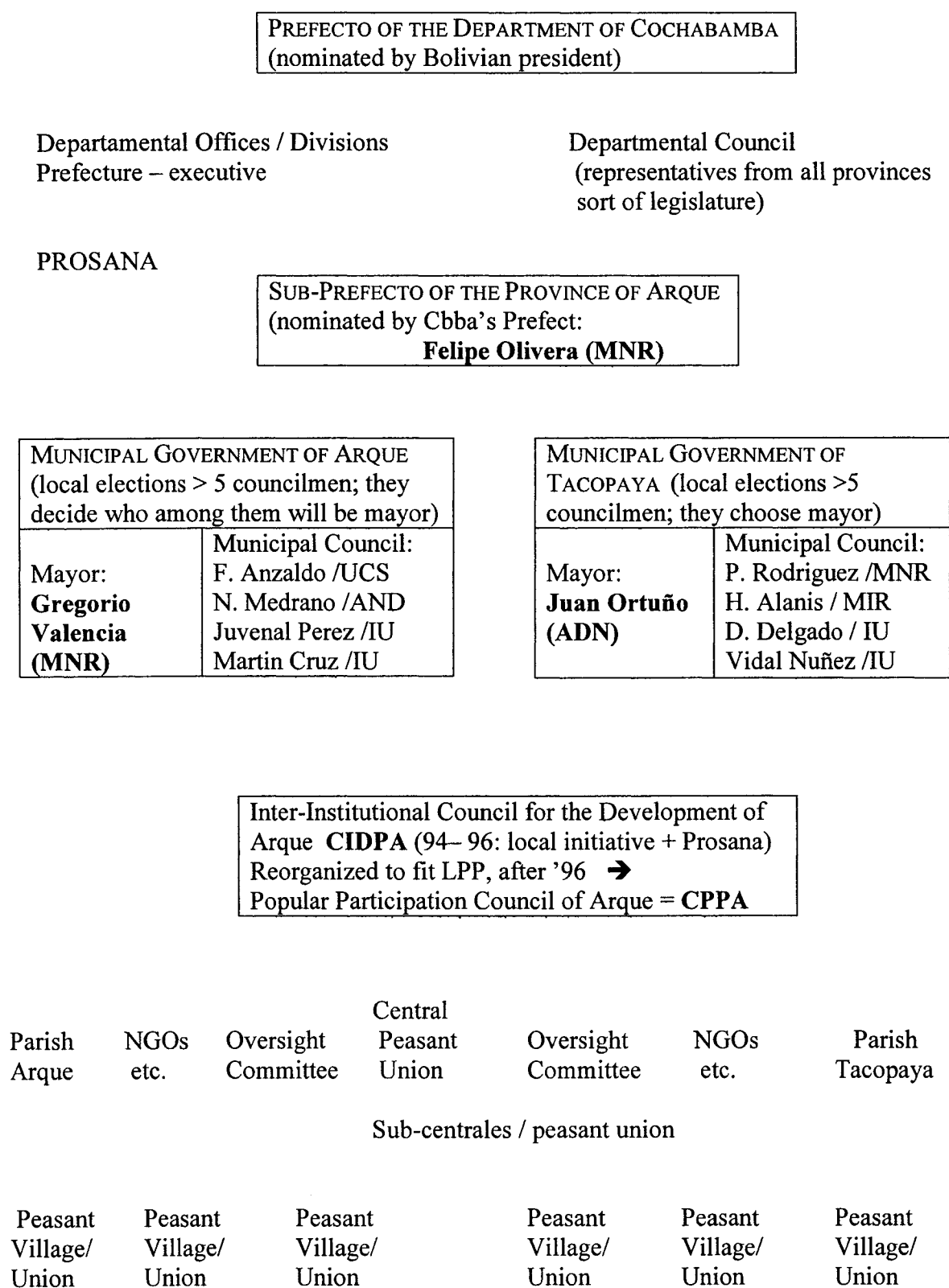
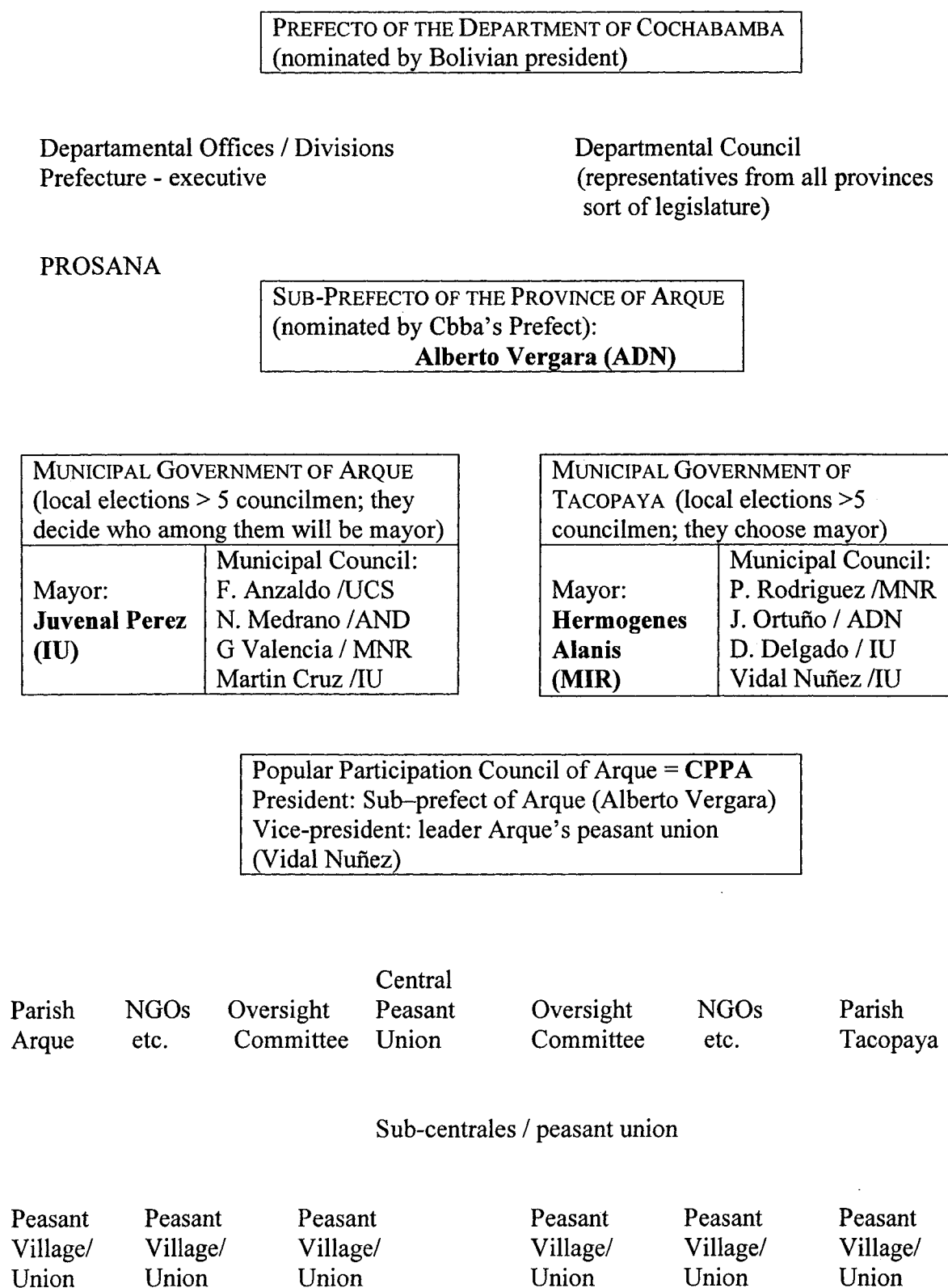
Figure 14: Administrative and Institutional Organization in 1996

Figure 15: Post-LPP Administrative and Institutional Organization by the end of 1997

II. The Old Municipal Scheme and the *Vecino / Campesino* Divide

Before the changes brought about by the LPP and the decentralization reforms, the jurisdiction of municipalities was limited to the urban area of a town and municipal budgets were covered with taxes paid by town residents and commerce. Municipal offices and elections were the exclusive affair of town dwellers. The surrounding rural areas did not have this local level of elected state authorities. As part of the *cantones* (provincial districts), rural areas were (and still are) administered by *corregidores* (magistrates) appointed by (and reporting to) the provincial Sub-prefect. In most provinces of Cochabamba, rural villages are organized as '*sindicatos agrarios*' (peasant unions) and in some areas like the highlands of Arque they elect '*alcaldes de campo*' a traditional ethnic /colonial authority connected to the *corregidor*. This politico-administrative organization supported an urban / rural division.

Until the 1950s agrarian reform provincial towns in Cochabamba were the strongholds of hacienda landowners, they had their houses there and they occupied the main state offices (sub-prefecture, town hall). Provincial towns were centers for services and commercial activities, and the place of residence for non-Indians (i.e. people who did not identify themselves as members of the surrounding rural villages called at that time Indian communities). The rural / urban division overlapped with a class division (space of hacienda landowners / space of hacienda peasants) a racial/ethnic division (the space of non-Indian culture / the space of peasant / Indian culture) and a more political division between members of the nation and citizens versus disenfranchised indigenous peasants (at that time illiterate people did not participate in elections and most indigenous peasants

were illiterate). The agrarian reform and the establishment of universal vote enlarged the political participation of indigenous peasants, transformed the situation of indigenous peasants in many ways, and forced large hacienda owners out of provincial towns. However, in places like Arque and Tacopaya, the contrast between urban and rural persisted with its underlying discriminatory representations of non-Indians versus Indians now recast in terms of town dweller / peasant villager (*vecino de pueblo / campesino de comunidades*); and 'peasant' became an euphemism for Indian.

Town folks with whom I spoke in Arque and Tacopaya and who are old enough to remember have vivid memories of more prosperous times when the towns were much larger, fertile orchards produced large amounts of delicious peaches, and trains stopped every day bringing in and taking out people and products. Town folks who live in Cochabamba and Oruro but visit Arque or Tacopaya during religious celebrations (*fiestas*) were particularly fond of talking about the past and eager to complain about the present. Thus for example, don Elgin Aspiazu, a man in his early 60s who lived in Cochabamba and rented his house in front of Arque's plaza to the judge, told me during his visit for Corpus Christi that "it will take this town 50 years to recover and be what it was 50 years ago." In his recollection,

In the 30s and 40s, there were turners, carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers, and every thing. There was a lot of activity in town. Thanks to the trains, the mines and agricultural production, there was work and food for everybody. Hacienda owners used to compete with one another as to who had their peasants in the best outfits. Retail sellers would get from here fruits, potatoes, and bread, carrying all by train to Oruro. At that time, Arque was feeding Oruro.

Descriptions of prosperous towns were often accompanied by an idealized image of the relations between landowners and peasants. For example, don Sabiniano Cosío, the

notary public and head of Arque clerk's office Arque, who was born in 1932 and whose parents had owned the hacienda of Kutimarka, told me that

Before the agrarian reform, there was discipline and respect... Peasants honestly fulfilled their daily chores, and made sure the landowner's (*patron*) share of the harvest would get to his house. The latter would not even touch the peasant's land parcels. The landowners would provide land and seeds and they [peasants] would provide the labor force. One would ask them to bring [the share of the harvest] and would pay them. Today they no longer bring [the share of the harvest].

The idealized image of an order from which no doubt landowners and town dwellers benefited the most is not corroborated by the facts. Newspapers from the decade of the 1940s were filled with stories of conflicts and confrontations throughout the haciendas of the valleys and highlands of Cochabamba: sit-down strikes, uprisings, capture of hacienda owners as hostages, and multiple short episodes of resistance that were often repressed by the army. After the National Indigenous Congress of 1945 obtained the legal abolition of the abusive free-servitude system of *pongueaje* the majority of conflicts were related to labor arrangements (peasants refusing to perform free services for the hacienda owners and the latter refusing to accept that peasants had from then on legally recognized rights to refuse to do such services). As Dandler and Torrico (1987: 361) convincingly argue in their analysis of the peasant / indigenous rebellion of Ayopaya, these conflicts were not isolated episodes or uprisings, "but rather processes of concerted mobilization and organization, of 'sit-down strikes' in response to the intransigence of *hacendados*, and the inability of the government to intervene in the making of concrete agreements." The history of peasant – landowner relations in the different haciendas of Arque remains to be done and until then we cannot ascertain the extent to which Arque peasants participated in that 'concerted mobilization.' The stories I collected during my fieldwork provide some evidence that, at least in the highlands of Tacopaya, where haciendas were

formed only in the late 19th century (see appendix), the 40s were a conflictive decade. In Totorá Pampa, doña Inocencia Flores, a widow in her 70s who never met the *patrones* (landowners) but remembered what her father used to comment about them told me that when she was a kid,

The landowners used to live in Tacopaya. The peasants had to bring everything to them from here. Sometimes they would bring them the entire harvest, other times they would keep a bit for themselves.... My father was a community leader.... One time the peasants from around here went to Tacopaya and Changolla and forced them to come out while they were asleep, just like that almost without [clothes] they made them run away. After that, the landowners did not dare come here anymore.

What is certain is that underlying the idealized image of fair landowners and obedient peasants is the assumption (remains of 19th century racist views) that peasants / Indians worked better when guided by authoritarian – patronizing landowners. These underlying assumptions are still present today. Descriptions of prosperous times before the agrarian reform by town folks whose families benefited in one way or another from the order in place before the 50s (like the ones quoted above) were often followed by complaints about the impact of the agrarian reform, and more specifically the role played by those linked to the MNR who as party members or union leaders co-opted and corrupted the reform. Once again, Arque peasants / Indians are deprived of agency in the representations of town folks whose narrative seems to lead to the conclusion that from the 50s on things went sour because the mass of peasants passed from the good hands of ‘decent’ landlords to the bad hands of corrupted political leaders. One of the most famous throughout the 50s and 60s was Jose Pedro Ugarte. Thus, for example, after he described pre-1950s Arque in the terms quoted above, Don Elgin Aspiazu,⁶ added:

⁶ According to what he told me, the family of don Elgin Aspiazu did not own much land in Arque, but before the Agrarian Reform, his father was the administrator of several haciendas and leased the hacienda

Then those who emerged as peasant leaders with the agrarian reform tried to take advantage [of their political power] through extortion and bribery. There was this woman, Trifonia Delgadillo, who became famous because she slapped Ugarte twice because he was charging her father a sack of potatoes for the right to keep agricultural produce in his house. An agrarian reform was necessary, but this one was badly implemented.

As soon as the peasants freed themselves from the yoke of the landowners, rather than enjoying a well guided freedom, they started to get drunk. Lacking any vision for the future, they cut trees to sell the wood and they do not control their herds' overgrazing, thus causing erosion.

Like many other town dwellers, don Sabiniano Cossio, the notary public, shared these views. Don Sabiniano had left Arque in 1946 to go to high school in the city of Oruro where he later worked as a clerk in the offices of the railway company until he retired in the early 1990s. Because it was considered a medium size estate, his parents' hacienda was not affected by the agrarian reform and was inherited by the four siblings when the parents died. Don Sabiniano had not been back to the hacienda since 1961. Shortly after he retired his oldest sister died and he and his wife decided to settle in Arque to take care of the family house. His wife, who traveled back and forth between Arque and Oruro, ran an occasional family restaurant at their house where I frequently had lunch or dinner. In one of our long after dinner conversations he commented,

Nowadays peasants don't even want to bring [the due share of the harvest]. I offered to pay their traveling expenses but still they don't want to bring it. We are four heirs but we don't even go [to Kutimarka] anymore. I guess as time passes, the property will stay with the peasants.

When I asked him why he thought Kutimarka peasants did not want to bring "his" share of potatoes he answered:

Peasants have changed a lot, not towards a more modern lifestyle but instead they have become rebels against the landowners and they have been corrupted by their leaders.

of Chapapani from "indios de Challacollo". Since this hacienda was considered '*latifundio*' it was entirely distributed among the peasants living on it.

Don Sydney de la Barra, a retired schoolteacher who went back to live in Arque in the 90s, remembered the 1950s with horror:

The agrarian reform did not benefit the peasantry; it rather corrupted it because leaders like Jose Pedro Ugarte forced peasants to buy guns at prohibitive prices, four or five times more per gun, a rifle for an entire ox. He treated peasants in a very abusive way, he then demanded gifts of potatoes or other products, and then also money, he asked for membership fees. Those leaders intimidated the peasantry in all sorts of ways and committed atrocities. Jose Pedro Ugarte was the son of an Arqueño, he went to work to the mines and came back after the revolution as a syndical leader and he was inciting peasants to rise up against the town. He, like many others thought that by exterminating the town folks they could acquire a lot of wealth, they used to say that town houses had hidden treasures. He incited people with those kinds of deceptions. He did not act by himself; the instigation's devil was Jaime Antezana.

Jaime Antezana's father, don Eliodoro Antezana, owned the house that now belongs to PROSANA. He was an immensely rich man and owned many estates all over. When he died [before the '52 revolution] he left properties for each one of his children. When the agrarian reform came, they became *movimientistas* [members of the MNR party] and they did not lose their estates. Jaime Antezana has caused a great deal of harm. He induced peasant-union leaders to cause trouble (create chaos and terror) because he wanted to take advantage of the chaos [thus created] in order to get a hold of more properties. Nobody likes him because he has caused a great deal of harm. He even fell out with his siblings because he tried to strip them of their estates.

After the agrarian reform, the majority of landowners of that time and that generation abandoned Arque under the threats of Jose Pedro Ugarte. We [my family] didn't own any land estates, my father was a lawyer and a music teacher, but he [Ugarte] also threatened us. He [Ugarte] once got a peasant crowd surrounding the whole block and threatening to burn our house. (...) One day, towards the end of 1956 somebody whispered to my father that they would come to kill us. (...) We had to run away in the middle of the night; we walked to Colcha and next morning we took the train to La Paz.

Indeed the changes brought about by the agrarian reform and the 1952 revolution gave rise to a reconfiguration of power relations and a re-composition of the social fabric of provincial towns like Arque and Tacopaya. Large hacienda owners lost their properties and privileged positions and left Arque to settle in the cities of Oruro or Cochabamba. Medium size or small land estate owners did not lose all of their lands, but if they were not connected to the MNR (the party of the revolution), they were excluded from state offices or positions of power. Some of them left, some stayed, but even those who stayed

sent their children to study in the city and encouraged them to settle there. The modernization reforms undertaken by the MNR administration after 1952 initiated the trend of rural exodus (emigration out of the countryside, decline of provincial towns and urban growth of the main cities) but the effects of this trend were not dramatically felt in Arque until the early 1970s. During the 50s and 60s, while some left under threatening pressures of a powerful MNR union leader like Jose Pedro Ugarte, others came to Arque thanks to him. Such was the case, for example of Don Gregorio Iriarte who was Arque's mayor when I arrived in 1996. When I was in town I often visited the store his wife owned and diligently managed. During the quiet weekdays when the town seemed empty I used to sit in the store and slowly drink a soda while chatting with doña Celestina. She was always busy and she was not a big talker but she always politely answered my questions. One of those afternoons she told me how she and her husband arrived in the area of Arque:

We are from the area of Cona-Cona, when we were just married we came to this area (Arque – Colcha) because my husband worked with Jose Pedro Ugarte subcontracting for the Railway Company. He worked as a sub-contractor (*contrastista*) building retaining walls and I cooked for the company's engineers (*ingenieros*). (...) Then [in the 1970s] we bought a house here in Arque with the money that we reclaimed from Jose Pedro Ugarte, from our deductions (*retenciones*). I opened a store here in town and my husband kept working as a sub-contractor. Later we bought this house, at the corner of the plaza, and we built a house in Villa Mexico [one of the growing shantytowns in Cochabamba city]. My children are living there now.

With the daily trains traveling through Arque, the mining centers around Berenguela still active, and upwardly mobile political / union leaders who took over the power vacuum left by the displaced old class of large hacienda owners, Arque and Tacopaya remained still lively functioning towns with public services such as a post office, public telephone

and telegraph, a well controlled market and a 'good' town government. As doña Blanca, a woman in her 30s who grew up in Arque during the 60s and 70s told me,

In the past, there used to be authority, city hall had authority to run the town and have everything under control. For example, peasants would bring their flour and inspectors would weigh, then peasants would pay a tax for the product and inspectors made sure that the incoming flour be distributed among all the town bakers; one baker could not buy all the flour available. Everybody respected the prices set by city hall and the inspector controlled that nobody cheated. With potatoes it was the same; potatoes arrived to city hall and the inspector weighed them. Inspectors also made sure that meat was fresh and fairly priced. At that time municipal administration had an inspector, a treasurer, a park keeper, a technician, and the mayor was permanently here. After the year of the flood, everything was over for Arque.

The flood doña Blanca is referring to year of occurred in 1974. Floods and landslides are as common in Arque as hurricanes are in Florida. But the 1974 flood in Arque as well as another one shortly after in Tacopaya were particularly devastating and accelerated the pace of emigration thus precipitating the decline of these small rural, provincial towns like the last straw on the camel's back. From what I was able to reconstruct about the history of Arque devastating floods have occurred every ten to twenty years but in the past town dwellers seemed to have had the means and incentives to rebuild their houses and keep on going.⁷ That did not happen after the 1970s floods. One dark rainy evening of December 1996, when I was visiting Doña Blanca at her house and we were chatting by candle light waiting for the storm to calm down, she vividly described the stormy night of 1974 when the Wallia River swept away a third of the town:

⁷ Don Sydney de la Barra, the retired schoolteacher, showed me a poem his grandfather had written after a devastating flood in 1914. Both don Sydney and don Sabiniano, the notary public, shared with me their memories of a terrible flood in the 1940s. According to don Juan Ortuño, who was the mayor of Tacopaya in 1996, climatic phenomena began to change in the 1940s: torrential rains were harder and more frequent causing increasingly stronger and uncontrollable landslides. In his view, the decline of the towns began with the devastating floods of the 40s. That he blamed natural phenomena instead of the political process of the agrarian reform, as most town dwellers of his generation did was due, I think, to two reasons. First, he was one of those small landowners for whom the changes of the 1952 revolution were more beneficial than harmful. Second, in all the interviews I conducted with him, he consistently and systematically avoided to say anything that could have political connotations.

At that time there used to be [electric] light until 9pm. Some 15 minutes later it started to rain very strongly, there was a very strong noise, like a motor, like an earth tremor. They [municipal authorities] rang the church's bells and turned on the light. We all ran out to see what was going on. It looked like smoke, at first it came mildly but then the landslide razed down everything. Houses were floating like ships. On that side of the Wallia River there used to be orchards and three blocks of houses between the river's bank and the main square. The landslide took all that away. It stopped half a block away from the square. It also destroyed what used to be on the Arque River's bank: the best houses with arcades, the market place, the jail, the health center. All that area is now part of the riverbed. Since then everything has remained abandoned and municipal authorities have not taken care of the town anymore. People started to leave, and the ruins, there they are. The sediment keeps accumulating thus raising the level of the riverbed. There used to be stairs with more than 15 steps separating the railway from the riverbank. Now the rails are at the river's level. Two times already they had to move the rails up the slope. There used to be four long blocks separating the square from the train station, now the station is almost at the square.

The few people who stayed after the mid-70s were state employees (railroad workers, schoolteachers, a doctor, a judge, etc.) elderly people too old to adapt to city life; single mothers or widows who could not make it in the city and survived by combining bread and *chicha* (corn beer) making with petty itinerant commerce (bartering in peasant villages to obtain products they could sell in major crossroads or use for their own consumption); and small-estate landowners who traveled back and forth between Arque and Cochabamba or Oruro and made ends meet by squeezing what they could from Arque peasants with whom they engaged in sharecropping arrangements supported by patron-client arrangements / *compadrazgo* ties. Although many among these few remaining town dwellers (*vecinos*) were born in peasant villages or descended from people born in those villages and although many of them were as poor as most peasant villagers, town dwellers continued to assert the real or imaginary differences between *vecinos* and *campesinos* and survived by reproducing unequal forms of exchange through patron-client relations with those *campesinos* (peasants of the surrounding villages).

Even if in relation to the city of Cochabamba both peasant villagers and most town dwellers would be equally considered as provincial rural people, town dwellers have more connections in the city and are more likely to be less discriminated against. They have a house or relatives with a house in the city, even if this house is located in a shantytown formed by recent rural immigration. They speak Spanish and know how to move around in the city, how to find a lawyer, and how to get services from state offices. Most probably they are also in good terms with those Arqueños who live in more established residential neighborhoods, professionals whose parents were landowners but who never go back to the province. In other words, the advantage of town dwellers is that they are better connected to the larger society and fall within the range of the Bolivian nation the parameters of which are defined by what Stutzman (1981) would call an “inclusive ideology of exclusion.” Symbolic belonging to the Bolivian nation linked to useful city connections and easier access to governmental agencies, services and offices were among the key factors contributing to reproduce the sort of ‘cacique’ power some town dwellers had over many, though never all, peasant villagers and / or their ‘*sindicatos agrarios*.’ Until the late 1980s, these well-connected *vecinos* were, for many villagers, the only brokers between remote out-of-the-way rural / Indian villages and the larger, dominant, mestizo society. This was especially the case for peasants who greatly depended on their sharecropping arrangements with ex-hacienda owners and for the ‘*sindicatos agrarios*’ gathered under the sub-central of Arque or Tacopaya often headed by town dwellers or their clients (*compadres* / *ahijados*).⁸

⁸ While this statement is true as a general / generalizing trend (one that stands in contrast with other areas of Cochabamba) each village has a particular history of relations with hacienda owners, clientelistic arrangements and unequal exchanges with abusive town dwellers, different forms of resisting, abuses or

The grounds for this control of Arque's *sindicatos agrarios* by town dwellers began to shake as new channels of communication with the larger society opened up since the 1980s and more and more Arque peasants found alternative brokers and networks of support. First, the intensification of emigration to El Chapare from the early 1980s on not only provided an increasing number of peasants with alternative sources of income, but connected them to the struggles of the larger peasant movement and exposed them to the work and views of the leadership of the *Federación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba*. Two out of the five peasant villagers occupying official posts at the municipal or provincial level in 1996-97 were men who had followed that trajectory. One was Martin Cruz, municipal councilman for the municipality of Arque and later elected 'diputado suplente' substitute to the congressman representing Arque's electoral district in Congress (*Cámara de Diputados* - House of Representatives). The other one was Vidal Nuñez, municipal councilman of Tacopaya and secretary general of Arque's *Central Campesina*. When I first had the chance to have a long conversation with Vidal Nuñez after months of asking him for an interview I asked him to tell me where he learned about peasant union organization and how did he become involved in the peasant movement. This is his story:

I dropped out of [elementary] school when I was in third grade. But then I continued to learn on my own. When I was 11 years old one of my older brothers took me to Cochabamba to work in construction. By the time I was 13, I was already a young man. Somebody gave me a bible and in there I found the word 'privileged.' Do you know the meaning of that word? I learned it in the Bible. There it said that we should be all equals; that there should not be any privileged ones. From then on I kept reading everything I could get a hold of and I kept learning on my own. When I was 15 I went to El Chapare. I got false papers indicating that I was 18 and I was able to get a plot. In El Chapare I was [union] leader and learned a lot about peasant unions. (...) I actually started learning about peasant struggles earlier on. When I was living in Cochabamba I lived in a small room in [the building of] the *Federación*. Every evening I heard the older leaders talking

negotiating better terms of exchange, and different possibilities of developing alternative brokerage networks.

and debating and that is how I formed my ideas about what is and should be *sindicalismo campesino*. I was there when they [people working for military dictatorship] came in and killed Enrique Encinas, I saw it. That was one of the many lessons I learned and that are forever inscribed in my head. (...) I was a [union] leader in El Chapare until 1990 when I had an accident and lost my hand. That is why I had to leave and I came back here, I've been around since then.⁹

Second, new communication channels and networks of support, though of a very different kind, also opened up with the arrival to the province of two rather active Italian priests. Although the preaching of Father Luis in Tacopaya and Father Mario in Arque had no political connotations or connections to larger peasant movements, their steady presence and their every day actions against the abuses of town dwellers imposed certain standards reducing public discriminatory practices towards peasant/ Indian villagers. A case in point is the seating changes Father Luis imposed in Tacopaya's Sunday mass shortly after his arrival.

When I first arrived in the early 80s peasant villagers hardly attended mass and if they did, they stayed at the entrance. The benches were only occupied by town dwellers. And the benches in the choir, around the altar were supposedly reserved to certain privileged *vecinos* like the widow of a judge who allegedly had been at the Supreme Court. She did not even live here and she wanted her bench to be kept just for her. Some people had their benches with their names only to be used by them. (...) So one Sunday I not only invited all the "Indians" who were at the entrance to come in and seat down, I also invited the *alcaldes de campo* who brought their staff for blessing to sit in the choir around the altar. Some town dwellers got up and left. A lot of town dwellers dislike what I do. (...) The few who stayed in town live as if they were still in the 1500s, they think they own everything and everybody. (...) I had confrontations with people here from the day of my arrival. They came to tell me that I had to respect the local customs, and part of that was that they wanted me to charge for the religious services. At the beginning I didn't get their point, then I realized that indirectly they were telling me to share a percentage with them. That makes you think of the Sicilian mafia! You are laughing! But for me it has been a constant struggle all these years. They were used to put the church and the priest under their whim and control.

⁹ That interview took place in Arque town in December 1996. At that time Vidal Nuñez was 28 years old. He is from the village of Chaquilla, located near the border with Oruro. From what Vidal told me in other occasions, his father was also a "fighter" who never ceased to struggle for his rights. At the time of the agrarian reform, Vidal's father was not on good terms with Jose Pedro Ugarte: "he threatened my father with a pistol," Vidal told me. From what I could reconstruct, Vidal's father was closer to the left wing of the 1950s peasant movement while Jose Pedro Ugarte was close to the right wing of the MNR.

Beyond their everyday town confrontations, Father Luis and Father Mario constantly visited the peasant villages attached to their respective parishes and often supported men and women villagers in establishing connections to obtain services from church linked organizations. In Totora Pampa, for example, Father Luis supported young mothers to organize a 'mothers' club' (*club de madres*) and work in a collective garden in exchange for food donated by the catholic NGO Caritas. Perhaps the work of further reaching consequences consisted of various educational initiatives that both priests pursued in their parishes. To begin with, they recruited young men from all peasant villages to train them as catechists and to all of them they provided in one way or another access to schooling and helped those who wanted to finish high school through a long distance program. Then, thanks to his Italian connections Father Mario was able to help set up a boarding house in Arque town for children of the peasant villages to be able to attend school through middle school.¹⁰ Finally, both parishes supported the establishment of a continuing education center where villagers from the entire province gathered once a month for a week of intensive high school courses. Thus for example, when PROSANA recruited young adults for their two-year nurse training program, most of the candidates eligible because of their reading and writing skills were catechists trained by Father Luis or Father Mario. Catechists were also the villagers who ended up occupying leading positions in the context of the LPP municipal reforms (oversight committees, municipal council, etc.). Donato Delgado, councilman in the municipality of Tacopaya, was one of the very few official authorities of the province to have a high school degree which he obtained with the support of Father Luis.

¹⁰ Schools in peasant villages only cover the curriculum of elementary school. Most rural schools are only through 3rd grade, very few go through 5th grade.

In spite of the significant impact the priests' work, the Chapare experience, and the *Federación* connections had on the political formation and / or school education of many (always men) villagers, until PROSANA arrived into the region there was not a unified provincial peasant organization. As *sindicatos agrarios*, most peasant villages (though not all) were gathered in *sub-centrales*, but there was no coordination among them. Not only were these *sub-centrales* lacking effective connections with, and thus institutional support from, Cochabamba's peasant federation, but many of them were still at the mercy of abusive town dwellers *quacaciques*. These *caciques* were also town authorities, and were related to political parties. Not only they made sure Arque peasants would vote for their political parties in national elections but also they prevented younger peasant leaders from establishing organizational links with Cochabamba's *Federación*. I heard many similar stories like the following one that was told to me by Nicolas Leon, a 24 year old leader of a *sindicato agrario* (peasant village) a few miles from Tacopaya:

Before PROSANA entered the region, leaders belonged to political parties and to *patrones*. They did not inform us about anything, they did not inform us about our rights. We did not learn anything, nothing about the difference between [the concepts of] land and territory, nothing about union organizing, how to conduct a union meeting. They just made us drink *chicha*. They did not let us get in contact with Cochabamba's peasant federation, only with the people they knew, their contacts.

PROSANA helped us get in contact with the federation, organize ourselves, and form a unified *Central*. PROSANA arrived here and gave us some training and that is how we have been able to knock down those pseudo leaders at the service of official political parties. We, the peasants, have recovered the office of the magistrate. We don't let the corrupt tricky ones get in anymore. Training is very important. We thank PROSANA and above all Jorge Lozano and Johnny for providing us with training. having

Before [the *patrones*] did not let us gather for a meeting, they kicked us out of the meetings. Now, thanks to PROSANA they cannot do that to us anymore.

I also heard stories about armed threats, election frauds, whip beating, etc. For example Jorge Lozano, the sociologist working with PROSANA, told me the shocking experience he had when he visited Tacopaya for the first time in 1993:

At that time, the head of the *sub central* gathering the *sindicatos agrarios* surrounding Tacopaya was a *vecino*, don Genaro Saavedra. He owned a store and *chicheria* [corn beer bar] and lived in the house next to PROSANA's. Genaro Saavedra was not only the head of the *subcentral* but also Tacopaya's magistrate and notary public. One day back in 1993 I was seating in Don Genaro's store when a *campesino* and his wife from a nearby peasant village came into the store. They had had a fight; the wife complained that the husband had beaten her. Don Genaro took them to a room behind the store where he had a desk with official seals and forms but I could still hear the conversation they had. Don Genaro forced them to fill up a written complaint for which they had to pay 100 *bolivianos* then lectured them in a very patronizing tone and finally punished the husband with a whip (*chicote*). When don Genaro came back to the front storeroom he said to me in Spanish "this is the only way for these Indians to understand." That year was election year and shortly after this incident I ran into don Genaro again. This time he was in the courtyard of the town hall talking to a group of *alcaldes de campo* from the surrounding villages. He showed them a sample of a voting form and instructed them to cross the slot corresponding to the ADN [the political party that Tacopaya's mayor represented]. I intervened to say that the vote was a free choice and I left. Later on some *alcaldes de campo* that were at that meeting came to PROSANA's house to ask me if it was really true that the vote was secret and free! (...) When election day came I visited a few of the surrounding villages, in Challoma I saw that the people in charge of the voting table organized a second round saying that the first one was not valid. In the ballot box of the second round there appeared a number of votes for the MNR, just the precise number of votes that were necessary for the MNR to win. I was even more shocked when I realized that the person presiding that voting table was don Genaro Saavedra: he was also cheating for the MNR, so he was with both parties.

The arrival of PROSANA into the region threatened in yet another way the power position of cacique like town dwellers. PROSANA was not just an alternative channel or broker, it was a much more powerful one. Or so it seemed at the beginning. As we will see in more detail in chapter 5, between 1991 and 1994, PROSANA's social unit staff devoted itself to the consolidation of Arque's peasant organization. Actively supporting the establishment of direct, organizational links with higher (larger) levels of the union hierarchy (Cochabamba's peasant *Federación* and Bolivia's peasant *Confederación*),

PROSANA helped Arque's *sindicatos agrarios* to get rid of town caciques / peasant leaders. PROSANA organized trips for local union leaders to attend confederation's meetings, federation's training workshops, and visit other provincial *Centrales*. Leaders of the highest union levels, like Roman Loayza (at that time the confederation's Secretary General), were brought (in PROSANA's cars) to talk at Arque's peasant meetings. Also PROSANA coordinated with the federation's staff the organization of training sessions on union organizing (*cursillos de organización sindical*).

Gerardo Mamani from La Comuna, a village located at the border between Arque and Bolivar, was the first leader ('Executive Secretary' is the official name) of this first *Central Provincial*. His trajectory, like many others', shows the importance of connections with the federation and the principles of syndicalism. He played a key role in the creation of the *Central*, and I heard people in PROSANA saying that without him it would not have been possible, at least not at that moment. The story Don Gerardo told me shows the difficulties they had to confront. This is what he told me:

In 1982, when I was 33 years old Arque's parish gave me a scholarship to attend training courses in Cochabamba (metalwork and other skills). The courses took place in the University's buildings. That is how I met and engaged in conversation with university students. I could see how they organized the students' union; how they went on a hunger strike to make their rights prevail. That is how I began to learn about union organizing. (...) Later I came back to La Comuna and in 1992 they elected me leader of La Comuna's *sub-central*. It is in my capacity as peasant union leader that I amended training workshops organized by the *compañero* Eleuterio Romero at Cochabamba's peasant federation. That year took place the October 12 demonstration, marking the 500 hundred years of the usurpation of our lands. For that demonstration, the *compañeros* [other peasants federation members] prepared black flags and a puppet looking like a Spaniard on a horse and then later they burned the puppet. There were several speeches about our wealth that has been taken away for all these hundreds of years. That is how I came to learn more about our struggles. Then took place the confederation's meetings in Ayopaya, that was when the *compañero* Eleuterio Romero was at the head of the federation. We were seven from Arque, those most interested in union organizing. (...) According to my capacity and my experience, I was elected Secretary of Conflicts, that was my first position within Cochabamba's federation. Every month we used to have short-term courses where we learned about the reasons for the Chaco War, whose interest's it served, etc. It is in that way that we acquired training. When I finished my

one-year position at the federation I came back and here I was part of the *sub-central's* leadership. That was in 1993 the year we organized the first Arque peasants' meetings. At those meetings I was elected as the *Central's* Executive Secretary, a position that I occupied for two years. Then after a short rest, in 1997 I was taken back to the federation's offices as secretary of relations.

I was elected to the at the head of the *Central Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de la Provincia de Arque* because they saw that I knew what it meant to do union organizing, that I had been trained in the ways of *sindicalismo*. At the beginning the job required a lot of sacrifices and I had to go through a lot of hardships because Jose Pedro Ugarte started to criticize me saying that I was not the right person for the job of union organizing; he said that I was *t'aparanku lloqalla*.¹¹ By talking in that way he threw the people of his party against me and I almost risked my life. Since then I had to walk very carefully when traveling through the province or holding a meeting or workshop. The servants of the [political] parties began to take revenge against us and didn't let us move forward. So we decided to organize workshops and seminars in the communities and *sub-centrales*. There were lectures on union organizing, the history of the peasant movement and peasant union organization. It is in that way that we began to make people aware (*concientizar*) of what political parties do. It was not easy at all to organize the *Central* with its *sub-centrales* and coordinate it all. It cost us a lot of sacrifice to make people aware; they did end up realizing that traditional political parties manipulated them and only cared about the parties' interests. It is only now that peasants here are able to see what their interests are and what their rights are. Through workshops and awareness seminars [*seminaries de concientización*] we the peasants have been able to slowly open our minds.

PROSANA helped a lot in the organization of these workshops. They provided transportation so that everybody could attend the events and that allowed me too to visit all the 23 *sub-centrales* of the province. We were able to gain awareness through these events during which we worked by groups. We broke into smaller groups; we learned about and discussed different topics, then we met again in a plenary session and presented the results of the group discussion. At the plenary we could learn more because people who knew more could rectify the conclusions presented by the groups. People learned a lot about union organizing in that way: what is a federation, what is the right path for union organizing, what are development projects, where does the money come from for those projects, what does the government do, does he do what it is supposed to do, what are the different functions of the executive power, and the legislative power, all those topics were discussed during the meetings.

The points don Gerardo makes in this testimony bear several commonalties with those made by Nicolas Leon in the statements quoted above and are representative of the ways in which many Arque peasants perceived the role of PROSANA and the significance of their connections to Cochabamba's peasant Federation. First, PROSANA

¹¹ Jose Pedro Ugarte was not living in Arque anymore, but most of the town caciques were the people who had worked with him and were still in contact with him. *T'aparanku* in Qhishwa refers to a big, dark, and scary moth that flies in a blind - clumsy way and *lloqalla* means young boy. The latter term is often used

not only provided logistic support indispensable for peasant organizing at the provincial level, but, more importantly, PROSANA represented a powerful referent to counterbalance the power held by the “servants of political parties” who hitherto had manipulated the organization of *sindicatos agrarios*. Second, their connections to the Federation, Arque peasant could have access to information about the larger society and the rights they have as members of that larger society. Through the teachings of ‘*sindicalismo*’ they could learn how to organize themselves to defend those rights. Third, we gathered from both testimonies that pseudo leaders at the “service of political parties and landowners” could manipulate and control Arque peasants precisely by preventing them to access that kind of knowledge. Put differently, the lack of knowledge about how the larger society works and how to operate within the larger / dominant society perpetuates their oppression, their condition of disenfranchisement. Those who benefit from their oppression will do everything to prevent them from knowing, to keep them in darkness. This is a recurrent preoccupation I heard many times expressed in different terms. In Totora Pampa Mario Ignacio and Zenobio Clemente spoke of a state of darkness or drunkenness, in Arque town, during a large peasant gathering (*ampliado*) Martin Cruz, the peasant councilman of Arque’s municipal government, told me:

We are now awakening from what was like a deep sleep. Union organizing is what makes us wake up. Large union meetings are like a school for us.

It is worth noting that the ‘awakening’ metaphor was not only used by peasant villagers but also by town dwellers. In my conversations with *vecinos* in Arque and Tacopaya I often asked if they perceived recent changes among peasant villagers. I often found that they were aware of the changes brought about by PROSANA’s presence and

(also in Bolivian Spanish) to refer pejoratively to somebody who lacks good manners, is poorly educated, is

the LPP reforms but that awareness fed their worst fears and led to peculiar interpretations. For example, don Leon Pardo, a retiree from the railway company who had settled in Tacopaya when he worked in the train station told me that:

Peasants used to work well, now they woke up. Constantly travelling to El Chapare they earn easy quick money. Now they are more awake than those who live in town and now they want to crush us.

Another iteration of ‘awakening’ came up in the answer from doña Aurora, a *chicha* maker in Arque town, when I asked about PROSANA’s work in 1997 (i.e. after PROSANA’s field teams had left):

The people of PROSANA used to go to the peasant villages, but it is difficult wake up those peasants, to make them understand. You have to explain them word by word, like feeding them spoon by spoon. They don’t understand quickly, it’s not like us.

In spite of the opposition of many town dwellers, Jose Pedro Ugarte’s friends and the servants of political parties and landowners, the *Central Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de la Provincia de Arque* was officially founded in 1993 with the active support of PROSANA’s social unit staff and the institutional recognition of the *Federación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos del Departamento de Cochabamba*. By 1994, when the LPP was promulgated, the *Central Campesina Provincial*, seemed well on the path towards taking over the control of the region away from town dwellers’ hands.

III. The Impact of the LPP: New Institutions , Same Old Tensions

Expanding the jurisdiction of a municipality to cover the whole provincial section (*seccion de provincia*) the LPP created a new layer of elective local government. For

poorly dressed, or lacks the experience to behave appropriately as an adult or professional.

Arque that meant that peasant villagers of the municipalities / provincial sections of Arque and Tacopaya could not only vote to elect a mayor, but also they could run for office and be elected as mayors and councilmen. In other words, by expanding the jurisdiction of a municipality the law erased the administrative division urban / rural and created a new layer of political participation for rural villagers. Of course, politico - administrative divisions can be changed by decree, but prejudices and discriminatory practices embedded in patron-client arrangements cannot be changed so easily. One could think, however, that because peasant villagers represented more than 95 % of the population and because peasant villages could count on the organizational structure of a peasant union freed from *vecinos*' manipulations and linked to the larger network the peasant federation and confederation, the 1995 municipal elections would have brought (put?) peasant villagers into the offices of the municipal governments of Arque and Tacopaya. This is not what happened.

As described in chapter 3, PROSANA was actively engaged in the application and enforcement of the law. At the beginning, PROSANA's staff, and especially so Jorge Lozano and Johnny Zambrana, saw this task as an extension of their support to strengthening the peasant organization. However, the fact that the law opened new channels for peasants' political participation did not necessarily imply the political empowerment of the peasant union organization as such.¹² In fact, the transformations

¹² As mentioned in chapter 2, when in 1993 – 1994 the Bolivian government announced the three pillar laws of the “New Bolivia” reforms, peasant leaders at the level of the Federation and Confederation opposed these reforms and referred to the new laws as “*leyes malditas*” (damned laws). Although the LPP was the least controversial of the three and peasant leaders eventually accepted its general principles, they contested specific aspects which could undermine the unity and strength of the peasant syndical organization. For example, they refused the generic terminology of ‘*organizaciones territoriales de base*’ (OTBs) to designate the organization representing the people living within the territory of a *sindicato agrario* or peasant village. In negotiations with government representatives they obtained the withdrawal of the term ‘OTB’ from the ‘*certificado de personeria juridica*’ and its replacement by the specific name of the

brought about by the LPP potentially tended to limit the political power of union organization. After the LPP, Arque's *Central Campesina* had to confront serious challenges. One of the first ones arose in relation to the municipal elections of 1995. Indeed, in order to run for office candidates had to represent a political party; yet peasant unions were not a party.

The issue of creating a new political party—the peasants' 'political instrument' as they called it—was widely discussed at the level of the Federation and Confederation. However, because of the lengthy legal procedure creating a party entailed, for the 1995 municipal elections Cochabamba's peasant Federation used (borrowed) the name of an already existing party, the United Left (*Izquierda Unida*). In meetings organized by Jorge Lozano and Johny Zambrana during the pre-electoral period, Arque peasants debated between the possibility of having peasant representatives included in the lists of all political parties and the possibility of putting all peasant representatives in the list of the United Left (IU). The majority of peasant leaders present at those meetings supported the latter option. However, there were some peasants who individually decided to run in the lists of other parties. In the case of the municipality of Tacopaya, Donato Delgado and Vidal Nuñez ran under the banner of the IU while Pascual Rodriguez joined the list of the MNR. In the case of the municipality of Arque, Martin Cruz ran for the IU together with Juvenal Perez who was a retired railway worker, thus not a peasant member of a *sindicato agrario*, but supported the views of the peasant union.

organization, i.e. '*sindicato agrario*,' or '*ayllu*,' '*capitania*,' etc.. The argument was that a new term like OTB could mislead people to believe that in order to get the LPP's benefits they had to form a new organization which would compete with the *sindicato agrario* creating conflicts and internal divisions among peasants villagers.

In municipalities of the size of Arque or Tacopaya, the municipal government is formed by five councilmen and their election follows the system of proportional representation. The term is five years. The number of councilmen that a party can have is proportional to the votes the party obtained. Once elected, the 5 councilmen decide among themselves who will occupy the office of mayor (this decision is revised every year). In the elections of 1995, the IU won two seats in Tacopaya and two seats in Arque. The remaining three seats went to three other parties (MNR, UCS and ADN in Arque; MNR, MIR and ADN in Tacopaya). As shown in figure 4.1, Gregorio Valencia from the MNR was elected mayor of Arque with three votes against two and Juan Ortuño was elected mayor of Tacopaya also with three votes against two. In the latter case it was expected that Pascual Rodriguez, a peasant member of the peasant union, would give his vote to Donato Delgado, head of the IU list. Most peasant union leaders considered as a betrayal the fact that he did not do it and instead gave his vote to a *vecino* landowner -- who had been the mayor of Tacopaya for 15 years. In 1997, the municipal council of Arque voted for Juvenal Perez, head of the IU list, to become mayor. The smoothness of the transition was probably due to both the fact none of the council members were landowners and that Juvenal Perez represented the IU but was a *vecino*. In the case of Tacopaya, the presence of a landowner and two leaders of the peasant union was an explosive combination and gave rise to multiple conflicts and even violent confrontations.

When I arrived in Arque in 1996 it seemed that, in spite of its weak position in the municipal governments elected in 1995, the provincial peasant union was well on its way to gaining control of the process unleashed by the LPP reforms through its strong

position within the provincial development council (CIDPA). In what follows I will discuss the evolution of this position when CIDPA was reorganized to fit the LPP frame and the conflict that emerged between the leader of the provincial peasant union and the Sub-prefect in 1997. Finally, focusing on the case of the municipality of Tacopaya, I will describe the tensions that arose between the mayor and peasant members of the municipal council and the obstacles Tacopaya's oversight committee faced when denouncing the lack of transparency in the mayor's management of municipal affairs.

A. Position of The Peasant Organization within CIDPA - CPPA

The first provincial CIDPA meeting I attended took place in May 1996. I arrived in one of PROSANA's Toyota land cruisers with Jorge Lozano, the sociologist in charge PROSANA's social unit, two women representatives of Cochabamba's Secretary of Popular Participation and two men representatives of a Danish funded program of support to Indigenous people. According to the information I had, the purpose of this meeting (and of our visit) was to discuss the subdivision of the municipal territories into districts.¹³ This meeting was supposed to be the first one in a series of two or three "distrition workshops" during which local representatives would identify 'districts' which experts defined as "geographical areas that constituted coherent units in socio-cultural, economic, and environmental terms." The purpose of distrition was to guarantee a more efficient management (e.g. distribution of services) and a wider participation of community representatives in 'oversight committees.'

¹³ As mentioned in chapter 2, 'distrition' was part of the LPP regulations. The Dirección de Organización Territorial (DOTA), another division of the National Office of Popular Participation, designed the guidelines for a participatory distrition process. While working in La Paz in 1995 I had attended some

It was a sunny Saturday morning. We had left PROSANA's main office in the city of Cochabamba around 8am and by 11:30 am we were parking in front of PROSANA's house in the south western corner of Arque's main plaza (square-park). The town was still, and seemed empty of people. Just one of the four shops on the plaza was open. A basket covered with a white cloth in front of an open door announced the availability of fresh-baked bread. Other cars from PROSANA arrived with other *técnicos*, the provincial Sub-prefect, the mayors of Arque and Tacopaya, a peasant leader, a couple of municipal councilmen, and bags of food and propane gas tanks.¹⁴ PROSANA's field *técnicos* came on motorcycles from Tacopaya and by 1 p.m. the whole block in front of PROSANA's house was full. In the back yard of the house a local woman hired to prepare the food was setting up huge pots on gas stoves while three young girls peeled potatoes and chopped onions. Little by little, as if out of nowhere, community representatives began silently arriving. The meeting was supposed to start around noon; at one p.m. the organizers were worrying that attendance would fall short, but by three o'clock the town hall was filled with some 70 people (95% men). The meeting was to take place in the town hall's 'theater' where important civic and social events are held.

As I was entering the building, just before the meeting started, I ran into a group of town people (three women and two men in their 60s or 70s) sitting on the benches outside. "Aren't you coming inside for the meeting?" I asked. "Oh, no, it is a peasant meeting, it is not for us" they answered in the loaded tone of their prejudices. Very naively I tried to explain, "It is for everybody, it is a provincial meeting and State

'distritation' workshops and read many DOTA documents. My knowledge about this topic was very helpful in establishing a good relationship with PROSANA's técnicos when I first visited them.

representatives will be giving important information that concerns all the people of Arque.” “If that is so, then they should organize a meeting to inform town people properly.” I understood that there was no point in delivering them more information. It was not a problem of lack of information. (Although it is true that they neither knew what this specific meeting was about nor did they know much about the LPP in general.) The problem was the arrogant blindness with which they desperately tried to hold onto the old privileges through which town people reproduced their racist forms of domination.

The theater of Arque’s town hall is a long, rather dark, rectangular space with an elevated stage at one extreme and a door that opens to the street at the other extreme. Along the right side two windows and two doors open to the town hall’s yard. For the meeting that day, a large table had been placed in the front for the authorities presiding the event: the leader of the peasant *Central*, the provincial *Sub-prefecto*, Arque’s mayor, Tacopaya’s mayor, and CIDPA’s minutes’ secretary.¹⁵ On the stage there was a wooden structure holding large rolls of paper and markers, the indispensable raw material of all these meetings. The two women representing the Secretary of Popular Participation, the representative of the Danish program and PROSANA’s social unit staff sat in the front but on a bench along the right-side wall. Peasant representatives sat in the ten or so rows of benches facing the stage. With the exception of one town woman (*de pollera*¹⁶) seating in the front row, they were all men and all peasant villagers. Standing in the back, and coming and going were more peasant villagers, a couple of municipal councilmen, and

¹⁴ PROSANA always provided the food for these meetings. Later on village representatives were asked to bring their share of potatoes, however PROSANA kept bringing from the city vegetables, meat, rice, noodles, and gas canisters.

¹⁵ At this CIDPA meeting, the secretary was Johnny Zambrana from PROSANA. Later on when CIDPA became CPPA organized following LPP regulations, the minutes secretary was the head of Arque’s Oversight Committee, Eleuterio Vazquez who was also a member of the peasant sindicato. He had completed his high school degree and was employed by Arque’s priest in the parish.

about ten PROSANA *técnicos*, half of which were women. Intimidated by the overwhelming majority of men in the room, I stood next to the women in the back.

At around 4pm, PROSANA's head of the social unit, Jorge Lozano opened the meeting welcoming everybody and introducing the state representatives. There followed very formal welcoming words by the two mayors. From the empty formulaic words they used it was clear that they did not know anything about distritation or the type of commitment it required from them. It seemed that what counted for them was the "prestige" of receiving authorities from the city. The formality asked for by the *sindicato* leader was of a very different nature. Suggesting that distritation was not on the agenda of the day, he said, "This meeting was not called by governmental offices, this is a CIDPA meeting of the people of Arque and there is no reason to accept arbitrary changes to the agenda we had established."¹⁷ A sort of contained tension started developing as more complaints came from the audience expressing discontent because of the lack of coordination and respect for the rules of *sindicalismo*. Playing the role of mediators (a role that I saw them play in all future meetings) PROSANA's social unit staff offered more clarifying explanations about the importance of listening to the information that distritation representatives were willing to provide. In a conciliatory effort they acknowledged that the order of the agenda should be respected. The minutes secretary then proceeded to call attendance. It turned out that only 14 out of the 23 '*sub-centrales*' were present and that, moreover, their representatives were not the elected *sub-central* leaders but simply members of the *sindicatos agrarios* belonging to those *sub-centrales*.

¹⁶ A 'pollera' is a wide gathered skirt which in this region is worn by women who live in town.

¹⁷ Usually the agenda of these meetings was stated in the announcement distributed beforehand. For this meeting there had been two calls issued at different times. The distritation issue had been added at the end of the list in a very last minute way.

Another long discussion followed concerning the validity of the meeting given that almost half of the *sub-centrales* were absent and the fact that those present were not duly represented. Finally they decided, by vote, that the meeting should be postponed. However, since they wanted to know what distritation meant, they were willing to accept PROSANA's suggestion and they would stay for a short information-talk. They would take notes and inform their respective villages. The decision whether the distritation process would or would not take place in Arque was to be taken at the following CIDPA meeting in Tacopaya in June.¹⁸

Observing the dynamics of the meeting, it seemed that the protagonists of the LPP application process were the representatives of state secretaries, PROSANA and Arque's *Central Campesina*, with PROSANA acting as the broker or mediator. The Central's reluctance to have a distritation workshop and the tension that followed revealed its mistrust of anything coming from the government and its ambivalence towards PROSANA. Peasant leaders were willing to consider PROSANA's suggestions and yet seemed to doubt PROSANA's neutrality. Being picky about strictly following a pre-established agenda or about the validity of sub-centrales' representativeness was, for the Central, a way of asserting a position of control to negotiate the terms of the law's application. When, much later, I learned that peasant leaders had been from the outset suspicious and unwilling to address the distritation issue, I realized that by calling off the

¹⁸ Eventually, after two CIDPA meetings during which distritation was further explained and discussed, Arque peasants refused to proceed to a territorial reorganization of the municipalities. In opposing distritation, Arque's Central Campesina was both following the Federation's instructions and asserting a position of power within Arque politics. Moreover, peasant leaders had a well founded fear that distritation would be a source of internal conflicts and stir up a delicate equilibrium. However, since under the new logic of decentralization, a certain territorial organization was necessary, PROSANA's proposed 'spatial planning units' became the de facto units for the planning and implementation of municipal development plans. See chapter 5.

meeting and postponing the distribution workshop they were buying time to make up their minds.¹⁹

What struck me most at that first meeting was the contrast between the active participation of peasant leaders and the disengagement (almost absence) of provincial and municipal authorities. Indeed, the latter remained silent during the whole discussion. They seemed either lost or bored; in either case they did not seem interested in the outcome of the meeting. My first impression based on that first meeting, was that the peasant organization seemed to be in a better position to take advantage of the openings offered by the LPP reforms. I thus (wishfully or naively) thought that they were on the right track to eventually gain control leaving behind the *vecinos* lost in their anachronistic prejudices and their blind ignorance of which they were not even aware. Of course, reality turned out to be more complex and the challenges the peasant organization had to face more difficult.

Indeed, at each step in the shaping of the municipal institutions in compliance with the LPP, the provincial peasant union had to renegotiate its position and find ways to keep its leading role as the main body representing and defending the interests of Arque peasants. Thus, when in August 1996 CIDPA was dissolved and reorganized as the Provincial Council for Popular Participation (CPPA) the presidency of the Council went to the Sub-prefect as stipulated by the law. Because the law did not give any further specifications, the provincial peasant union remained within the presiding table with its leader as vice-president. At the beginning the change did not seem to affect the dynamic

¹⁹ In *The practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau elaborates on a very illuminating distinction between 'strategies' of power and 'tactics' of resistance: "Tactics are procedures that gain validity in relation to the pertinence they lend to time –to the circumstances which the precise instance of an intervention transforms into a favorable situation, ... to the possible intersections of durations and heterogeneous rhythms, etc." (de

of the meetings because the Sub-prefect Felipe Olivera was never actively involved. Thus PROSANA's staff remained in charge of planning and organizing the meetings and Vidal Nuñez, the elected leader of the provincial peasant union in 1996 and 1997, seemed in charge of actually running the meetings.

However, with the change of government after the presidential elections of August 1997, a new Sub-prefect, Alberto Vergara, replaced Felipe Olivera. Alberto Vergara was born in Arque town but had left in the 1970s and had not returned since. Like other emigrated Arque *vecinos* I met during the 1997 October patron-saint town celebration, Alberto Vergara decided to visit again his town of origin when he found out that the LPP (and PROSANA) had brought development funds to the province. Since he was a member of the new political party in power (ADN) he obtained the nomination to the office of Sub-prefect and wanted, as he put it, to "work for my homeland." In his vision, the future of Arque was in revitalizing the mining industry. Unlike Felipe Olivera, Alberto Vergara wanted to assert his authority as Sub-prefect of the province and president of the CPPA. He thus intended to run the CPPA meetings as he best saw fit.

Ignoring the routines already established for these meetings, the new Sub-prefect started the December 1997 CPPA meeting with the national anthem followed by a speech praising the president of Bolivia and the prefect of Cochabamba. He did not know anything about the methodology of participatory planning PROSANA had been applying in Arque since 1995 and did not understand what each step in the planning process entailed. Everybody else, except for him and the few *vecinos* that attended the meeting on his request, came prepared to do the evaluation of the projects planned for 1996 and, on

Certeau 1984: 38). This distinction is particularly pertinent for the analysis of the way in which the distritation process unfolded in Arque.

that basis, elaborate later on the list of projects for 1997 (see chapter 5). Everybody except for him and his *vecino* friends had filled the charter distributed by PROSANA at the previous CPPA meeting and indicated the state of the projects planned for 1996 in their respective villages.

Unaware of the degree to which peasant representatives were committed to follow the planning process as they were accustomed to, Alberto Vergara announced modifications to the agenda of the day: the evaluation would be skipped and they would move into the ‘gathering of demands’ which was the last point of the agenda for the following day. It seemed, from the way he phrased it that he mistook demands (i.e. needs and requests for projects) with claims and denunciations; which clearly showed that he did not know anything about the planning process. At that point Vidal Nuñez intervened to explain that the evaluation could not be skipped because it was the basis for the establishment of future projects. While he was talking, Vidal Nuñez was holding in his hand the evaluation form he had filled and referred to it to make his point. Claiming not to know anything about that form he took the form away from Vidal Nuñez and said that all the information to be discussed in the meeting should have been submitted for his approval beforehand. Vidal Nuñez reminded him that the form had been distributed at the previous meeting, which the Sub-prefect had also attended, and took back the form from the Sub-prefect hands. Losing his temper Alberto Vergara screamed at Vidal Nuñez saying that as the highest authority he would not tolerate such an affront. The more than a hundred peasant representatives got up and asked for a 10 minute recess: the Sub-prefect did not have the right to insult in that way their highest authority, i.e. the leader of Arque’s *Central Campesina*.

When the meeting resumed, peasant representatives named four people to act as the meeting's 'union police' and announced their decision to ask the Sub-prefect to leave the meeting. The few town dwellers seating in the first row protested but quickly left the room when they saw the four 'union police' approaching. Clearly upset, Alberto Vergara also left the room threatening to sue them. All this happened rather quickly and by the time Jorge Lozano tried to intervene to dissipate the tensions, the Sub-prefect was already out of the room and Vidal Nuñez resumed the meeting telling Jorge Lozano, "Don't worry don Jorge, this meeting will continue as planned." And indeed the audience broke into groups and proceeded to evaluate the projects under way in the villages of their respective *sub-centrales*. Later on, under the guidance of the *Federación's* legal advisor, Arque's *Central Campesina* sent a letter to the Prefect of Cochabamba asking him to replace Alberto Vergara. The Prefect did not answer the letter and did not replace the Arque's Sub-prefect.

B. Conflicts within Tacopaya's Municipal Government

The transformations required for municipal governments to operate and assume the extended responsibilities established by the LPP represented a major challenge for remote, small, rural municipalities like Arque's and Tacopaya's. To begin with, in order to receive the 'co-participation funds' municipal governments had to prepare an operational plan with detailed budget for the works to be implemented in a much larger territory. They had to put contracts out for bid, oversee works and projects, submit financial reports, and raise more funds, not to mention carrying out a participatory development planning process. Without electricity, a phone line, or means of

transportation, the town halls of Arque and Tacopaya were completely unprepared for the new tasks. At the beginning PROSANA's staff did most of the work and its offices in Cochabamba became the main center of operations for both municipalities.

Trying to take some distance from PROSANA and function in a more autonomous way, in early 1996, the mayors of Arque and Tacopaya rented a separate office space in the city and hired a secretary, an accountant, and a legal advisor. According to what members of the municipal council of Arque told me in October 1996, they decided to leave PROSANA's offices because they believed the accusations Juan Ortuño, mayor of Tacopaya, made against PROSANA. They later realized the accusations were false and regretted having left so early. They lacked the skills to handle the administration of the new municipal government and had to rely on PROSANA to help them out.

Don Juan made us believe that PROSANA was stealing from us, when we saw them coming we used say, 'there they come the thieves.' So we refused their advice. We thought we would be able to make it on our own. We thought it was just a question of taking the lists of needs the villages had and the yearly operational plan would come out of there easily. But when we tried to do it we didn't even know how to begin. We realized it was not easy at all. The advisor we hired, Deheza, was a disaster, we could not do anything with him. So, after that we had to go back to PROSANA and we talked with Filemon Iriarte, we feel more at ease with him [than with the German director]. Now PROSANA's staff is helping us out and we are doing much better. Next year it will be a different thing because we are learning and PROSANA is helping us hire and train new staff that will work for the municipality.

Indeed, municipal governments performed poorly in 1996. One of the most evident signs was their inability to spend the money in the budget. Another problem was the withdrawal of PROSANA from the direct implementation of projects in peasant villages and its replacement by NGOs new to the region.²⁰ This problem was

²⁰ For the selection of NGOs, PROSANA, in coordination with the municipal governments, put five contracts out for bid (three for Tacopaya and two for Arque). The selected NGOs signed a contract with PROSANA and with the municipal government. PROSANA was in charge of providing technical advise

compounded with the fact that while in 1995 PROSANA had been actively carrying out the construction of irrigation canals, plant nurseries, terraces, and other visible works on the basis of studies conducted in 1994, the projects listed in the 1996 plan were not ready to start, they were ideas of projects that required a previous period of data collection and project design. Peasant villagers were not only disappointed but they also resented the arrival of strangers asking too many questions.²¹

In the case of the municipality of Arque, with PROSANA's help the municipal government was able to put out an emergency plan and disburse the budget implementing works in Arque town between October and December 1996. These works included the construction of a market place, the restoration of Arque's town hall, and the construction of the peasant *Central's* headquarters. Foreseeing possible complaints from peasant villagers (because all the money was being spent in works for the town), the mayor of Arque, following PROSANA's advice, informed the oversight committee and provided peasant representatives with detailed explanations about the reasons for such a decision. Furthermore, the contractors who won the bid hired local workers for all construction works and many villagers benefited from that.

In Tacopaya, the mayor ignored the complaints, refused to give explanations, tried to handle the situation in his own old ways, and tensions escalated. In the monthly meetings of the municipal council Donato Delgado and Vidal Nuñez questioned the mayor's administration, asked for explanations and transparent accounting. In response the mayor marginalized them from the meetings giving them wrong information about

and the municipal government of overseeing the implementation of projects. The contract included an initial three-month trial period.

²¹ The only NGO that did not have that problem was PURISANA because it was formed by *tecnicos* who had worked in PROSANA's field teams. The difficulties they confronted were of another order: they had to

the place and time of the meetings. As Vidal Nuñez told me, the place of the meetings constantly changed between Tacopaya's town hall and the office in Cochabamba without advanced notification. Furthermore, the mayor spread the rumor, among his many godsons in the villages, that Vidal Nuñez could not be legally recognized as municipal councilman because the law did not allow to simultaneously hold a leadership of the peasant Central. This was false information, but the rumor caused doubts and confusion thus undermining the legitimacy of Vidal's authority.

At the CPPA meeting of January 1997 the mayors of Arque and Tacopaya were expected to present the economic report of the budget spent in 1996. While Gregorio Iriarte, mayor of Arque, had prepared—under PROSANA's guidance—detailed written report, Juan Ortuño spoke without papers in vague and general terms (see chapter 5) and left the meeting before it ended thus giving rise to questions and criticisms from the audience. Jorge Lozano intervened to explain that the proper way for CPPA members to voice their complaints was to write a letter to the municipal council asking for a proper economic report. After a couple of weeks of missed public meetings and missed deadlines, the mayor called for a public municipal meeting in Cochabamba city. For the representatives of Tacopaya's peasant *sub-centrales* that was the straw that broke the camel's back. They gathered in Tacopaya, put a lock outside Tacopaya's town hall and sent a message to the municipal council saying that municipal meetings had to take place in Tacopaya and if the mayor was not able to come forward and present his economic report he should be replaced. The response of Juan Ortuño was to hire a lawyer who, in the name of the mayor and of the president of the municipal council, Pascual Rodriguez,

adjust to work with fewer resources and to depend on the approval of Tacopaya's mayor for the renewal of their contract.

initiated the legal procedure to take Donato Delgado, Vidal Nuñez, and three other peasant leaders from Tacopaya to court referring to them as a “marginal subversive group” that did not represent the majority of Tacopaya’s peasants but instigated them to “commit delinquent actions.” Cochabamba’s peasant Federation put its lawyer to work and question the accusations. PROSANA initially hesitated to intervene. However, when PROSANA’s directors realized that the mayor was taking advantage of the crisis to hire his friends without putting the contracts out for bid, they organized meetings with members of the municipal council to discuss possible solutions to the conflict. As for PURISANA, its *tecnicos* did not even want to show up in Tacopaya during the lock out of the town hall; one of them told me later that they could not risk the renewal of their contract with the municipal government. Facing increasing conflicts, in March 1997 Juan Ortuño stepped down from the mayor’s office and supported Hermógenes Alanis, a truck owner, to become mayor. Ortuño was thus able to remain in control as a councilman while dissipating the tensions and preventing Donato Delgado from becoming mayor (see figure 15).

C. Obstacles Faced by Tacopaya’s Oversight Committee

The oversight committee (*comité de vigilancia*) was another innovation of the LPP. Formed by representatives from all districts (one per district) elected by the territorially based organizations (OTBs, i.e. the *sindicatos agrarios*) this committee’s mission is to oversee the conduct of the municipal government and make sure that the projects and works implemented are fairly distributed among all the peasant villages within the municipality. The oversight committee has to sign the municipality’s yearly

operational plan that the municipal government presents to the Bolivian Treasury Department (*Ministerio de Hacienda*) in order to get the co-participation funds. Furthermore, the committee has to follow closely the implementation of the plan and has the right to ask from the municipal council an economic report to verify that the municipal budget is spent according to the approved yearly plan. If the committee observes irregularities and the municipal council fails to solve them, the committee has the right to appeal to higher authorities at the departmental or national levels.

The organization of oversight committees in Arque was facilitated by PROSANA's staff and greatly discussed in the context of CIDPA meetings. At the beginning, members of Arque's peasant union thought of these committees as yet another device to undermine the unity and authority of the peasant organization. Thanks to PROSANA's explanations they eventually agreed and came to see the work of this committee as part of the work the peasant union had to learn to do in the new context defined by the LPP. The election of oversight committees took place during CIDPA meetings, issues concerning the committee's work were discussed during CIDPA meetings, and PROSANA trained the elected members to perform the committee's duties. Because of the lack of financial support and the lack of means of communication within the province the oversight committees of Arque and Tacopaya faced many difficulties. Living in distant villages, committee members could neither meet frequently nor visit all the villages to verify that planned projects were being properly carried out. After several resignations, re-elections, re-organizations and with the steady support of PROSANA, by the end of 1996 the Arque's and Tacopaya's oversight committees were beginning to function.

When at the beginning of 1997, Tacopaya's mayor repeatedly failed to provide a detailed economic report, Celso Vargas, president of Tacopaya's oversight committee, discussed with Jorge Lozano and Johnny Zambrana about the legal steps to follow in order to report the problem to higher authorities. In fact, the legislation was not very clear and different sets of regulations stipulated different and even contradictory procedures. In short, while the regulations attached to the LPP stipulated that oversight committees should appeal to the national government in La Paz, the regulations attached to the law of administrative decentralization promulgated a year after stipulated that oversight committees should appeal to the government of their respective Department, and more specifically to the Departmental Council (*Consejo Departamental*) (see figure 4.1). After several consultations with legal advisers, Jorge Lozano and Johnny Zambrana told Celso Vargas that the best way was to follow the latest regulations, i.e. send a letter (submit a written report) to the Departmental Council, which Celso Vargas did with the unofficial help of PROSANA's staff.

At that time I was living in Totora Pampa, but I had hired an assistant in Cochabamba city to do archival research in the prefecture's library locating documents of the old regional development corporation. Since I knew that the monthly meetings of the Departmental Council were semi-officially open to the public, I asked my assistant to attend the meeting during which the letter from Tacopaya's oversight committee would be discussed. According to my assistant's report, the letter caused a half-hour discussion concerning the legality of the procedure: most council members did not know regulations and thought that such matters were not part of the council's attributions. When they finally decided to postpone the discussion of the letter until the next meeting, the Prefect

of Cochabamba, who presided over the council, said that he did not think the letter truly represented the views of Tacopaya's oversight committee. Since it was written in good Spanish and clearly typed in a computer it could not have been written by a peasant; he thus suspected the letter to be the product of external activists who manipulate the peasantry for their own political agenda. Tacopaya's oversight committee never received an answer to the letter.

The above described tensions within the new LPP shaped institutions (CPPA, municipal council, and oversight committee) constitute three instances of confrontations between peasant villagers closely related to the provincial peasant union and town dwellers closely related to those small landowners or political leaders who, as members of the political party that implemented the agrarian reform (MNR) formed the post 1952 local political elite. Showing the resilience of the old order, the three cases discussed reveal the intricate ways in which tensions between peasant villagers and town dwellers along representations of the rural / urban divide overlap with tensions along underlying representations of the colonial Indian / non-Indian divide and the post-colonial disenfranchised indigenous communities / citizens of the Bolivian nation divide.

IV. Conclusion

In this chapter I have described some key differences between the municipal schemes before and after the LPP (1990's decentralization reforms) and discussed the socio political reconfigurations that resulted from these reforms in the province of Arque. First, I have argued that by supporting the consolidation of the peasant organization at the

provincial level PROSANA played a key role in the reconfiguration of power relations between the large majority of peasant villagers and the small group of town dwellers who until then had tried to control the region. As the transformations brought about by the law became more established and as the confrontations between “town dwellers” and the peasant organization took a more overtly political tone, PROSANA’s role shifted from sided support to the peasant organization to a neutral mediator that tried to minimize tensions.

Second, while opening new spaces for the political participation of peasant villagers the transformations brought about by the LPP tended to limit the political power of peasant union organizations, especially at the supra-village level. After the LPP, Arque’s *Central Campesina* had to confront serious challenges when trying to occupy the new spaces opened by the law as a unified body representing the interests of all peasant villages. Third, the process of implementation of the LPP was a site of contestation where every step was susceptible to contradictory interpretations and where old social / racial / ethnic tensions were recast in new terms thus revealing the persistence of colonial race/ethnic hierarchies as the foundation of forms of inter-subjective relations of power. Put differently, these tensions and differences are to be understood within a frame constituted through the superposition of different historical constructions of categorical identities and representations of class and ethnic/race relations. I further argue that this superposition is condensed around the articulation between being a citizen of the state and belonging to the mestizo nation (see introduction for the discussion of Quijano’s concept of colonality of power).

Many supporters of the LPP and the New Bolivia reforms celebrated the emphasis put on democratization and the strengthening of civil society and criticized the vertical and hierarchical character of union organization in Bolivia. They suggested that the fact that in Bolivia all peasant unions belong to one national peasant confederation and that all labor and peasant unions come together under the banner of the confederation of Bolivian workers (COB) was a sign of a weak civil society. These supporters of the new Bolivia reforms thought that in a democratic and strong civil society labor and peasant unions are just one more form of grassroots organization and should not aim at being part of the 'political society' and just be part of a strong civil society with multiple and diverse local organizations. As a general ideal, who could question this view? However, such an assessment of labor and peasant unions fails to take into account the specific meaning and purposes these organizations have in the local contexts where they exist and take shape. In the case of Arque, the consolidation of a peasant union unified at the provincial level and attached to the departmental peasant federation allowed Arque peasant villagers to achieve a certain degree of autonomy from abusive patron-client relations by a small local power elite. As fragmented peasant villages outside the structure of the union organization they could not have achieved that autonomy. The challenge of keeping the strength and unity of the peasant union organization and occupying the spaces opened by the LPP as a unified union was confronted in different ways in different regions of Bolivia. In El Chapare, representatives of the peasant *Centrales* were elected to all the positions in the municipal governments. In Arque, it was a never-ending struggle.

CHAPTER FIVE

PLANNING METHODOLOGIES AND THE PROCESS OF PARTICIPATORY PLANNING IN ARQUE

Symbolic power, the power to constitute the given by stating it, to act upon the world by acting upon the representation of the world, does not reside in 'symbolic systems' in the form of an "illocutionary force.' It is defined in and by a definite relation that creates belief in the legitimacy of the words and of the person who utters them, and it operates only inasmuch as those who undergo it recognize those who wield it. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:148)

De reunion en reunion y de asamblea en asamblea nos van a ir llevando por su camino. (From meeting to meeting they will lead us into their path.)
(Comment by a leader of Arque's peasant organization at the CIDPA meeting of August 1996:)

I. Introduction

In previous chapters I identified the conceptual shift from 'developees as beneficiaries' to 'developees as agents' of development. In this chapter, I will explore the ways in which these new orientations were enacted in the specific practices of development interventions. I will focus on one particular aspect central to development since its inception, namely planning. First, I will briefly describe the different approaches to planning corresponding to the different development trends since the 50's and discuss how the connections between planning – research – participation came into being within the development industry (section II). The rest of the chapter will be devoted to analyzing the implementation of a 'participatory planning' process in Arque. Through a description of the different stages, I will show how this process, which started before the passing of the LPP, shifted in the context of the new framework established by the law, and will suggest that since then planning development is becoming a market for the

supply and demand of development. Finally, focusing on three particular instances (the first organizing – planning workshops, the community surveys, and the evaluation – planning meetings) I will explore the ways in which local actors are (or not) becoming ‘agents of their development’ and the meanings of participatory development planning’ as shaped by the interactive practices of developers and developpees.

II. From Top-Down to Bottom-Up: A Brief History of Planning Modalities within Development Agencies

In his discussion of the central role planning technologies and practices have played within the development enterprise since its inception, Arturo Escobar holds that

“The history of development in the post-World War II period is, in many ways, the history of the institutionalization and ever more pervasive deployment of planning. The process was facilitated time after time by successive development ‘strategies’. From the emphasis on growth and national planning in the 1950s, to the Green Revolution and sectorial and regional planning of the 1960s and ‘70s, including ‘Basic Needs’ and local level planning in the ‘70s and ‘80s to environmental planning for ‘sustainable development’ and planning to ‘incorporate’ women, or the grassroots, into development in the ‘80s, the scope and vaulting ambitions of planning have not ceased to grow” (Escobar 1992: 137).

Along this history, as development orientations shifted, conceptual and methodological approaches to planning also underwent a few transformations.¹

¹ The scientific modality of social planning— or, scientific social planning—advocated here has had a long history, one that, according to Friedman (1987), can be traced back to the 18th century idea that “scientifically based knowledge could actually be applied to society’s improvement (pp. 51-52). This was already present in Jeremy Bentham’s 1789 work, and was further developed by Saint Simon, “the father of scientific planning.” Through his concept of social physiology, Saint Simon proposed the model of a society ruled by an elite of scientists, engineers, bankers, and artists who, familiar with “society’s organic laws” would set out its future course “according to a comprehensive plan” (ibid). By the 19th century there were two standpoints on this topic, the conservative one alluded to above and also a more radical perspective on planning characterized by the work of such thinkers as Proudhon and Marx. A central difference between these two standpoints is that the conservative holds the members of the ruling class as the planners and guides of social scientific change, whereas the message of radical planning was addressed to “the carrier of revolutionary struggle, the urban proletariat” (p. 53). Despite this difference both believed in scientific social planning as “the” correct means for progress. Since then, proliferation of planning traditions has operated between these two poles. “Conservative and radical traditions

Between the 1950s and the 1970s, development planning was seen as a scientific endeavor to be undertaken by development experts working in the headquarters of international aid agencies, as well as those responsible for advising Third World policy makers. According to these development experts, the problems of development could be framed as a lack of ‘planning, saving, and training’ (UN 1962: 2). Further, from this standpoint, planning was not viewed as a mere problem frame as such, but also as the central means toward the solution for all these problems thus framed. A United Nations document, illustrating this perspective on planning and development, held that

the ground has been cleared for a non doctrinaire consideration of the real problems of development, namely saving, training and planning, and for action on them ... Careful development planning can be a potent means of mobilizing ... latent resource for a rational solution of the problems involved. (In Escobar 1992: 136 from United Nations 1962: 2, 10)

Also significant in here is the belief that planning of a rational modality is a neutral, objective, scientific approach that by its very nature clears the grounds of the biases that had previously stood in the path of development. As Escobar (1992:132) notes, this perspective regarding ‘Third World development’ was grounded in “the idea that poor countries could move more or less smoothly along the path of progress through

of planning thought were thus established early on. The actual realization of scientific planning as a technique for guiding social progress would take another century. Inaugurated with production planning during the war years, 1914-1918, it came into regular use with the installation of the Soviet planning system in the 1920s. Although other forms of planning, such as urban design, piecemeal social reforms, and administrative city planning, can be found from the middle of the 19th century onward, they did not as yet embody a scientific practice. Long shadows of this conception, such as the faith in a meritocracy of scientific and technical elites (Tugwell 1975), in an objective social knowledge (Popper 1975), in the possibilities of a directed process of societal change (Etzioni 1968), and in the ultimate harmony of social relations fine-tuned to an ever widening social consensus (Habermas 1979), reach down to this day.” (Friedman, 1987: 53)

For Friedman (1987), after WWII, along with triumph of technical reason, the major planning traditions that we know until today came into being. Friedman offers a typology of 4 major categories: social reform, policy analysis, social learning, and social mobilization. The two first are closer to the conservative pole while the two last ones are closer to the radical pole. As he points out, however, the actual practice of planning has often consisted of a combination of different elements from these different traditions. Following his classification, we could say that development planning between the 50s and the

planning.” For Escobar, this assumption regarding the relationship between rational-scientific planning and development “has always been held as an indubitable truth, an axiomatic belief in need of no demonstration, by development experts of most persuasions” (ibid). Escobar argues further that “the application of scientific and technical knowledge to the public domain, planning lent legitimacy to, and fueled hopes about, the development enterprise” (ibid). That is, it was believed that the scientific approach, inasmuch as it is objective and non-biased, provided a newfound legitimacy for the deployment of development interventions (through the creation of institutions and the hiring of experts to design and implement development projects) in the ‘Third World.’

As the institutionalization of planning expanded, development experts working in both national and international planning offices became charged with the task of the application of scientific knowledge to the conception and design of programs and projects. While major orientations and strategies were circumscribed at the highest levels, these standpoints and problem frames impacted development planners or technicians serving this development establishment in such a manner that they adopted and enacted planning methods based on rational decision-making models, systems analysis, and operations research theories. This institutionalization of rational-scientific planning gave rise to the establishment of standard frames /models for the process, thereby setting up standard, pre-set slots to be filled and offering ‘the’ logical steps to be followed in the design of a development program. These steps usually comprised the identification of a problem, the analysis of its causes and possible solutions, the definition of measurable and quantifiable goals, as well as the delineation of specific and cost-efficient activities

70s was a combination of social reform and policy analysis while the critics and new development planning methods developed since the 80s have drawn on the traditions of social learning and social mobilization.

/tasks to reach those goals. Through the rational magic of this science, the complex realities of 'underdevelopment' could be represented as a series of discrete problems to be solved through discrete and carefully delineated development programs.²

Within this approach, the development expert's role was central, and planning was based on the expert's knowledge, this knowledge generated through 'scientific' research and embodied in expert project design. Hence it can be argued that the development expert was now one of the pivotal and concrete expressions of the power/knowledge regime constituting the power asymmetries marking the relationship between developed and underdeveloped. Underlying this conception of 'scientific knowledge' is the assumption that an active, scientific subject/knower sees the 'truth' about a passive known object, and thus produces 'objective' knowledge about it. The representation of reality that this knowledge thus generated became the basis for planned interventions through development programs and projects.³

When in the 1970s World Bank experts recognized the failure of economic growth to trickle down to the poor new strategies were brought to bear to address the

² These standard frames produced very standard representations of 'underdeveloped' countries. The pictures of these countries that emerge from development reports are so similar that one is tempted to think that the only thing that was changed in the text of different country reports was the name of the country (see, for example, Ferguson's extensive analysis of the 1975 World Bank development report on Lesotho, Ferguson 1994: 25-73).

³ Pointing to the "violence of seemingly neutral modes of representation" and to the links between representation and power, Escobar (1992: 139-140) holds that, "All of these rhetorical devices that reflect the 'normal' perceptions of the planner contribute to obscure the fact that it is precisely the peasants' increasing integration into the modern economy that is at the root of many of their problems. Even more fundamentally, these statements, which become translated into reality through planning, reproduce the world as the developers know it—a world composed of production and markets, of 'traditional' and 'modern' or developed and underdeveloped sectors, of the need for aid and investment by multinationals. (...) In short, planning ensures a functioning of power that relies on, and helps to produce, a type of reality which is certainly not that of peasants, while peasant cultures and struggles are rendered invisible." (139) (...) "As a system of representation, planning thus depends on making people forget the origins of its historical mediation. This invisibility of history and mediation is accomplished through a series of particular practices. Planning relies upon, and proceeds through, various practices regarded as rational or objective, but which are in fact highly ideological and political."

problematic of poverty alleviation. Oriented toward integrated rural development and the identification of basic human needs, these strategies explicitly targeted the ‘poor’ and expanded development interventions to cover new arenas such as “education, health, nutrition, housing, family planning and rural development” (Escobar 1992: 138). Furthermore, this shift also opened the doors of development agencies to social scientists. As expressed by a senior World Bank social scientist, “for the first time the concept of ‘target group’—the poor, those with an income below the absolute or relative threshold of poverty—was brought to bear upon project strategies. With it came the need to define the target group, the social actor, the beneficiaries (...) of development” (Cernea 1991:2).

The changes triggered by the new orientation noted above, together with increasingly widespread criticism pointing toward the inefficiency of development bureaucratic / technocratic approaches, contributed to a revision of development research, planning, and project design methodologies. By the early 1980s, one of the main criticisms voiced by NGOs and academic institutions of development studies was concerned with the vertical (top-down) character of planning and designing development programs and projects.⁴ This criticism was based on two related premises. First, there was the idea that development experts living in the ‘first world’ (or ‘third world’ urban settings) could not ‘know’ the realities of third world poor (or rural poor). Therefore the programs and projects they designed from afar were doomed to inadequacy in respect to the successful framing and solution the complex problems of the poor (or rural poor).⁵ Closely interconnected to this was the idea that failure of previous development projects

⁴ For example, the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex, GB and the influential book by Robert Chambers (1983): *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*

⁵ In the words of one of the main ideologues of this position, “The direct rural experience of most urban-based outsiders is limited to the brief and hurried visits, from urban centers, of rural development tourism.

was partly due to the lack of participation of the local population supposed its beneficiaries. Annis (1987: 25) notes that now “the long term ‘sustainability’ of projects [was] closely linked to active, informed participation by the poor.”

Majid Rahnema traces the appearance of the terms ‘participation’ and ‘participatory’ within the jargon of development back to late 1950’s. Until the 70’s, however, the usage of these terms was limited to “social activists and fieldworkers” who maintained a critical position outside development agencies. It is only by the late 70’s, after McNamara’s recognition that growth was not reaching the poor, that “a word that had been systematically discarded earlier by economists, planners and politicians, suddenly lost its earlier subversive connotation” (Rahnema 1992:117).⁶ An explicit interest in the idea of ‘participation’ was expressed by some UN (e.g. FAO) and European development agencies during the early 1980’s (e.g. the Swedish). In her study about Swedish development agencies, Evers Rosander (1992: 65) argues that ‘people’s participation,’ a central concept in the Swedish rural development strategy outlined in 1981, had mainly a rhetorical value, thereby confirming the Swedish’ “self-image as democratic and generous people” and increasing their “willingness to give money.”

Interviewing development experts and fieldworkers at different sites –from Sweden to Africa—and at different levels of the professional hierarchy, Rosander (1992:62) found that

At one end of the development continuum are the Stockholm headquarters programme officers who are ideologically the most committed to the programme’s participatory

(...) As a result, the poorer rural people are little seen and even less is the nature of their poverty understood.” Chambers 1983:2

⁶ Rahnema gives 6 reasons for this sudden official, mainstream interest in participation: 1) the concept is no longer perceived as a threat because governments have learned to control the risk of ‘unruly’ participation; 2) it has become a politically attractive slogan; 3) It is seen as economically advantageous, 4) more cost efficient; 5) it is used as a fund raising device; and 6) it can even be expanded to include the ‘participation’ of the private sector in the development business. Rahnema 1992: 117 – 120)

ambitions. They are also most inclined to delegate the concerns with people's participation to others, especially to the socio-economists and the ideology elaborators. At the other extreme we found the experts—excluding the socio-economists—who state that they pay little attention to ideological or 'theoretical' prescriptions about participatory issues in their daily work, but instead rely on their own professional ability.

Whatever the meaning that 'local participation' was given by the different actors involved in the development enterprise, and whatever the function the concept had in the different contexts in which it was used, the decade of the 80s saw the proliferation of a variety of initiatives, experiences, debates and publications dealing with 'participatory' approaches for the research, planning, design and implementation of development projects. Such approaches were at the core of the alternative visions of development defended by many NGOs, for whom, the application of participatory action-research methods or group discussion techniques—based on popular education methods—was part of their construction of a distinctive identity, one standing in opposition to mainstream, technocratic development agencies financed by multilateral or bilateral donors. For the social scientists employed in those NGO's, the production of documentation that demonstrates the advantages of the participation of local populations and the elaboration of guidelines regarding the design and enactment of this involvement process was also pivotal to their identity and, more importantly, their usefulness in relation to what they viewed as reluctant colleagues.⁷

One cannot help but notice the irony involved in their double task: to demonstrate the uniqueness of their expertise and to demonstrate the importance of recognizing the

⁷ "[A]ccelerating development through planned interventions often runs the risk of creating social imbalances. (...) [S]uch risks are aggravated when planning is guided by technocratic or econocentric models, which typically overlook social and cultural variables. Using social science knowledge and analytical methods in designing project strategies can minimize such risks.' (Cernea 1991: 1) This type of statements that apparently aim at convincing a reluctant audience of the usefulness of social science knowledge abound specially in the documents produced by social scientists working at the World Bank.

‘agency’ of the local population involved in a development project, as illustrated in the following statements taken from a World Bank document (Cernea 1991).

The systematic use of social knowledge, as a complement to economic and technical knowledge, is indispensable for “putting people first” in planned development interventions.” (...) “The argument of this paper is that the model adopted in projects that do not put people first clashes with the model intrinsic to the real social process of development, at the core of which are—simply--its actors. Putting people first is a reversal because it proposes another starting point in the planning and design of projects than that taken by current technology centered approaches. This specific “reversal” demands to identify—in every single technical, financial, or administrative intervention—the sociological angle and the variables pertinent to the social organization affected or targeted by intervention. This is why putting people first is not a simple metaphor, but rather a tall demand to restructure the approach to planning (pp. 8 - 9).

A case in point which demonstrates the acute demand for social action methodologies, is the impasse with participatory planning for rural development. Among obstacles is also the absence of a methodology for organizing people’s participation. Now we often hear sudden declarations of fashionable support for participatory approaches from politicians, planners, economists and technocrats. Social scientists should not confuse these approaches with actual participatory planning because, under the cloud of cosmetic rhetoric, technocratic planning continues to rule (p. 32).

The social engineering action model is rooted in knowledge of the social fabric and dynamics. It postulates the translation of social science knowledge into new know-how and change tools, and it uses this knowledge purposively to organize new social action and relationships. (...) [S]ocial knowledge is increasingly usable as a guide to plan and as a means to democratize the planning process itself by facilitating broader participation in it of the development actors themselves. Social engineering is being used anyway by technocrats, if it is given to social scientists it will be done properly (pp. 37-38).

It is worth noting that social scientists in European agencies, especially those of northern Europe, e.g. Germans, Swedish, Danish and Dutch, are more careful in choosing their terms, and never use a term as loaded as “social engineering.” In documents published in the 1990s, the term used would instead be that of ‘facilitation.’ However, the boldness of Cernea’s statements reveals the nature of the expertise social scientists claim to have: the “know-how,” or the “tools” to “organize people’s participation,” and “social action.” Who is then first? The people who are put first or the experts who put people first? From this position of unique expertise, social scientists have produced endless ideological documents (like the one cited above) and increasingly sophisticated methodological guidelines laying out the steps to follow and the techniques to use in

order to trigger local participation. In this endeavor they have drawn greatly upon the experiences of NGOs, and the work (methodological systematization) produced by applied anthropologists and sociologists in academic institutes of development studies.

At the beginning—in the late 70s early 80s—these participatory approaches were mainly concerned with research regarding rural development, and aimed at the involvement of local peasants / farmers in the process of data collecting. Calling for a “reversal in learning” and the recognition of “rural people’s own knowledge,” Robert Chambers (1983: 75) challenged “outside professionals to step down off their pedestals, and sit down, listen and learn.” In this context, applied social scientists put together a series of ‘packages’ or ‘tool-kits’ containing methods and techniques for collecting and analyzing participatory data and for eliciting local technical knowledge. Often inspired on the methods of anthropological fieldwork, these ‘packages’ included analytical games, map drawing, and other techniques of visual communication especially designed for illiterate audiences.⁸ Throughout the decade, new approaches were developed aiming at the expansion of participation such that it included project design and implementation. For example, Latin American experiences in respect to popular education inspiring in Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed greatly contributed to what came to be known as the ‘action research’ approach. Combining Freire’s pedagogy and Dewey’s pragmatic epistemology –“learning by doing”—action research ideologues strongly defend the idea that knowledge is derived from experience, and validated or tested and warranted in practice.

⁸ One of the first and most widely known is perhaps RRA, i.e. Rapid Rural Appraisal, but the list is endless: Farming System Research, Participatory Technology Development, Rapid Assessment Procedures, Rapid Ethnographic Assessment, Community Baseline Studies, Consultation and Popular Participation Approach, etc. For a description of methods and bibliographical references see Schonhuth and Kievelitz 1994.

By the 1990s, the debate among social scientists working in development had shifted from a concern with involving local beneficiaries in development projects to a concern with ‘facilitating’ the process through which local people would become ‘agents of their own development.’ Thus, for example, Uwe Kievelitz—a social scientist at the German agency GTZ—wrote in 1991 that after “development from above” and “development from below,” “we are entering the stage of a paradigm of development from inside.” By ‘development from inside’ he meant “understanding development to be undertaken by the actors in society themselves, whereby external aid undertakes mainly a catalyzing and facilitating role in terms of socio-organizational processes” (Kievelitz 1991:10). Probably in response to the needs of the changing paradigm, he later edited together with Schonhuth a book discussing participatory learning approaches and describing the different techniques and methods used by different ‘schools.’ Presenting the advantages of a new approach, ‘Participatory Rural Appraisal,’ Schonhuth and Kievelitz draw the following comparison:

	Rapid Rural Appraisal RRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal PRA
developed in	Late 1970’s / 1980’s	late 1980’s / 1990’s
key resource	local people’s knowledge	local people’s (analytical) capabilities
main innovations	Methods	change of behavior and attitudes
mode	Extractive	Facilitating
mode of instruments	verbal (interview, discussion)	visual (particip-diagramming)
ideal objectives	learning from insiders by outsiders	Empowerment of local people
outsider’s role	Investigator	initiator and catalyst
insider’s role	Respondent	presenter. analyst and planner
a model	for participatory intervention	for interaction
who demands?	donor organization	insiders (ideally)

(Schonhuth and Kievelitz 1994: 13)

This synoptic table illustrates the conceptual and terminological shifts in the rhetoric of participatory development planning during the last 20 years. A rhetoric which by the 1990s was widely shared by all sorts of development experts working with all modalities of development institutions (governmental and non governmental, national and international), both in the 'first world' and in the 'third world.' Thus, these views and debates were also shared among NGOs in Bolivia throughout the 80's. In chapter 2 I discussed the process through which NGOs gradually changed their activities from providing support to grassroots organizations to implementing development projects on behalf of government and international development agencies. It is in that context that Bolivian social scientists, development experts, and NGO activists engaged in debates very similar to the ones I described above, and thereby engaged in the practices and the rhetoric of participatory development planning. In 1993 some of these experts were recruited by the government agencies in charge of formulating social policy, whereby they incorporated their views, experiences, and rhetoric into the design of the regulations and methodological guidelines that accompanied the application of the Popular Participation Law. In the following sections I will discuss the ways in which these new development-planning orientations were enacted in the 'participatory development planning process' carried out in Arque between 1993 and 1997.

III. Participatory Development Planning in Arque

It is not surprising that, given the context above described, local participation and participatory approaches were also a central concern for PROSANA. As Jorge Lozano wrote in a report about the history of the planning process in Arque,

Experience has demonstrated that the participation of the beneficiaries as subjects or protagonists in the processes aiming to achieve their own development leads to the success of [development] programs and projects. Knowing that experience, the Program for Nutritional Security (PROSANA), when initiating its activities in the Arque Province, decided to promote a participatory process from its very first stage denominated orientation phase. (PROSANA 1997c: 1)⁹

How did PROSANA's *técnicos* see participation and how did they proceed to do it or to get it? Indeed, 'to get local participation' is probably a more accurate expression to characterize the paradox framing 'participatory development.'

When PROSANA's *técnicos* started working in Arque in 1991, they selected 10 pilot communities to implement development projects in agro-ecology, education, health, and organizing. As described by the *técnicos* I interviewed, the relationships that they established with the local population at that early stage was largely limited to an exchange between a "provider of services" and the "users of services" (PROSANA 1997c). A bilateral agreement was reached between PROSANA and the 'community', or more accurately, with village leaders and other villagers attending the meeting organized by PROSANA. The agreement stipulated the terms of the exchange: usually the institution would provide the materials and the experts, and the 'community' would provide the labor. Beyond that there was a wall of silence and mistrust.

These mistrustful silent peasants were not the participatory "actors," "protagonists of their own development," that PROSANA had envisioned for their participatory development process. How might they overcome this unexpected obstacle? How might

⁹ This quote is taken from the opening paragraph of a report prepared by the sociologist in charge of PROSANA's social unit – Unidad de Fortalecimiento Institucional. The case of PROSANA confirms what Rosanders (1992) already identified in her study of Swedish development aid, i.e. that "the responsibility for participatory issues is delegated to the [social scientists] recruited for the purpose" (64). It is worth noting that while the development literature of the 80s points to the 'lack of participation' as a cause for projects' failures, here we learn that it has already been demonstrated that 'participation' guarantees their

they confront this pivotal challenge? The strategy chosen to promote the emergence of local participatory actors consisted of strengthening Arque's peasant grassroots organization. In the section of this chapter to follow below, I will focus on the connections or relationships between peasant organizing and development planning. Indeed, at the beginning, by supporting the consolidation of the peasant organization, PROSANA's *técnico* sought to lay the foundations for some form of participatory planning. Many of the events leading to the formation of the Central Campesina Provincial were also the occasion to address development issues. As I will show shortly, between 1991 and 1994, i.e. before the promulgation of the LPP, organizing and planning were carried out as complementary processes. I will argue that in spite of the *técnicos'* intentions, organizing and planning were de-linked in the aftermath of the law's application.

PROSANA's *técnicos* began by gathering information about the different forms of grassroots organization, both at the peasant village and supra-village levels. At the village level they identified two forms of organization; 'ethnic' or 'traditional' authority system consisting of *jilankus* and *alcaldes de campo* and the *organización sindical* (peasant unions). While the latter was present in all 178 communities, although with different degrees of cohesion, the former was mainly found in the higher parts of the province; that is, typically further away from the fertile valleys where hacienda owners had more closely watched farming in the past. At the supra-village level, the *organización sindical* prevailed and ethnic authority systems had little relevance (with very few exceptions; cf. Totorá Pampa in chapter 6). However, most supra-community

success. This passage illustrates not only the ideological value of participation rhetoric, but it also shows that 'local participation' has become an area of expertise and intervention.

level organizations were either not functioning or totally subordinated to abusive town-patrons. This was precisely one of the reasons for the prioritization of the promotion a strong peasant organization. According to experts and leaders, the decision to support the consolidation of the *organización sindical* and address it as the main grassroots interlocutor for development planning was made by peasant village representatives in one of the early workshops that PROSANA organized.

In October 1993 PROSANA held, in collaboration with the Cochabamba's peasant union federation, the first provincial meeting / workshop regarding peasant organization. As stated in the proceedings, the event's objectives were to identify the "current forms of organization in the Arque Province" and to launch the "organizational process that could provide all Arque peasants with a single peasant organization at the provincial level, a single *Central* well organized, articulated and representative." (PROSANA 1993b: 1). The first objective was clearly PROSANA's, the second the federation's.

The ad-hoc committee elected at that occasion organized—with the support of PROSANA and the *Federación*—Arque's first *Congreso Campesino* or first peasant conference. This meeting was held in Arque in early December 1993. The 224 peasant village representatives that attended the event elected the first executive committee thereby creating the *Central Campesina de la Provincia de Arque*, along with its 22 *sub-centrales* (the number of sub-centrales constantly shifted around this number depending on who drew the list). In mid December, PROSANA organized the first planning workshop inviting representatives of the newly formed peasant organization, including leaders of the *sub-centrales*, to present their demands. Also attending were

representatives of development institutions, so as to provide a description of the modalities of development work they were doing, or would be able to do. According to the organizers, this was a first attempt to gather in a systematic way the “peasant demand” and to present the “institutional supply;” this being a first step in a long process of negotiation aiming to match development institutional supply and peasants’ demands (PROSANA 1997c: 12).

One decision made at this event was to establish an institutional frame for this process to take place. The *Consejo Interinstitucional para el Desarrollo de la Provincia de Arque* or the Inter-institutional Council for the Development of Arque Province (CIDPA) was founded at the meeting called by the Central Campesina with the support of PROSANA in March of 1994. CIDPA was constituted by the executive committee of the Central Campesina, the leaders of the 22 subcentrales, the provincial *sub-prefecto*, the mayors of Arque and Tacopaya, representatives of the regional state offices of education and health, the priests of Arque and Tacopaya parishes, representatives of PROSANA, and representatives of the two NGOs working in the province at that time. One of the pivotal founding regulations was that the presidency would be permanently held by Arque’s *Central Campesina*. PROSANA’s experts considered this outcome as an “almost historic opportunity” for peasants to be in a position from which “they could use a democratic power to decide over their own development” (ibid: 14). By supporting the creation of CIDPA and committing itself to provide peasant leaders with training, legal information, and technical support, PROSANA sought to contribute to make of Arque peasants the ‘agents of their own development.’

Another important outcome of the first planning workshop was the realization that the demand expressed at this supra-village level was not specific enough, and that it was therefore necessary to undertake ‘participatory planning’ at the village level. Thus emerged the idea of the *carpetas comunales*, i.e. files containing information about the main characteristics of a peasant village and a list of their development demands. The idea was that each village should fill its ‘community file’ in a participatory manner, and a central challenge for PROSANA was that of the successful implementation of this idea in all the 178 communities of the province. The promulgation of the LPP in April 1994 and, more specifically, the programs and regulations launched by the Bolivian government to support the law’s implementation, enabled PROSANA to meet this challenge. However, as we will show later, while lending legitimacy to the ‘participatory’ planning process initiated by PROSANA, these reforms also involved important shifts. That is, in becoming ‘municipal participatory development planning’ by state mandate, the roles and positions of the people involved changed and thereby the planning process already in place took on new meanings.

In mid 1994, the municipalities of Arque and Tacopaya were selected as part of the 92 pilot municipalities—supported by the National Secretary of Rural Development—to prepare a five-year development plan following a methodology of participatory development planning.¹⁰ PROSANA was selected, and funded as the ‘entidad ejecutora’ in charge of carrying out the task, following the methodological guidelines provided by the above noted State Secretary. PROSANA’s *técnicos* linked the process as they had been conducting it to the methodological guidelines provided by the

SNDR. In three months they were able to conduct community surveys, to fill up the community files, prioritize community demands at CIDPA meetings, and prepare the Plan de Desarrollo de la Provincia de Arque, a thick 463 page document (CIDPA – PROSANA 1994).

According to LPP regulations, the '*Planes Operativos Anuales*' (POAs) or Yearly Operational Plans that each municipality submits in order to obtain funds (*'fondos de co-participacion'*) should derive from the five-year development plan. Participatory development planning—as defined in the methodological guidelines of the SNDR—should be a continuous process of design, following up of implementation, evaluation of progress, and redesign, or the making of adjustments in respect to its various components in light of the findings of the evaluation. The planning meetings I attended during my fieldwork concerned the evaluation and preparation of yearly operational plans (POAs).

In PROSANA's eyes, this participatory planning process, initiated independently and then continued in compliance with the new State mandate, was a smooth continuum. Yet, my analysis of the process as it took place in Arque reveals, as opposed to the standpoint of PROSANA on this matter, significant shifts or ruptures in the participatory planning. In what follows below, I will focus on three moments of this process to identify points of rupture and explore the implications of these shifts. These three moments are: the pre-LPP organizing – planning events of 1993, the post-LPP community surveys conducted in 1994, and the evaluation-planning meetings held in 1996-1997.

¹⁰ As mentioned in chapter 3, this was part of the rural communities development program (PDCR) financed through a loan from the World Bank. PROSANA won the bid and thus got the funds to elaborate the 5-year development plan for the Arque Province.

IV. The Shaping of a Peasant Development Demand

As mentioned above, peasant organizing and development planning were linked from the beginning in PROSANA's strategy to make of Arque peasants 'agents of their own development.' Discussion regarding the ways in which peasants viewed the development of their province was on the agenda of all meetings from the very start. During the first two organizing meetings (the first peasant 'congress' and the first planning seminar), the discussion consisted of the identification of problems and the generation of proposed solutions for these same problems. However, the ways of framing the discussion varied significantly between these two events. Comparing the **problems and solutions** identified at the *Primer Congreso Campesino* held in early December 1993 and the **list of development demands** resulting from the *Primer Seminario de Planificación* held in mid December 1993 will shed light on the nature of the differences between these two events.

A. Arque's First Peasant Conference (*Congreso Campesino*)

At this very first organizing meeting, participants were divided into *comisiones*, or groups, each formed by representatives of different communities for the purpose of discussion of specific themes. The themes were defined according to the following categories: política sindical y naciones originarias (union politics and originary nations – footnote); cuestiones orgánicas (union organic structure); social issues: education, health, culture, coca; transportation and communications; economy; land and territory; institutions; and natural disasters. The conclusions of each group were then presented in a plenary session, and forwarded for approval or modification.

In the case of the groups dealing with overtly political issues, the conclusions resembled political manifestos expressing the official position of the peasant movement. For example, the document presented by the ‘comision de política sindical y naciones originarias’ reads as follows:

Whereas

Since the Spanish conquest we have been humiliated and exploited, our culture has been subordinated and humiliated;

Independence has not meant liberation for the legitimate children of this earth and the Agrarian Reform, even though it freed us from the control of the landowners has not brought economic liberation but rather has resulted in political *pongueaje* [servitude] particularly in the case of the peasant military pact;

Current neo-liberal policies try to introduce new foreign solutions with the so-called Plan for All that will only benefit to the rich, while for the peasants it will mean the same poverty and misery,

We resolve:

1. To reject political parties be they of the left or the right.
2. To continue working in the construction of the political instrument of the First Nations.
3. To reject the political interference of *yankis* [USA policy makers] who aim to make disappear the coca leaf that is our *acullico* [ritual practice of chewing leaf].
4. To demand our union seat of the *Federación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Cochabamba* and demand from the Prefect of the department that he award this seat to us, the peasants who are the majority. (Central Sindical Campesina de Arque 1994: 12)

In other cases, general critiques of governmental policies echoing the position of the Federacion Departamental were intertwined with claims that were more specific to Arque peasants. Thus, the conclusions presented by the ‘comisión tierra y territorio’ both express the preoccupation of the peasant movement in relation to the new agrarian law that was about to be presented to congress and address the particular land tenure situation in Arque ¹¹:

1. We clearly see that the present government wants to give our lands to the landowners. We reject the sale of land of which we have always been the legitimate owners.
2. Many of our families depend on small holdings that are not productive enough to meet our needs. We demand that the government be award us, the peasants of Arque, a colony in Eastern Bolivia.
3. Many of our communities we do not have maps and surveys of our lands (...).

¹¹ At that time the government was preparing a new very controversial agrarian law (ley INRA) that generated strong opposition from the peasants confederation and its federations.

4. The government cannot remove from our land mineral resources, [for otherwise] how are we and our children live and sustain ourselves. We request our territory be respected and we participate in the exploitation of our natural resources.
5. How we can make disappear the haciendas that still exist?
6. We reject the commercialization of land proposed by the present government as part of the Plan for All, because it threatens the interests of Arque peasants. (...). (ibid: 25-6)

The majority of the comisiones, however, framed their discussion in terms of the identification of problems and the proposal of solutions, interestingly an approach characteristic of planning methodologies, one that somehow passed to peasant leaders, for it had been hanging in the air for a long time. The degree of generality or specificity and the intertwining of political and technical aspects varied according to the topic of discussion at hand. For example 'comisiones' dealing more directly with public services (provision de servicios) identified as problems the lack of such services as roads, health centers, schools, and the like. On the other hand, the 'comisión económica' identified the following problems concerning the economic situation of Arque peasants:

1. The problem of the poverty is very serious in Arque, [which] is one of the poorest and most neglected provinces. Agricultural products such as potato and onion do not receive fair prices.
2. The transport to the markets is difficult, the costs of transportation and travel are expensive, sales are not sufficient to cover the cost of travel and transport, and monies do not cover other expenses.
3. There are no roads, the products cannot be moved and therefore they are not sold.
4. There are many natural disasters that do not allow safe harvests, thus there is no security in production and income is uncertain. T
5. Problems of erosion are serious, the lands are being washed away, the lands are being lost.
6. The lack of irrigation for crops is very serious.
7. Workers that go to Cochabamba or El Chapare are paid miserable wages. ¹² (ibid: 23)

This 'comisión' also identified the causes for these problems:

1. The government forgot about Arque, it is responsible for the great poverty in Arque, but we peasants have not organized ourselves and for that reason we have let ourselves be deceived and have been left behind, politicians never deliver on their promises (politicians or candidates only offer empty promises).

¹² As mentioned earlier, El Chapare is the tropical region where coca leaf is produced and one of the main destinations for temporary (or permanent) migration.

2. The new economic policy does not favor provinces like Arque, rather favors the east (agribusinesses).
3. The natural resources are overexploited if we compare with other provinces. For that reason there are natural disasters. Also lack of technological advances. (ibid: 23-24)

Among the solutions proposed by those comisiones framing discussions in terms of problems and solutions in respect to economics, transportation, social services, and natural disasters, we find:

- a) What peasants themselves should do: build irrigation canals, roads, and hill terraces, plant trees, get organized, “understand that we can prevent erosion,” recover ancestral agricultural techniques, etc. These kinds of solutions were often expressed in the imperative terms of ‘we must.’
- b) What development institutions (governmental and non-governmental) should provide: training, construction materials, and technical advice. These requests were often expressed in terms of ‘we would need’ or ‘we would like to ask’.
- c) What the state/ government should provide: build roads (and provide them with the tools for peasants to take part in this work); build more health centers and provide these centers with adequate personnel, equipment, and medicines; build more schools; impart middle and high school education, and; organize a literacy program; etc. In this case, the demands were expressed in very strong and almost threatening terms (exigimos, or, ‘we demand’ and ‘otherwise we will go on strike or block the roads’).

To further illustrate this complex configuration of issues, interlocutors, and connections, let us quote the poignant statement presented by the ‘comisión’ social under the subject heading of “social y cultural”:

1. Peasants from Arque are mistreated in the City, for that reason we change our [Indian / ethnic] clothes [for standard urban clothes] when we go to the city, but we should not have to do that; on the contrary we should be proud.
2. We must maintain our customs and above all our form of [Indian] dress.
3. We respect the religion that raises our consciousness and helps us to fight for the community and the interests of peasants. ¹³ (ibid:19)

Anybody who is familiar with congresos campesinos (peasant meetings) in Bolivia would immediately recognize that the categories defining the topics of these

¹³ As mentioned in chapter 4, the two Italian priests working in the parishes of Arque and Tacopaya were extremely committed to supporting community peasants against the abuses of town dwellers. They also played a very important role in providing peasants with access to education and formed many peasant leaders through the training activities they promoted, like the short courses for catechists. Very probably a good number of the community leaders / representatives attending this congress had been trained through these activities.

debates and discussions corresponded to those used in publications and meetings organized by departmental peasant federations or the national confederation. Striking are also the similarities in the tone of the documents and discussions in the meetings such as in the confrontational tone they both use in addressing their demands to the state (exigimos, huelga etc). It seems, however, that beyond the tone, their demands to the state are simply demands of citizens defending their rights to have access to public services. In fact, we might go as far to say that the accusation of peasant unions as being by nature 'undemocratic' and 'corporatist' (two sins in the new doxa of democracy and decentralization) is one way of disqualifying these demands. Maria Lagos (1997) argues that the 'New Bolivia' reforms aimed at constructing a new citizen. In the same vein, I would argue that shaping a peasant demand to match a development supply is a way of disciplining the existing citizen to make of him or her a new citizen, a 'rational' agent in the now free market of development items.

In the curious mixture of political statements and technical matters we can see the influence of the federation as well as that of PROSANA. For example, the solutions proposed by the 'comision de desastres naturales' resembled very closely those proposed by PROSANA's agro-ecology *técnicos*. This suggests that Arque peasants had heard and were echoing PROSANA's message and / or that they were asking what they knew the institution could provide. Furthermore, the combination of broad issues concerning the peasant movement at large and concrete needs concerning Arque peasants, of general political statements and concrete demands suggests that for the comisiones, neo-liberalism, US imperialism, fair prices for agricultural products, and the construction of a

school or an irrigation canal, are constitutive and interwoven elements of one and the same problem.

Those in search of a participatory process where an “authentic” peasant / Indian vision could be expressed would have been disappointed. Further, they would also probably say that political statements were learned by leaders under the influence of federation politics, and that development technical demands resulted from explicit and implicit manipulation on the part of development institutions and NGOs. One might argue that this is as close as you can get to a supra-village participatory process, and that merely dismissing this out of hand in the name of a search for the ‘authentic’ would be yet another way of silencing claims peasants make when they position themselves as citizens in front of the larger society, and thereby of reproducing the very mechanisms through which—in different ways throughout history—they have been excluded from political participation.

B. The First Planning Seminar

In mid-December 1993, PROSANA’s social unit staff organized the first planning meeting inviting local authorities and representatives of development institutions. The leaders of the Central Campesina opened the event by presenting the congress’ conclusions noted above (with the exception of those concerning politica sindical and cuestiones orgánicas). In order to derive from these conclusions a list of development demands that could match the ‘institutional supply’ a series of modifications were necessary. This seems to have been the purpose of the meeting.

Participants were divided into smaller groups. This time the groups were called ‘working groups’ not ‘comisiones,’ and they were organized according to geographical areas or ‘micro-regions’ instead of thematical areas.¹⁴ The identification and delimitation of micro-regions within the province was also part of an ‘action- research’ undertaken by PROSANA’s experts to establish ‘spatial planning units’ according to criteria of correspondence between social organization, economic activity, distribution of services, and geographical and ecological characteristics. Although at the time of that first planning meeting, this micro-regions study was only beginning, a tentative delimitation of 6 micro-regions had already been discussed between experts and peasant representatives during a prior workshop. Thus, for the first planning meeting, 6 working groups were established, each constituted by representatives of the subcentrales located in respective micro-regions. (Eventually experts identified 8 micro-regions; see Map 4.)

For each group / micro-region, PROSANA’s *técnicos* had prepared maps showing existing services or projects such as roads, schools, and health centers under construction. The discussion was ‘facilitated’ by a *técnico* and centered on issues corresponding to numerous categories, including: irrigation, reforestation, soil conservation, agricultural production, health, education, roads, bridges, organization, and others.¹⁵ The organizers (i.e. PROSANA’s *técnicos*) had previously established this classification so that, as they explained it, “[peasant] needs could be expressed following a consistent form of

¹⁴ The concept of ‘micro-region’ was debated among the experts in charge of designing the regulations that accompanied the LPP. See for example: “Es necesario relieves que uno de los temas fundamentales que consideramos ya resuelto luego de la aprobación e implementación de la Ley de Participación Popular, es el del ordenamiento territorial en el marco Municipal para la planificación, superando a nuestro entender la necesidad de definir microregiones que se constituyan en los espacios físicos que guardaban características relativamente homogéneas o complementarias y que desarrollan entre ellas relaciones políticas, sociales, económicas y culturales.” (Avila – Navajas 1997: 12)

¹⁵ In Spanish: micro-riego, agroforestería, conservación de suelos, producción agrícola, salud, educación, caminos, puentes, organización, otros.

classification and thus allow [development] aid supply to be clearly identified.” Needless to say, these categories were not the same as the ones used at the Peasant Conference.

Although many issues overlapped in the discussion, framing them within a different classificatory system modified greatly the outcome of the discussion. The conclusions of this First Planning Seminar consisted of a list of demands that PROSANA put together in a single charter on the basis of what each group had presented.

Map 4: Arque's Planning Units as Designed by PROSANA's Técnicos

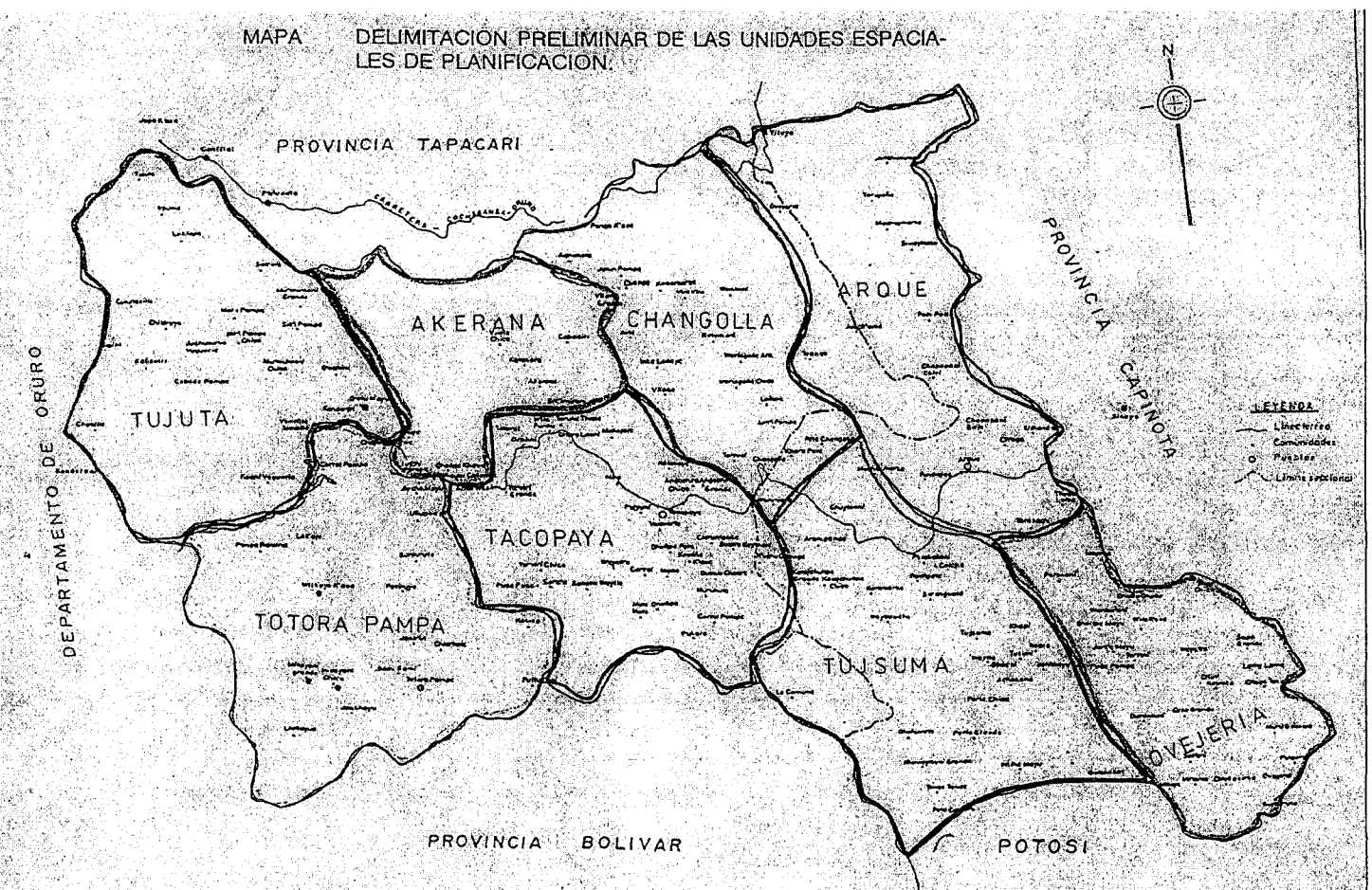


Table 4: Development Needs in Arque as Listed by Tecnicos at the First Planning**Seminar**

Category	Number or Amount	Peasant Contribution	Foreign Support
Micro Irrigation	- 72 new constructions - 5 improvement works. Approximate cost \$US 1,000,000	-Unskilled labor -Local supplies	-Topographer -qualified labor - External Supplies (includes transportation)
Agro Forestry	110 interested communities Approximate cost \$US 500,000	-Labor for taking care of plants (in some cases in central nursery)	-Plants, seeds, technical support, motivation and nursery expert
Soil Conservation	103 communities interested	- Labor	-Motivation, training, plants, seeds and in some cases food.
Agricultural Production	146 communities interested with the support of - improved seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, equipment, veterinary products and training	Management of Rotating Fund	-Implementation of external supply centers - Training of promoters
Health and drinking water	-Construction of 6 posts of first priority and 3 of second priority. - Refurbishment of 3 posts. - Training of 146 promoters including traditional medicine contents. - 90 drinking water stations, 5 already approved - 2 sewer stations - 12 public restrooms -1 medical doctor for Tacopaya	Selection of health promoters	-Pre-investment - Skilled labor - External materials - Training
Side roads	- Opening of 120 km - Improvement/widening of 144 km	Unskilled labor	-Equipment, topographer, machinery and explosives
Bridges	- 2 vehicular bridges - 8 pedestrian bridges - 4 manual cable-lifts	Non qualified labor - Local supplies	-Pre-investment -Equipment, machinery and external supplies
Education	Branch schools: - new: 38 - improved: 31 → Total 69	- Non qualified labor - Local supplies	-Pre-investment - External supplies - Skilled labor

	36 Schools were already demanded to FIS 28 were already evaluated -1 Yachay huasi in Tujsuma -Literacy Program in Tacopaya, Aquerana and Hornoni. - Women's training - I technical school in Tacopaya - Refurbishing of Arque School -Construction of housing for teachers		
Organization	- 141 union training events - Construction of 18 union offices - Support of 68 organizational events		- External supplies and others
Others	-Exchange of peasant experiences (horizontal training) - 11 retaining walls - 1 peasant market in Tacopaya - 1 mill in Taruja Thapa - Electrification from Pongo to Tacopaya - Radio communication and telecommunications in Arque, Tacopaya, La Comuna and Ventilla - The 3 last points are submitted to the Council		- Transportation and food

(Source: PROSANA 1993 – my translation)

In this list of works and projects that development institutions could carry out, there is obviously no room for addressing issues like fair prices for agricultural products, salaries when they migrate to work, discrimination, land property titles, or land shortage. With the state no longer functioning as an interlocutor there is less room to ask for land concessions in other regions of the Bolivian territory or to discuss territorial rights to returns from natural resources of the subsoil. These issues were brought up in the *Congreso Campesino* and disappeared as if ‘magically’ in the translation into the ‘peasant demand’ gathered at the First Planning Seminar.

Within the classificatory system used in this Seminario de Planificación, the technical prevails over the political; that is to say, the order of technical reason is imposed upon the complexities of social realities and asymmetrical power relations, thereby silencing political claims. This is one of the manifold ways through which—what Ferguson called—the ‘development machinery’ depoliticizes realities of ‘underdevelopment,’ converting the political dimensions of poverty into mere technical problems manageable through technical development interventions. As he showed in his analysis of Lesotho, the problem is not that development *técnicos* are not able or capable of understanding / grasping the complexity of sociopolitical realities, but rather, the institutional context within which development discourse is inserted does not allow for anything but statements about those aspects of reality that can be both translated into operational terms and addressed through mere technical solutions. As he puts it,

For an analysis to meet the needs of ‘development’ institutions, it must do what academic discourse inevitably fails to do; it must make Lesotho out to be an enormously promising candidate for the only sort of intervention a ‘development’ agency is capable of launching: the apolitical, technical

‘development’ intervention. The ‘development intervention is a highly standardized operation. (Ferguson 1994: 69) ¹⁶

There is, however, a more important question to ask while remaining within the frame of this classificatory logic. That is to say, leaving aside those issues that cannot be translated into operational technical solutions, what can we say about those general issues that can and were indeed translated into concrete projects? How do we pass from problems defined as “there are many natural disasters that put our harvest at risk;” “erosion is very serious, the soil is being washed away and we are losing cultivable land;” or “droughts and lack of irrigation water destroy our harvests” to solutions such as “we must build ponds and canals, we need cement, we must plant trees, we must build hill terraces, we need to go back to the agricultural systems practiced by our ancestors, we need technical support, the support of institutions whether governmental or non governmental”? Furthermore, how do we pass from such concrete solutions to a list in a charter that includes: “micro-irrigation: 72 works, local contribution: non-skilled labor; external contribution: topographer, skilled labor, materials; forestry: 110 communities interested, local contribution: labor, care of tree-nurseries; external contribution: tree plants, technical advice, motivation, a *técnico* in charge of the nursery; soil conservation: 103 communities interested, local contribution: labor; external contribution: motivation, training, plants, seeds and in some cases food?” These are big leaps that cannot be taken for granted; the steps in between are not obvious and the rationale behind each of them should be spelled out.

¹⁶ It is worth noting that Ferguson’s critique addresses the old top-down style of development projects. That is, the style ‘participatory’ - bottom-up approaches aim at replacing or overcoming. However, Ferguson’s critique is also relevant for the ‘new participatory style’ precisely because the institutional constraints he refers to have remained unchanged.

Looking at the documents of both events (the Peasant Conference and the Planning Seminar) from the standpoint of this question, we realize that the leap does not occur suddenly when passing from the peasant conference to the planning workshop (i.e. comparing the conference's conclusions with the workshop's tables). Rather, it can already be identified when comparing the lists of problems and the lists of solutions presented by the 'comisiones' at the peasant conference. The correspondence between problems and their solutions seems to be taken for granted, as if the process of translating problems into their solutions, or of identifying the specific solution that 'fits' a problem was a natural procedure and not a very arbitrary, problematic, and often conflictive process of selecting and discarding. Perhaps the more telling example is the following set presented by the comisión of natural disasters:

- Problem: Sudden freezing temperatures is another serious problem, we can lose one-year worth of work overnight.
- Solution: We need technical support, support from development institutions, whether governmental or non-governmental. (Central Sindical Campesina de Arque 1994: 29)

I believe that this example suggests the direction to follow in order to begin to address the question of how to understand this particular way of translating problems into demands. Indeed, it directs our attention to the interlocutors and the context where this text was produced. Put differently, this passage suggests that we cannot understand this 'participatory process' or what is said in this process without looking at the context in which it is said, the context in which this process takes place, the frame that sets it in motion. And this context is the context of the development encounter.

There are two central points to consider here. The first concerns the development encounter itself. Asymmetrical power relations between Arque peasants and development experts predefine their positions in the encounter; which doesn't mean that there is no

room for maneuver. There will be resistance, appropriations and redefinitions of the terms of the encounter, but power differentials will not be reversed in the context of the encounter. The second central issue at play here concerns the point of view of the local population. Arque peasants are not able to deal with the extreme level of ecological degradation. The old ways are not used anymore, and furthermore they do not work any longer; their traditional ways seem to have lost their efficiency. The experts from the institution, seen from the perspective of the locals, seem to have some idea, power, or possibility to know how to trigger more efficiency, they come from a world where things work and they seem to have access to the knowledge of how things work (cf. chapter 6).

From these two points we can establish the grounds for the basic misunderstanding that this “participatory” rhetoric stubbornly refuses to recognize or rather insists in mis-recognizing. What makes the presence of ‘experts’ possible there is the development encounter, and the implicit contract is that development experts know how to operate efficiently. To pretend that Arque peasants could participate in the development planning process as if the experts were not there is an act of bad faith.¹⁷ To pretend that Arque peasants could engage in such a process as if there were no power differentials, as if the development encounter did not presuppose an asymmetrical relation of power is an act of what Bourdieu calls symbolic denegation. That is, “the fictitious bracketing of the relation of power, [which] exploits this relation of power in order to produce the recognition of the relation of power that abdication elicits” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:143).

¹⁷ I am using this term in the same sense as Vincent Crapanzano uses it in his critique of ethnographic writing; thereby I am suggesting an analogous situation. In his introduction to *Tuhami*, Crapanzano (1985: ix) uses Sartre’s definition of ‘bad faith’ to refer to the “culturally constituted bias ... within the

V. Failing to Shape a Community Development Vision

When looking for a way to introduce participatory planning at the peasant village level (after having done participatory planning meetings at the supra-village level of subcentrales), PROSANA's social unit *técnicos* faced a few challenges. One was to design some kind of 'instrument,' as they called it, that could guide members of a peasant community in the process of planning a 'development proposal' (PROSANA 1997c: 37). The idea here was that the list of demands presented by community leaders at the provincial meetings should be the outcome of community consensus. To arrive at this consensus the members of each respective peasant community should discuss the kind of future they wanted for their community, and then give priority to those development demands that were more directly linked to that communal 'vision of the future.' This information was to be recorded in a set of questionnaires or forms and kept in the community file, or '*carpeta comunal*.' A central obstacle to overcome was that of finding a way to successfully carry out this task in all the 178 communities of the province; because of illiteracy, locals could not do it and the institution lacked sufficient resources.

As mentioned earlier, PROSANA was able to overcome this obstacle due to the programs launched by the government (with World Bank loans) to support the application of the LPP in the countryside. In this context, PROSANA became the *entidad ejecutora* (executive entity) in charge of carrying out municipal participatory planning processes in Arque and Tacopaya.

anthropological gaze" that led many anthropologists to "proclaim neutrality and even invisibility in their fieldwork."

The guidelines proposed by the National Secretary of Rural Development (SNDR) foresaw a continuing planning process comprising 5 stages (SNPP 1995) ¹⁸:

- 1) Preparation and Organization
- 2) Survey or 'Diagnosis'
 - 2.1. Expert's survey
 - 2.2. Community's survey / appraisal (or "self-diagnosis")
- 3) Formulation of the Municipal Development Plan
- 4) Formulation of the Yearly Operational Plan
- 5) Support for projects' implementation and consolidation of local social control (evaluating and monitoring)

Since a participatory planning process had already started in the province, PROSANA's *técnicos* adapted the guidelines to their particular situation. Thus, they did not need to engage in the organizing corresponding to the first stage because that is what they had been doing since 1991. Further, they did not to enact the "experts' survey" either because they could use the numerous studies they had already completed using participatory action–research methodologies. In the three months agreed on the contract—September to December 1994—PROSANA completed the enterprise of community surveys / appraisal and the elaboration of the plan.¹⁹

The idea behind the community survey / appraisal was very similar to what PROSANA's social unit staff had in mind concerning participatory planning at the community level. This similarity, as was the case with others like it, was not just coincidence, rather, they reveal the extent to which social reforms launched by

¹⁸ The contract was to implement the three first stages in 3 months. Because of its links with the *Prefectura* of Cochabamba and the *Dirección de Fortalecimiento Municipal*, PROSANA actually undertook to carry out the whole process.

¹⁹ Such a short time frame shows how little commitment there actually was to a participatory process, constraints of the development machinery.

government were inspired by and informed by the rural development initiatives developed by a great number of NGOs throughout the 80s.²⁰

According to methodological guidelines provided by the SNDR, the “autodiagnóstico” or participatory community survey/assessment was to be carried out by the members of the community without the explicit intervention of an external *técnico*. Two local “facilitators” (a man and a woman) chosen by the community and trained by the ‘entidad ejecutora’ were to take notes and coordinate a two-day workshop that was to be attended by all the adult members of the community. Through a series of activities—including map drawing, analytical games, group discussions and other techniques derived from popular education traditions—especially designed to elicit information and motivate discussion, men and women were to describe the characteristics of their community, identify their needs, assess the ‘potentialities and limitations’ they had in light of the enterprise of meeting those needs, and, on that basis, discuss collectively a development strategy. The list of priorities and demands to be presented to development institutions was to be derived from this strategy. After the workshop, the facilitators were to transpose the information and conclusions gathered into the tables and forms of the community file.²¹

PROSANA adjusted these guidelines to fit their work conditions in Arque. First, they did not use local facilitators but trained a team made of PROSANA fieldworkers, and people hired specifically for this job (mostly students from Cochabamba; all fluent in Qhishwa). Second, they simplified the procedure and minimized the number of

²⁰ As discussed in chapter 2, the experts hired by state secretaries to design these reforms came from that experience. The point I am making here is however to explore the ways in which these experiences were co-opted as disciplining means for enhancing governability

“instruments” (forms and tables to be filled). The community files contained a map drawn by the community indicating what existed already (roads, sources of water, rivers, pastures, fields, etc.) and what they would like to have in the future (e.g. irrigation canal, school, woods, etc.); a census table; a questionnaire complementing the information contained on the map; and a list of development demands. Often, the information was gathered during a community meeting attended almost exclusively by the male heads of households.²² The extent to which the event included women and / or was used as an occasion for the audience to discuss and reflect upon the conditions of the community and the possible futures they could envision was pretty much left to the initiative of the facilitator. In the majority of the cases, the facilitator stood in the front, asked questions and filled the questionnaires and tables on the spot. Sometimes, if the facilitator thought he knew the answer, he would not even ask the question. If there was any discussion it mostly turned around the demands to be put on the list and in which order.

In order to illustrate the gap between the design of questionnaires and their application, let me describe the example of one of the ‘instruments’ proposed in the official guidelines that was used in Arque.

One of the tables to be filled in the community folder concerned the sexual division of labor for agricultural activities. The first column of the table showed a list of tasks involved in the production of potatoes, the tasks related to herding and other household tasks (gathering wood, bringing water, etc.). Followed four empty columns to indicate who was responsible for performing the task (men, women, boys, and / or girls). According to the instructions, the table should not be filled directly with the audience. Instead, the facilitator should ask the audience to list the main economic / productive activities they undertake during the year, break down each activity into a series of tasks and indicate who in the household is responsible for each task. The facilitator should not give the list of tasks beforehand, rather, the table should serve as a guide, but should be

²¹ The guidelines provided by the SNDR were subjected to various evaluations and revisions. The version used by PROSANA in 1994 was later considered too ...

²² Community meetings or *asambleas comunales* are the regular meetings of the ‘sindicato agrario’. They are usually held once a month and are attended by heads of households; the few women that attend these meetings are widows who don’t have an adult son.

modified according to the information given by the audience and should be filled after the meeting is over. The purpose of the discussion was to identify in the most concrete possible way those activities where women were in charge and thus are more likely to be the ones to make the decisions. This information should help the facilitator guide the identification of needs and development demands, which should be done in groups where men and women discuss separately. Once recorded in the folder, this information should help the development institution to choose the appropriate interlocutor for the specific development project to be implemented in the community. This is one example of the ways in which experts in La Paz tried to introduce what they called the “gender perspective” into the planning methodological guidelines. As far as I know, the exercise was never carried out in the way just described, it was never used for the purpose it was designed. More often than not, the table would be directly filled in a very mechanical way with the audience, or even worse, by the facilitator himself because he considered he knew enough about the way “these things work around here” (as a *técnico* who worked as facilitator once told me).

One of the problems identified by PROSANA’s social unity staff was that the biases of facilitators effected the outcome of a community planning meeting.²³ The main problem, however, was that this community planing process failed at accomplishing one of its main explicit purposes, namely the generation of a collective reflection leading to the formulation of a community development proposal (*propuesta comunal de desarrollo*).²⁴ Thus, the “autodiagnóstico” failed to trigger the participatory planning process expected by development experts. In most cases, communal participation limited itself to men attending a meeting where a *técnico* would ask them some general questions, have them draw a map and list the kinds of development projects, services and infrastructure construction works they would want development institutions (governmental or non-governmental) to implement in the community.

²³ . As they stated in their report, “It is obvious that is difficult to find a facilitator capable of gathering the community’s demand without introducing his own bias as expert in specific branch...” (PROSANA 1997: 38) How to design exercises that would force external *técnicos* or facilitators to listen to the specificity of peasants’ descriptions without immediately translating them into their own technical jargon was also one of the main preoccupations expressed by methodology experts in La Paz.

²⁴ In their report, PROSANA’s social unit experts lamented that “it was not possible to generate a more thorough analysis of community’s reality, of the limitations and potentialities. Because of the extremely short time, it was not possible to outline or gather in more detail a ‘vision of the future’ or a development strategy from the peasant’s perspective. The first list of demands was a long laundry list of works to be done (schools, roads, health centers, irrigation, forestation). In most cases there was little reflection about their feasibility or real necessity.” (PROSANA 1997: 18)

Moreover, the information contained in the community files hardly increased the knowledge PROSANA's *técnicos* already had acquired through the manifold and more thorough studies they or hired consultant experts had already completed. Indeed, the 463-page document presenting the Provincial Development Plan contains an extensive analysis about the geographical, ecological, historical, economic and social characteristics of the region, and a well-articulated development strategy. This document was not the outcome of the community files. Rather, it was the result of PROSANA's *técnicos'* experience working in the area for years and the large amount of information they gathered through the extensive studies their experts produced between 1989 and 1994. The development strategy proposed was not grounded on the peasant's vision of the future but on the technical assessment of agronomists, medical doctors, nutritionists, and social scientists.

What then were the community files for? What was their function? In terms of the preparation of the development plan, these files did provide two important pieces of information. The first one concerned the population of each peasant community (which given the limitations of the 1992 national census was a much needed piece of information). The census foresaw for 1994 a population of 17.684, and the information from the community files pointed to a population over 18.732 inhabitants (PROSANA 1994b: 15). The second important piece of information concerned the specific number and location of development projects to be implemented in the next five years. Thus, the document contained detailed maps showing the irrigation canals, health centers, roads, school, and the like, under construction or to be built. Whether it was because of the facilitator's biases, or the inadequate methodological design, or because most

communities asked what they knew the institutions were prepared to give them, peasants' demands seemed to fit neatly into the pre-existing categories defined within the PROSANA's development strategy. In that sense, they seemed to validate the knowledge the institution produced about the region and or the work *técnicos* did to 'motivate' peasants to express their demands in terms that could eventually fit the institutional 'supply', as *técnicos* often called it. Whether this is what experts intended when launching a process to promote peasants participation as 'agents of their own development' or not seems less important a question than asking what peasants did with their carpetas and development plan.

Through the production of the carpetas and the Plan, PROSANA did succeed in providing community representatives with instruments they could appropriate as valid proof (with the validity of the written word) of demands they had the right to claim. When filling the carpetas in community meetings, presenting their list of demands in provincial CIDPA meetings, discussing their priorities and reaching a consensus, community representatives and, especially those peasant leaders who presided over these meetings, strongly believed they were an integral part of the planning process. And indeed, in that sense, they were. PROSANA certainly encouraged this sense of authorship when putting 'CIDPA' (i.e. the provincial council presided by the peasant organization) as the Plan's author on the cover; that PROSANA provided the technical support to prepare this plan is only mentioned in the first page.

This sense of authorship / property (as if PROSANA's *técnicos* had been mere transcribers of CIDPA meetings) appeared very clearly, when, during the June 1996 CIDPA meeting, Vidal Nuñez, the *Central's* 'Executive Secretary publicly referred to the

document as “the Plan that we, the peasants did.” It is worth noting that the emphasis was even stronger in the expression he used in Qhishwa: *noqayku ruwayku*.²⁵ More importantly, peasant leaders could use this document to assert their authority, validate their position in relation to other regional actors, and to legitimize their claims as citizens of the Bolivian state. Thus, for example, when the Prefect and all the representatives of the *Consejo Departamental* of Cochabamba visited Arque and were pompously received by Arque local authorities, Vidal Nuñez presented the Plan with the following statement.

Three years ago we organized ourselves in order to get irrigation, water, schools, health centers. More importantly, in 1994, through CIDPA, we prepared a Provincial Development Plan. This Plan came out of our own ideas and was prepared with the support of PROSANA. The works (obras) that are being currently implemented came out of this Plan. We thank PROSANA because with its support we were able to start doing the Plan even before the Law for Popular Participation was passed. We decided to do it at a provincial meeting of the *Central Campesina* in 1993. We ask that this Plan be implemented. (Sesion de Honor del Consejo Departamental, November/ 29/ 96).

What is important to emphasize here is that the Plan actually belonged to the municipal governments of Arque province, and not to the peasant organization. It had been prepared as the official development Plan to be implemented under the responsibility of Arque’s municipal governments in the following five years. However, the fact that PROSANA had discussed it in the context of CIDPA and presented it as the result of a participatory process that included all the actors of the ‘sociedad civil’ made it possible for the peasant leader to present it to state authorities as the expression of a very carefully prepared peasant demand.

Similarly, at the level of community representatives, the community files were used as the legitimate instrument to validate the claims they presented at CIDPA

²⁵ In Qhishwa there two different personal pronouns to refer to the plural of the first person: an inclusive ‘we’ –noqanchej- that refers to all the people present and an exclusive ‘we’ –noqayku—that refers to a

meetings and the demands they pressed mayors to meet. In all the meetings I attended in 1996 and 1997, I would always see community representatives carefully taking out of their 'qepis' (bundles or bag packs) a well wrapped packet—well protected against the intemperies of the long walks through the mountains—containing the community file and notebook wherein they would take notes to report back to their respective communities. Clearly, to know the list of demands contained in the carpeta, be able to defend the right to have them met in front of CPPA authorities, and be informed of the state of the projects to be implemented in their area had become, by 1996, part of the functions a sindicato leader had to perform in order to comply to the responsibility his community had entrusted on him. However, in spite of the important bargain value the carpeta acquired in the interactions with municipal authorities and development institutions, inside the community most people, and especially women, only vaguely knew of its existence.

It is important to mention, before closing this section, that none of the leaders I spoke with lost ever sight of the enormous gap that separated them from the *técnicos* who had the required knowledge to prepare a technical report like the 463-page provincial plan. While remaining a deep concern for them, this awareness did not prevent them from understanding how they could use such document to claim their rights to the services the state should provide to its citizens. It is not necessarily that they believed that this development strategy would guarantee a more promising future for Arque, but they knew that in the new context of an emerging market for development items, to be in possession

smaller group within the larger group formed by all the people present. In this specific case, the use of the exclusive we referred to 'we the peasants' and excluded everybody else present in the room.

of a series of demands like that formulated by PROSANA was to place them in a position to match the existing supply.

VI. The CIDPA – CPPA Planning Meetings

When I arrived to Arque in 1996, the ‘participatory municipal planning process’ was already at the stage of designing and evaluating yearly operational plans (POA’s) derived from the 5-year development plan designed in 1994 (i.e. stages 4 and 5 in above description). ‘Participatory planning’ was mainly done in the context of the provincial development council meetings (CIDPA until August 1996 and CPPA afterwards). It consisted of evaluating the implementation of the operational yearly plan of the previous year and reaching a consensus concerning the projects to be included in the plan for the following year. In this section, I will discuss the evaluation of the 1996 operational plan and the preparation of the 1997 plan, which took place in the CPPA meetings between November 1996 and April 1997.

Before I turn into that discussion, it is worth mentioning a few points about what happened in the time between the preparation of the 5-year plan in 1994 and the evaluation of the yearly plan in November 1996. In 1995 the new municipal governments were barely starting to organize themselves and PROSANA fulfilled (or helped them fulfill) most of their tasks. PROSANA still had a very active presence in the region and guaranteed the implementation of the development projects contemplated in the operational plan for that year. In 1996, things began to change as the municipal governments started functioning independently from—and sometimes in conflict with—PROSANA. The latter withdrew from the role of direct project implementation and its

fieldwork teams were replaced by local (Bolivian) NGOs. These NGOs were hired (as contractors or sub-contractors, so to speak) by PROSANA and the municipal governments to implement projects that were part of the 1996 yearly plan. In its new role as technical advisor and supervisor, PROSANA limited itself to raising funds, writing grant proposals, supervising / supporting the application of the LPP, and providing technical training to representatives of the oversight committees, peasant leaders of the Central and sub-centrales, NGOs' *técnicos*, and municipalities' administrative staff. PROSANA's presence in the everyday life of peasant communities and its availability to directly respond to peasant demands gradually faded away. However, the municipal governments were not yet ready to operate efficiently and the NGOs did not have the means or the experience to operate as PROSANA had in the past. The construction of schools, health centers or running water pipes depended on external contractors and funding agencies like the Fund for Social Investment (Fondo de Inversión Social), or the Fund for Peasant Development (Fondo de Desarrollo Campesino). Moreover, during that year political conflicts and confrontations emerged among the municipal councilmen from different political parties and between the municipal government and the peasant Central (cf. chapter 4). In this changing and tense context, the implementation of the yearly development plan was seriously compromised.

A. Evaluation of the 1996 Yearly Operational Plan

The CPPA meeting for the evaluation of the municipal yearly operational plan (POA 96) took place in the town of Tacopaya in November 1996.²⁶ The meeting, held in

²⁶ CPPA meetings in Tacopaya usually took place under the corrugated-zinc shed built between the oldest chilijchi tree and PROSANA's house, which was, by then, administrated by PURISANA. By groups of

a semi open space covered by a corrugated zinc roof, started around 2:30pm. Sitting at the large table placed for the occasion, were the presiding authorities: Arque's mayor Gregorio Iriarte, Jorge Lozano representing PROSANA, Eleuterio Vazquez (president of Arque's oversight committee and CPPA's secretary of minutes), Vidal Nuñez (leader of the *Central Campesina*), and Tacopaya's mayor Juan Ortuño. Felipe Olivera, Arque's Sub-prefect and president of the CPPA, was absent that day as he usually was when the meetings took place in Tacopaya. Placed next to the table was a wooden structure holding a board, and also present were the large rolls of paper and markers that are the indispensable raw material of these meetings. PROSANA's directors, Hans Schoeneberger and Filemon Iriarte, were sitting in the first of the six rows of benches, otherwise occupied primarily by peasant village representatives. Those who did not arrive on time to get a seat were standing or sitting on the floor. Representatives of development institutions and other participants were along the sides, on dispersed chairs, improvised benches, or standing and coming and going. Because of the importance of the evaluation and because they were in charge of its coordination, almost all of PROSANA's staff was there.

Following the usual formalities, the meeting started with calling attendance, the reading of the "orden del dia" (previously defined agenda), and the election of the 'policia sindical.'²⁷ Judging from the agenda, it seemed that the audience would first listen to the reports presented by the mayors, then by the presidents of the oversight committees, then by the development institutions, and then, on that basis they would

three or four, peasants would first drop by PROSANA's house and hang out there until the meeting started. While PROSANA or PURISANA *técnicos* set up the space for the meeting (connecting wires to the house's electricity motor, putting bill boards, etc.), women in charge of the house organized the food preparation with the town women hired to cook.

evaluate what had been accomplished during the year. That is not exactly the way things went on that Saturday November 23 1996.

Before the first point in the agenda—mayors’ reports—was addressed, hands raised from the audience with questions and complaints. “I would like some clarification about the delays in school constructions, there are rumors that there will be no more schools.” “I represent the community of Cebadiri, I would like to know why is it that nothing has been done there.” As it often happened in these meetings, PROSANA’s experts promptly intervened to give clarifying reliable information and / or to mediate when conflictive issues were being addressed. In this case, PROSANA’s German director, doctor Hans, provided the required information: “the criteria of the Social Investment Fund (Fondo de Inversion Social – FIS) to finance the construction of schools is to give priority to school centers (*nucleos escolares*) over small local schools (*escuelas seccionales*). Building school centers costs US \$100,000 while small schools only cost US \$25,000. FIS has agreed to build four school centers and two local schools in Arque.” Responding to the complaints, another expert (one of the agronomists closely involved in the designing of participatory planning processes), echoed the sentiment of frustration and called for a collective reflection: “let’s think what is it that we did wrongly, where is it that we failed, in doing the carpetas or where?”

These introductory exchanges were followed by the mayors’ reports. Arque’s mayor started by explaining that between the demand for a project and its implementation there is a big gap: technical advisors needed to study the conditions of feasibility and prepare the project’s design; their office lacked adequate human resources and was only

²⁷ See description of meetings at the beginning of chapter 4.

beginning to hire such advisors. Don Gregorio Iriarte (Arque's mayor) then proceeded to read a carefully prepared written report specifying the state of progress in each one of the areas (running water, education, health, agricultural production, roads, equipment for the municipality and services in the urban area). For each case he would mention the institutions involved (FIS for the construction of schools, FDC for roads, two NGOs for the support to agricultural production, etc.). The report explicitly acknowledged that they were running behind schedule, but the clear and detailed information showed that things were getting under control.

The contrast between this report and Tacopaya's mayor report was, to say the least, striking. Don Juan Ortuño did not have any written text; he just improvised in his very fluent and witty Qhishwa. With his usual arrogant and patronizing landowner tone he lectured community peasants, largely ignoring the rest of the audience: "many complain that nothing is done in their communities, but many communities refuse the help." Vaguely acknowledging that the POA's implementation was running behind schedule he went on and on making peasants feel guilty for their lack of cooperation, and never gave any specific information about the state of the projects.

The contrast between the two reports seemed at the time too striking to pass unnoticed, but there were no comments and no questions. For those of us in the audience who knew about the state of relations between PROSANA and both municipal governments, it was clear that Arque's Mayor had received the help of PROSANA's staff while Tacopaya's Mayor had refused it.²⁸

²⁸ In chapter 4 I explained the tensions between Tacopaya's mayor and peasant leaders, on the one hand, and PROSANA, on the other hand. At the time of this meeting the conflict was not yet explicit, it would soon explode, as we will see shortly.

As if in turn ignoring Tacopaya's mayor, the meeting proceeded with the report of the regional school district director.²⁹ Then came the reports of the oversight committees. The presidents of both committees pointed to the difficulties they encountered: the lack of means (money) to travel and to attend meetings, the lack of coordination with the other members (because of the lack of remuneration there is no real motivation), and the reluctance of the municipal council to cooperate and provide them with information. They regretted not having done their job the way they should have done it. However, in the case of Arque they had been able to accomplish a minimum follow up, and gather necessary information about the work of the municipal government. In contrast, the representative of Tacopaya's oversight committee simply said that "the mayor must be thankful for our poor work, we just did not watch him at all." These reports gave rise to a long discussion about the importance of these committees and the conditions under which they had to operate. This was a favorable context for undercurrent conflicts to emerge. Indeed, taking advantage of the situation, one of Tacopaya's municipal council members, Pascual Rodriguez, intervened:

the oversight committee doesn't coordinate its work with the municipal government, there isn't any coordination either between the grassroots and the oversight committee. It seems that we are not understanding the changes brought by the popular participation law, you keep thinking and doing in the old ways. Now things have to come from the bottom up, you have to analyze the situation, you have to control what the municipal government is doing, what projects they carry out, how much these projects cost.

To anybody not familiar with the political tensions, alliances and power relations in the province, this statement could seem patronizing at most, illustrative of the widespread popular participation rhetoric at least. To those of the audience who knew

²⁹ He informed about the distribution of books to the different schools of the province and explained that 28 children was the minimum number for a local 2 year elementary school to be allowed to operate; this was part of the new educational reform.

about the tensions with Tacopaya's mayor and whose side this councilman had taken, his words were a demagogical provocation. I asked the peasant leader seating next to me what he thought of what had just been said. "What good could come out of his mouth" he answered, "he is a betrayer, he is a peasant and yet he has taken the side of the landowners, he is Don Juan's ally."³⁰ Quickly reacting to keep the discussion under control (as I saw him doing often in these meetings), Vidal Nuñez, insisted that the "economic factor" (lack of remuneration) prevented the oversight committee of effectively and efficiently fulfilling its controlling role.³¹ He suggested that each community should give 50 cents (10 cents of a dollar) to guarantee that oversight committee members would be able to do their job. In spite of his efforts to redirect the discussion, the words of the councilman had already made an impact. The representative of a community neighboring the councilman's community of origin, asked for an explanation concerning the way in which representatives to the oversight committee had been elected. This doubt colored interjection triggered a reaction of the oversight committee's president marked by his offer to resign. The Central's executive secretary intervened again to say that those were matters to be discussed in the internal meetings of the peasant organization. Next, another councilman, also an ally of the mayor, questioned the legitimacy of the executive secretary's authority: "the Central's executive secretary cannot occupy two positions at the same time, he should choose one and resign to the other, he cannot be a municipal councilman and executive secretary of the peasant

³⁰ As mentioned in chapter 4, Pascual Rodriguez vote was determinant for peasants not being mayors. Here he was trying to distance himself from don Juan to try his own chance,

³¹ (It is worth noting that they would offer refer to this role with the expression "fiscalizar la alcaldia" to audit the municipality, which is a very interesting misinterpretation of the law. According to the LPP, oversight committees are entitled to ask for information and check if funds are spent as planned and as stated by the law, which is not the same thing as auditing, but peasants in Arque kept using the expression fiscalizar, to audit).

organization at the same time.” At this point, PROSANA had to intervene to redress the situation. As I saw it happening at all the meetings when tensions escalated to this point, PROSANA’s authoritative knowledge of the law was the only mediation able to guarantee that the meeting proceeds according to the agenda. This time, it was Jorge Lozano, the sociologist in charge of PROSANA’s social unit, who explained that it was perfectly legal to be the leader of a grassroots organization and an elected municipal authority.

The meeting continued with reports by representatives of the development institutions working in the province. PROSANA went first. Jorge Lozano, the same person who had just mediated in the conflict, explained the recent changes in the role and objectives of the institution. PROSANA was not in charge of directly carrying out development projects anymore, its role was now to provide advice and support to the municipal governments, NGOs and peasant organizations for the implementation of the development plan. He reminded the audience of the different programs contained in the plan (agricultural production, natural resources, health, education, organization, irrigation, and roads). PROSANA also was helping the NGOs get funds and providing them with technical advice to carry out the development projects related to those programs. He then gave the list of the NGOs and the areas of the province where they were working.

The NGOs presented tables listing the projects they were involved in, the communities where they were working, the progress made, difficulties encountered and where their funds came from. They did not read the details, but described in very general terms the kinds of projects they were implementing, and their contracts with PROSANA

and with the municipalities. They all tried to show that they had fulfilled their part of the contract according to schedule and justified the delays in terms of external bureaucratic inconveniences or the lack of cooperation from the part of peasant communities.³² The contrast between how little the new NGOs had been able to achieve and how much PROSANA had done was striking. For the latter, the only problem was the difficulty in getting more funding. .

After these presentations, Vidal Nuñez expressed the concern of the peasant organization to see the development plan duly implemented and made a general call for the NGOs to show respect for the communities where they worked. We then just proceeded to the next point as if there were no more tensions. Actually in what happened until that moment in the meeting there were the seeds of future conflicts that would emerge in future meetings, as I will show later, after I present the evaluation work in groups. The next point on the agenda was “evaluacion por parte de la asamblea,” which meant the evaluation that community representatives could make on the basis of the information they had about the development projects—foreseen in the POA—that were supposed to have been implemented in their respective villages.

Peasant representatives broke into eight groups corresponding to the eight areas identified by PROSANA’s experts as the planning units (see Map 4). PROSANA’s staff and *técnicos* of the NGO working in the respective area were the designed ‘facilitators’ for the group discussions. PROSANA staff had prepared all the information to be discussed, each facilitator had a folder with information about the different projects, and big ‘papelografos’ (large pieces of paper to be attached on a board) had been prepared

³² As it became clear in later CPPA meetings, most of the new NGOs entering the province had encountered many difficulties in earning the trust of the communities where they worked. In some cases

with tables to be filled with the information community representatives were to provide the working group. In the document that PROSANA prepared afterwards, these same tables were transcribed and presented showing the “peasant vision” (*vision campesina*). There were nine tables for the nine types of projects: running water, irrigation, forestation and soil conservation, improvement of water sources, community training, schools, roads, and other activities. Each table had a list of the communities where projects were supposed to be carried out, and blank columns to fill in with: type of project, state of project preparation, source of funding, state of project implementation, source of funding, and observations.

During the group discussions, lasting 2-3 hours, I moved from one to the other. In all of them I observed a similar dynamics: community representatives had many complaints and many questions, ‘facilitators’ tried to take note of everything, but did not have answers for all the questions asked. In some cases they did ‘facilitate’ the discussion and motivate community peasants to speak up, in other cases they seemed impatient to limit the discussion to what was strictly necessary to fill up the tables.

A general complaint, common in most groups was that not much had been achieved. “We don’t see any work done.” “The yearly plan (POA) has not been implemented, we just walk for nothing.” Once the facilitator started focusing the discussion on specific projects in specific places, following the break-down in the tables’ columns between preparation stage and implementation stage, it appeared that in many cases the former had been completed or was under way. That is, the required research (*estudios de pre-inversion*) for project design had been completed or was in process, even though the actual work could not be seen yet. This was another source for major

there were open conflicts between *técnicos* and community leaders and two of the NGOs had to leave.

complaints. “Too many studies done, too many promises, there are no works.” “They take too long to do pre-investment studies; we want them to hurry up. They tell us this year pre-investment and next year projects will be done, but nothing gets done. We want to accelerate project implementation.”

Explaining the technical reasons why research is required for an adequate project design was not enough to stop the complaints. Indeed, the problem was not that community representatives could not understand the difference between “pre-investment and “investment.”. The point was that they had begun to understand that the completion of the “study” did not guarantee the implementation of the project. For example, in some communities ‘water surveys’ for the installation of running water had been inconclusive (either because there was not enough water or because people in the community were not willing to pay the required 5% of the cost). In other villages, the outcome of research done for the construction of irrigation systems was that the project was not feasible.³³ It is worth noting that there was no mention or discussion about the reasons why some projects were considered unfeasible, nor about who defined the criteria of feasibility and how this was accomplished. In yet other cases, villagers had not been informed of the results of the studies, and thereby did not yet know if the project would be implemented or when. Moreover, studies took too long; researchers asked way too many questions.

There were also complaints about the few projects that were being implemented. There was an irrigation system whose design had to be entirely revised. In relation to forestation and soil conservation, some village representatives complained that these

³³ The reasons were not discussed at this occasion, but I know from my conversations with *técnicos* that one of the main reasons why some irrigation systems were considered non feasible is because the funding agencies would not give money for projects that would not yield a certain profit or, as they called it, a minimum return rate of 7%. Efficient irrigation system in these dry high mountains are often very

projects were benefiting only a few families; others complained about the lack of information, the majority of the people in their villages did not know in which way the experiments that agronomists were doing would eventually benefit the community.

Finally other complaints referred to the fact that NGOs expected to work in the region showed up only towards the end of the year; village representatives that attended the meetings and had their “carpetas comunales” in order had been left out of the POA; or, a lack of information about what could be expected from mayors, municipal councilmen, and oversight committees. Looking at the tables as they were being filled, it was clear that a) a large percentage of what had been planned had not been completed; b) most training programs at the village level (not supra-village /*subcentrales*’ leaders) had not even started; and c) in many cases peasant representatives had no information whatsoever about some of the projects supposedly assigned to their villages.

The plenary session resumed around 8 pm but it did not last long since the assembly voted in favor of PROSANA’s suggestion to postpone the planning of the POA ‘97 for a meeting in Arque in early December. For that time PROSANA’s staff would have put together all the information collected from the group work evaluations. We all went to PROSANA’s house where dinner was being served. Walking down the one and only street, I could perceive a lot of movement, unusual for this otherwise calm place. Indeed, this last weekend of November was the one time of the year in which this otherwise empty town was crowded, and all the otherwise locked houses were open to lodge their owners who lived in the cities of Oruro and Cochabamba and who came for the fiesta of Santa Catalina, the patron saint of Tacopaya.

expensive and difficult to build, I guess the criterion is something like “too much money for too few people engaged in low productivity agricultural production.

This CPPA meeting was the shortest I attended in the two years that I lived in the province. Contrary to what could be expected from reading the agenda, the POA evaluation was not based on the mayors' reports, but instead on a discussion of lists and charters previously prepared by PROSANA. It is true that the reports were too general and that without the previous preparation by PROSANA, the audience would not have known how to proceed. On the other hand, the fact that every thing was previously predefined and pre-formatted shows the extent to which the participatory planning process had by then become a technical routine, one couched in the terms defined by the institution. Peasants' participation and information depended on how well the institution could prepare the meeting. As long as they accepted these pre-defined terms (which they did not have the means to define or redefine) peasants were welcome to give their opinions, express their claims and criticisms.

For many external observers who had known the region 10 years ago, seeing community peasants gathered in town speaking up their minds in front of town authorities and complaining aloud about the insufficient work they had done, was in itself a great achievement. As Alberto Vega, PROSANA's German agronomist, once commented in a celebratory tone, "Who would have thought that one day peasants would be planning the development of their region!!" That they had complained about the low level of project implementation was part of the process; it was just that 1996 was a year during which pre-investment studies had to be completed, and peasants would eventually understand that these studies that take time and money are a necessary requirement for adequate and thereby successful project design. However, as I suggested earlier, the complaints I heard that afternoon could not be reduced to a difficulty in understanding the

difference between pre-investment and investment. In between the lines of the peasants' complaints I also heard other concerns. First, 'pre-investment' studies required a great deal of information and, thus, involved constant intrusions into peasants' lives. Second, they feared that, once again, promises would not come through. Third, in spite of the participation rhetoric, decisions concerning the feasibility of projects were actually out of reach.

B. The 1997 Yearly Operational Plan

The level of attendance at the next meeting in Arque was impressive; practically all the peasant communities had sent their representatives. The most remarkable absence was that of Tacopaya's mayor, the most remarkable presence was that of the top leader of Cochabamba's peasant federation (Alejo Veliz). This meeting was important in at least three regards. First, PROSANA's *técnicos* had prepared a report summarizing the work completed by the groups at the Tacopaya meeting. They started by presenting a big drawing showing a two-plate scale: one side represented the planned projects and the other the implemented ones. The former was much more loaded than the latter and the scale was totally unbalanced. Indeed, in the municipality of Tacopaya, only 92 pre-investment projects had been implemented out of the 203 planned and only 23 investment projects had been implemented out of the 163 planned. In the municipality of Arque, only 47 pre-investment projects had been implemented out of the 111 planned, and only 4 investment projects had been implemented out of the 83 planned.

Second, the Federation's executive secretary, Alejo Veliz, exhorted peasant representatives to ask for a detailed financial report and mechanisms to guarantee that

this low level of implementation would not happen again. A long discussion followed concerning the attributions—according to the LPP—of the oversight committee to ask higher instances of government to freeze the funds if mayors were not working well.

Third, in relation to the demands for the 1997 plan, (POA 97), the procedure was very similar to the evaluation of the '96 plan. PROSANA's *técnicos* facilitated the discussion in the 8 groups and used the same type of lists and charters. This time the charters were filled with the list of projects to be implemented in 1997. Those projects that had been on the 1996 plan but had not been implemented were put on the list for 1997, marked as “demanda reprogramada.” New demands for the same type of projects were marked as “new demand.”

Neatly copied into charters that included price estimates, the resulting list of demands for projects was discussed at a very different meeting that PROSANA organized in Cochabamba in early January. Organized as a ‘workshop for the definition of the institutional supply,’ this meeting gathered representatives of the development institutions working in Arque, representatives of financial institutions, administrative staff from PROSANA and the municipalities, the mayors, the sub-prefecto, and the representatives of Arque's Central Campesina. The point was to see if the “institutional supply” could meet “the peasant demand.” That is, the discussion turned around who could fund future projects and who could implement them.

One significant aspect of the planning exercise that took place during this meeting was a discussion of criteria of priority, thereby addressing the problem of articulating which kinds of projects would be given priority (*categorías de jerarquización*). Nine (9) categories were agreed upon, going from those concerning projects that were already

being implemented (to assign money in order to finish them was priority one), to those projects that were still in the process of being designed, to those that had been already approved (by a major funding agency), and all the way down to the new demands gathered in the last CPPA meeting in Tacopaya.

Also central to this planning exercise was a discussion regarding finances. This involved showing that municipalities would not have enough money to cover the implementation of the projects demanded. After all, Tacopaya's budget for 1997 amounted only to Bs\$ 1,832.890 (less than 500.000 dollars) and Arque's to Bs\$ 1.651.007 (less than 400.000 dollars).³⁴ PROSANA's *técnicos* told me that the problem was a very serious one, and even suggested that the municipal government attain a line of credit. The lack of money also meant that PROSANA had to try harder to find other moneys.

At the next CPPA meeting held in Tacopaya in mid-January (1997), PROSANA's *técnicos* presented the list of projects to be included in the 1997 plan organized according to the criteria discussed at the institutional supply workshop, i.e. according to funding availability. The purpose of the meeting, according to the invitation, was to reach a consensus about which demands would be included in the POA 1997. However, the presentation of this list did not get much attention, and most of the meeting was concerning the conflict that exploded after Tacopaya's mayor presented, finally, his written 1996 economic report.

³⁴ The "fondos de coparticipación" for 1997 were of Bs\$ 154 per inhabitant (in 1996 they were of 135).

Indeed, Tacopaya's mayor very quickly read a list of items and amounts of money, without providing any details, specifications or explanations. From his report as presented we could not know if running water installations were already finished, in which places, and if they were operating. In fact, it was commonly known in the town of Tacopaya that construction had begun, but was never finished: the tubes collapsed, there was no running water in town, and nobody knew if one day there would be any. Most of the lists read by the mayor consisted of names of NGOs and the amount of money given to them, but no specification for what that money had been provided and if anything had been done. From the report it seemed like most of the money of the municipality had been given to development institutions.

The first and violent reaction came from Padre Luis, Tacopaya's parish priest. He violently criticized NGOs for taking the little money municipalities got from the central government. And, once again PROSANA's *técnicos* had to clarify. Also important was that at this meeting most people in the audience criticized the report for its lack of clarity, that it was read too quickly, and that nobody understood. However, Celso Vargas, the president of Tacopaya's oversight committee said that he did understand, arguing, "The problem is not that it is not clear, the problem is that the lack of clarity is a way of covering up bad management."³⁵ After a long discussion the assembly voted against the mayor's report; that is, Tacopaya's report was refused and the mayor left the room. Another long discussion followed, one where many questions were asked concerning the ways, according to the law, in which oversight committees could effectively control the wrong doings of a mayor. It was decided that as a first step the CPPA should write a

³⁵ The Spanish expression he used in the middle of his otherwise Qhishwa statement was: "mal manejo de fondos," i.e. an expression that covers all the range from simple bad accounting to embezzlement.

letter to the president of the municipal council asking to replace the mayor. Conflict did not stop there, and the tensions would escalate.

Early in April there was a CPPA meeting in Arque for the presentation of the POA 97. In relation to the planning process, this meeting was important in, at least, four ways. First, PROSANA's staff presented Arque's POA '97 to don Juvenal, mayor of Arque (the replacement of Gregorio Iriarte by Juvenal Perez for the mayor's office was decided by Arque's municipal council at the beginning of that year). The POA was completed and approved by the Secretaria de Participacion Popular. The mayor kept a copy, and gave one copy to the sub-prefecto, as well as providing one to the oversight committee. PROSANA's *técnicos* distributed copies to leaders of Arque's *sub-centrales*.

Second, the mayor of Tacopaya was absent. The director of an NGO who had been hired by Tacopaya's mayor to prepare the POA 97 presented an incomplete and not yet officially approved POA 97 for Tacopaya. Community representatives from Tacopaya were shocked to learn that an unknown NGO had been hired and that PROSANA was not involved. They were extremely worried about not yet having their POA approved, the implication here being that the municipality would not get the 'fondos de coparticipacion' until they had an approved POA. They asked why it was that this NGO did not coordinate with PROSANA, given that PROSANA had all the relevant information about the region. PROSANA's *técnico* said that he knew from informal sources that the mayor of Tacopaya had told them not to have anything to do with PROSANA. "It is not the fault of the NGO, it is the mayor who defined the terms of reference for their work."

Third, the president of Tacopaya's oversight committee, Celso Vargas, denounced the NGO for deceiving him. He had been invited to a meeting at the NGO's office in Cochabamba where the NGO *técnicos* showed the POA they were preparing. As Vargas told us,

We observed that there were many projectworks missing and that is how the meeting ended. Before leaving the secretary came with a "libro de actas" (a notebook where meeting's agenda and attendance is recorded) and asked us to sign. She said it was just to register our presence at the meeting. Later on, the people of the NGO used our signature to say that we had approved the POA; we never signed our approval of that POA."

Angry reactions came from the audience. Some community representatives proposed to take over the office of the municipality. The *técnicos* of the NGO under attack remained silent but clearly nervous.

Finally, PROSANA's *técnicos* calmed everybody down and proposed to name a committee that would mediate in the conflict. The committee was formed with representatives of PROSANA, the NGOs working in Tacopaya, Tacopaya's priest, the sub-prefecto, and the president of the oversight committee. The POA of Tacopaya was eventually completed with the help of PROSANA and the mediation of this committee, but the conflicts between the oversight committee and the mayor, as well as among the members of the municipal government escalated throughout the year.

In relation to the participatory planning meeting, this last episode (i.e. the preparation of the '97 POA) is important because it shows a) the dependence of peasants on the technical knowledge of development institutions and b) the importance of PROSANA's mediating role for peasants to be able to defend themselves from abuse by the hand of authorities unwilling to comply with the new legislation. By launching this participatory planning process, PROSANA succeeded in making peasants part of the

process as demanders / consumers of certain development items, and thereby opened a space for them to complain when they did not get those items. It is as if with the help of PROSANA they were able to have a sort of consumers' rights association.

V. Conclusion

The theories and methodologies of development planning advanced in the last 20 years aimed at improving the communicative interaction between developers and developpees in order to enhance the latter's participation in a bottom-up planning process. Communication techniques, interactive research methodologies and planning tools were designed to be used by development workers in their activities with local communities. The experience of Arque's 'participatory development planning process' shows that in spite of the painstaking efforts, developers' 'participatory' practices ended up reproducing the very same power/knowledge asymmetries they allegedly intended to reverse. Miscommunication, misunderstandings and relations of domination marked the process; the symbolic power of development experts prevailed, even if resisted.

As I showed throughout the chapter —and especially so when discussing what happened after the LPP—the technical knowledge of development experts was indispensable in the implementation of the methodology of participatory planning; such expertise included charts containing the information to be presented, design charts to be filled during the meetings, and the elaborate reports. The concrete outcome of the planning meetings I described had to be specific project ideas, and only the experts present at these meetings, and not the peasants, had the skills necessary to evaluate

project feasibility and to formulate these proposed projects following and in line with pre-existing jargon, categories, and requirements of funding agencies.

As long as these methodologies are applied within the context of the development encounter, they are part and parcel of the technologies of operation through which development planning's discursive and institutional practices systematically reduces the sociopolitical dimensions of poverty (and land distribution or ecological degradation) to mere technical problems, calling for attendant narrow and neutral technical interventions. Following the process of implementation of the law in Arque, I came to see the space created by the law as a playing field already designed for a certain game with its specific rules. All sorts of players can enter the field, all sorts of things can happen in the field, but you cannot play soccer on a baseball diamond. In this field you can claim respect for your civic rights, recognition for your ethnic identity, and express your preferences between a few affordable development goods (irrigation canal, health center, or school blackboards). However, there is no interlocutor to discuss access to land, minimum wages, or fair prices for local agricultural products.

Finally I would like to suggest that these participatory planning methodologies are best understood as symbolic systems operating within the field of development. What the development experts involved in their design seem to forget is that even the simplest symbolic exchange brings into play a complex and ramifying web of historical power relations among those involved in a communicative interaction. Furthermore, as Wacquant summing up Bourdieu's argument states,

The meaning and social efficacy of a message is determined only within a given field (...), itself nested in a network of hierarchical relations with other fields. Without an understanding of the entire structure of objective relationships that define positions in this field, of the specific political forms of censorship each imposes, and without knowledge of the trajectories and linguistic dispositions of those who occupy these positions, it is

impossible to fully explicate processes of communication –why something is said or not said, by whom, what is meant, what is understood, and, most importantly, with what social effects. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:150).

CHAPTER SIX

THE STORY OF A FIELD: MEMORY THROUGH THE CRACKS OF A PILOT EXPERIMENT

I. Introduction

This chapter tells the story of a field in the community of Totora Pampa where development experts conducted an experiment in ecological agriculture. Differing versions of the history of this particular field illustrate the miscommunication and multiple misunderstandings that characterize encounters between development workers and local residents. I situate these confusions and conflicting narratives in relation to the differing experiences and agendas of development workers and locals respectively. These differences inform local-level resistance to development initiatives, and help us understand how and why local engagements with the state and its agents (whether governmental or non-governmental) can be experienced in the idiom of “drunkenness.”

In order to provide the necessary background information, the chapter starts with a description of the management of the space and the organization of agricultural production in Totora Pampa (section II). In section III I present conflicting versions of the history of a particular field which the *técnicos* designated the *parcela agro-forestal* (agro-forestry plot), and which Totora Pampeños would often call the *parcela foresatl* (forestry plot) or simply *rusana parcela* (by which they meant PROSANA’s plot).

II. The Social Management of the Agricultural Space in Totora Pampa

In the rather arid, undulating puna highlands with round-top hills and mild slopes Totora Pampeños grow mostly potatoes, wheat, and barley, and raise sheep and a few goats. Only potatoes are sold in the market. Cereals are for household consumption or for fodder. Middle-aged and older people remember the time of their childhood when *quinua* grew well. There were more bushes for firewood, and most families were able to raise not only sheep, but also llamas. A wide exchange / barter network linking different ecological niches allowed for a more varied diet (e.g. including valley products such as corn in daily meals).¹ Nowadays, *quinua* doesn't grow anymore, firewood is very scarce, only a few families have some llamas, 'llameros' are rarely seen in this region, and valley products are seldom part of a regular meal.

As in other parts of the Andean highlands, the management of agricultural space in Totora Pampa follows a complex system of field – crop rotation (including the combination of farming and grazing) which tends to maximize productivity and minimize risks. In the regions of Arque and Bolivar, the area comprising the household plots that follow the same communal rotation cycle is called *aynuqa*.² The *aynuqa* system can be found in the higher parts of the Arque province; the closer one gets to the lower parts of the valleys, the less likely its occurrence. While it is true that haciendas in the valleys followed a different form of management of the agricultural space, the case of Totora Pampa is representative of those highland regions where the incorporation into hacienda did not involve the disintegration of the *aynuqa* system.

¹ Quinoa is an Andean cereal that grows in high altitudes. Exchange networks would include the llameros, i.e. caravans of llama pastoralists that traveled between the high plateau and the lower valleys.

Totora Pampeños distinguish two different farming zones within their territory, which correspond to ecological zones: the ‘q’oñi jallpas’ or warm, dry lands and the ‘chiri jallpas’ or cold, humid lands.³ Each area has its own *aynuqa* system and thus follows a different rotation cycle. The *aynuqas* of the dry zone, generally called Totora Pampa, rotate clockwise, the *aynuqas* of the humid zone, generally called Vaqueria, rotate counterclockwise (see figure 2 16 and 17, and map 5).⁴ In general, the crop rotation cycle within the *aynuqa* starts with potatoes, followed by barley of good quality in the second year, then barley of a lesser quality in the third year, and barley only for fodder in the fourth year. The *aynuqa* is then left fallow (3 years in the dry area and 4 years in the humid area) and open for grazing. Thus, the movement of herds is complementary to crop rotation cycles.⁵

Local / ethnic authorities are elected on a yearly basis to oversee *aynuqas*’ production. The *jilanku* and his two assistants (*alfiris*) are in charge of making sure that production goes smoothly. They perform rituals to prevent natural disasters, keep an eye on signs announcing hail, call for meetings if problems arise. In compensation for his work the *jilanku* to farm the communal plot in the *aynuqa* assigned for potatoes.

² ‘*Aynuqa*’ is an Aymara term used mostly in the northern part of the high plateau. In other regions it is called a *manta* (e.g. Albo 1988: 467-68)

³ ‘Q’oñi in Qhishwa means hot or warm, jallp’a means farming land / field or soil; according to agronomists’ classification this is the dry area. ‘Chiri’ in Qhishwa means cold; according to agronomists’ classification this is a humid area.

⁴ The dry zone is divided into eight *aynuqas*: Waca K’ala,, Wisaru, Qallpa Qallpani, Lente K’asa, Qhellu Rumi, Sevaruyo, Totora Pampa, and Viluyo. The humid zone is divided into nine *aynuqas*: Ch’ojlla Meqa, Ayrapuna, Q’ara Qhochi, Chiquería, Iru Kinray, Mujuna, Gira Girani, Taypi K’asa, and Vaqueria. The *aynuqa* Vaqueria, within the zone of Vaqueria, is located at the intersection of both zones and, thus, both rotation systems overlap at this place.

⁵ In the last year of the cycle (8th and 9th years respectively) the land is tilled in preparation for the potato sowing the following year. Sometimes, in some places second or third year sowings might include wheat, favabean, green peas, or other tubers (e.g. papalisa or oca).

Figure 16: Rotation in Totora Pampa's *Aynoqa* System

Source: Fernandez 1995: 67

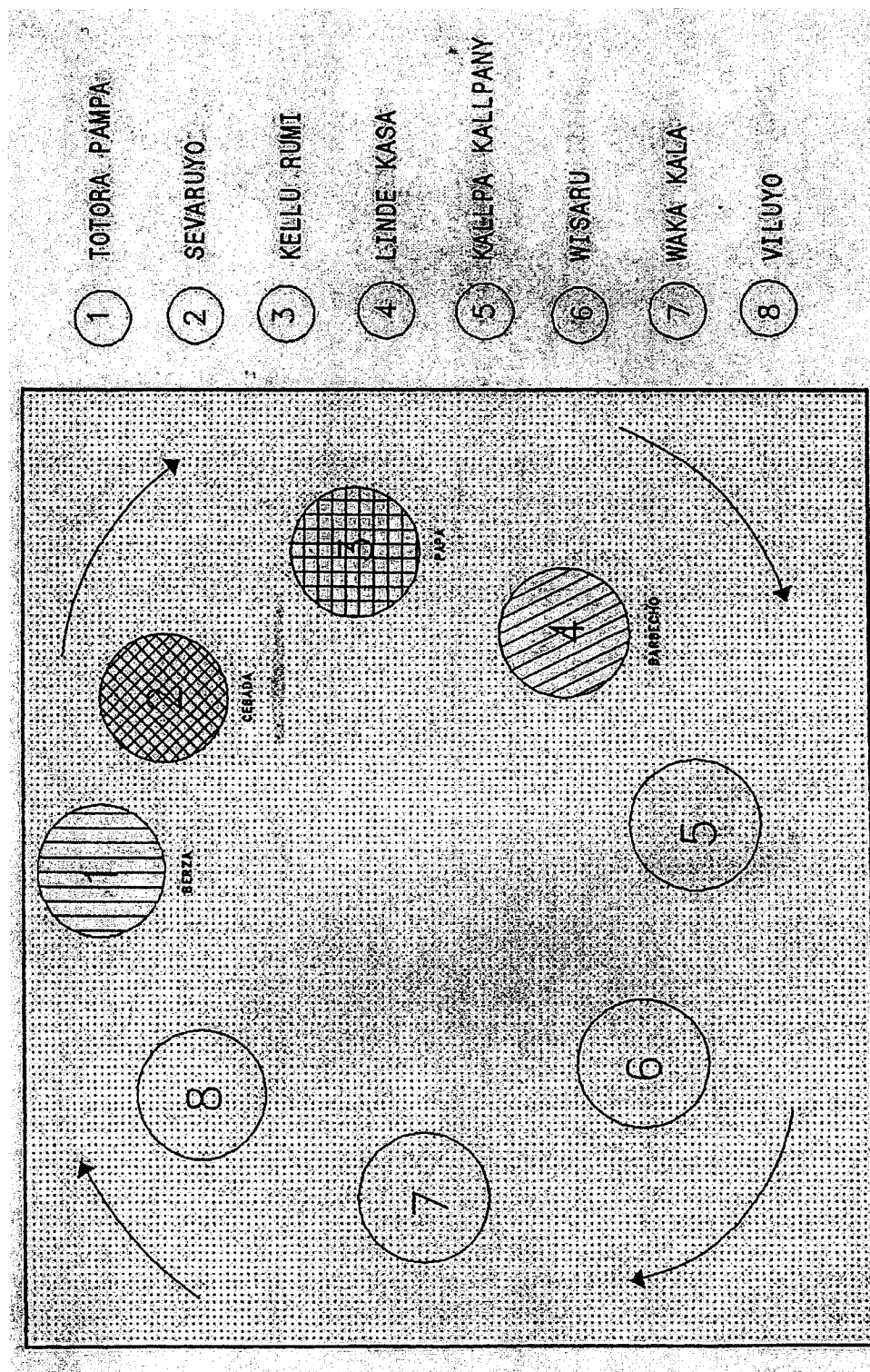
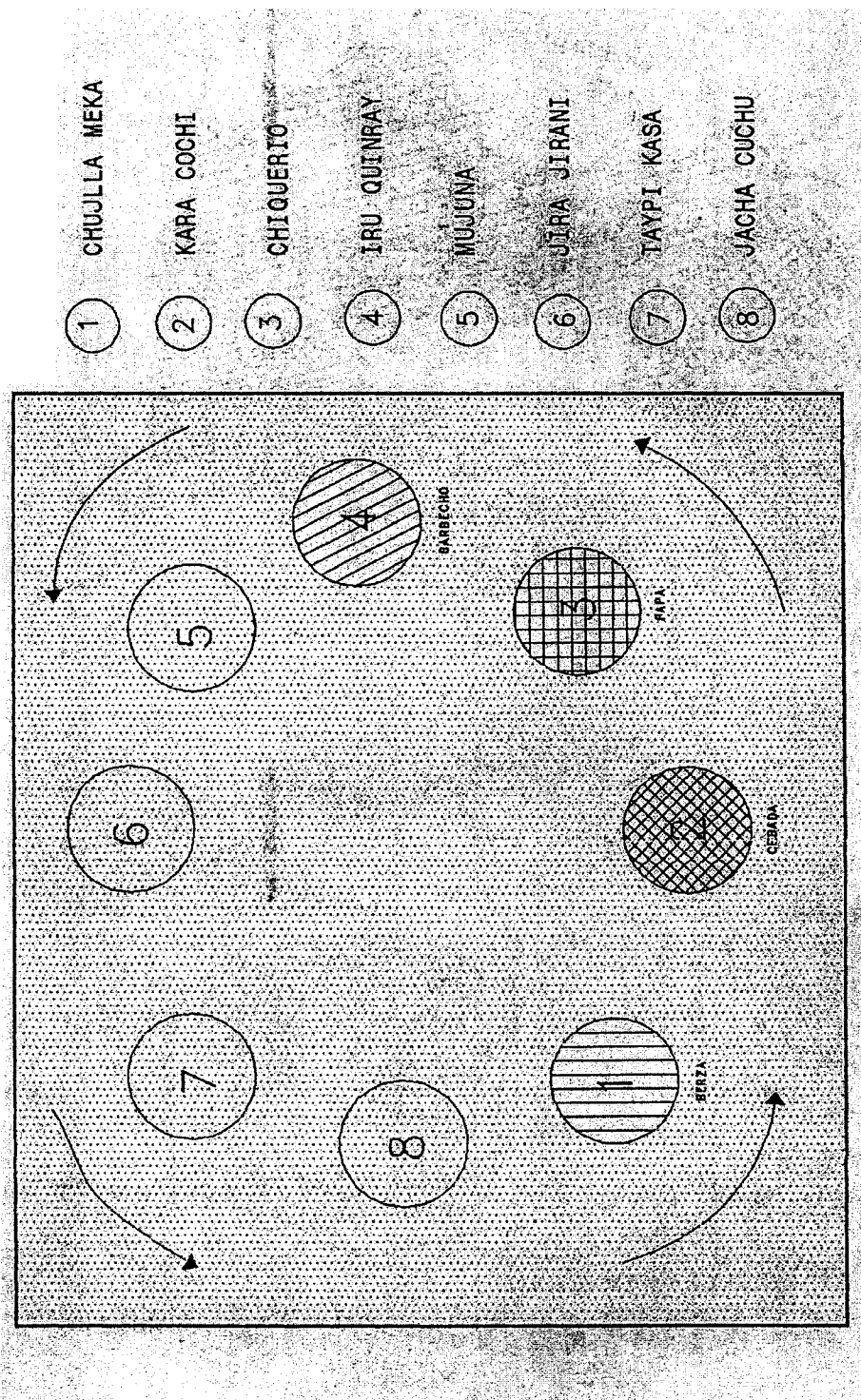


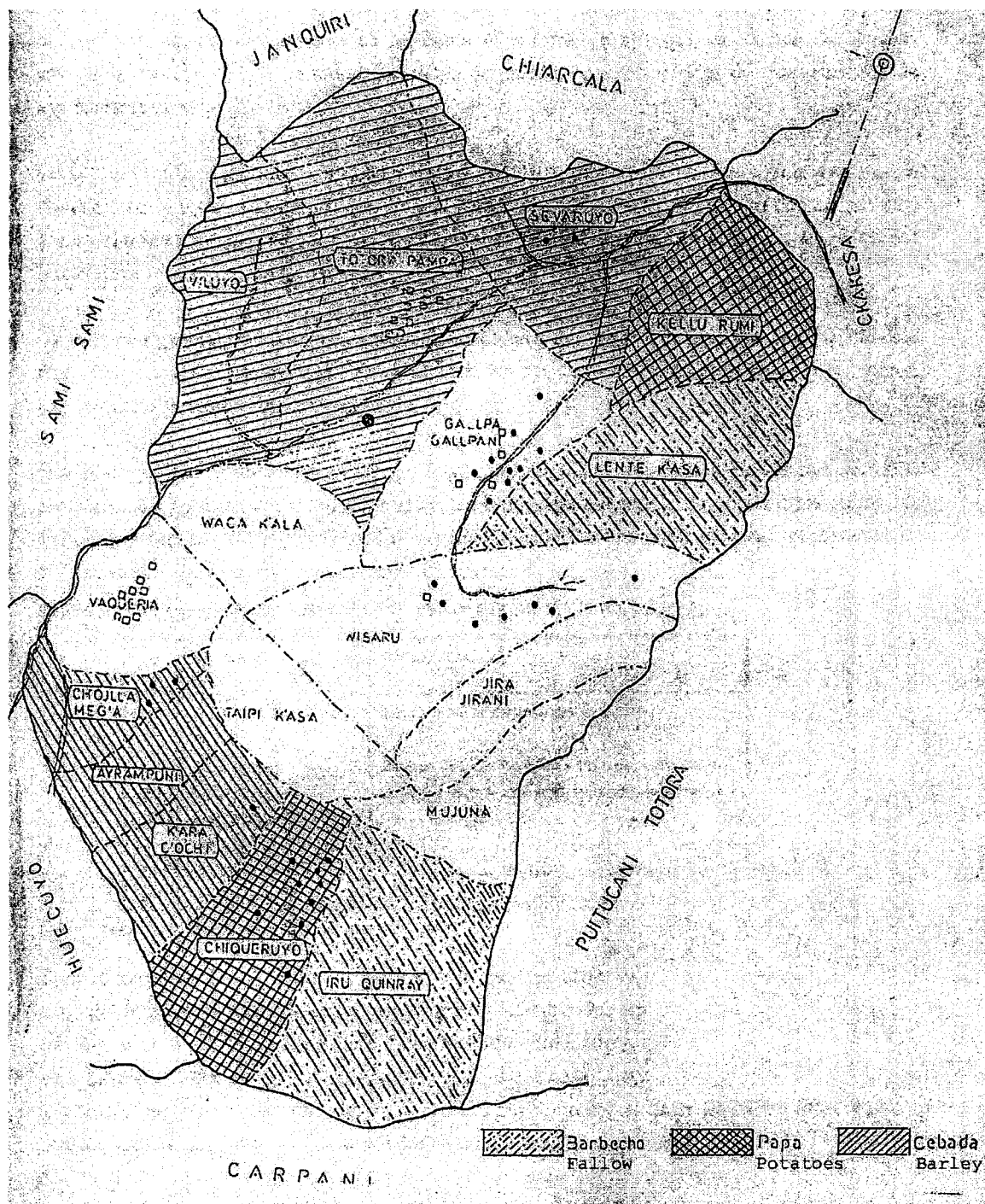
Figure 17: Rotation in Vaqueria's *Aynuqa* System

Source: Fernandez 1995: 68



Map 5: Totora Pampa: Management of the Agricultural Space

Source: Fernandez 1995: 69



While the usage of the agricultural – pastoral space is communally managed, actual agricultural production is managed by households. Everybody has access to land in all the *aynuqas* of both zones. Each household owns several plots (usually between 5 and 10) dispersed within each *aynuqa*. Each household decides whether to cultivate all the plots that year or not; whether to combine the main crop (corresponding to the rotation cycle) with other crops; and how to organize the work. These decisions are usually based on labor availability that, in turn, is related to the household life cycle and the possibilities of getting extra household labor through different forms of reciprocal exchanges. From this very general description we can only begin to imagine the complexity of the agricultural production system. A household can have as many as 90 plots dispersed in the 17 *aynuqas*. Each plot has a different size, a different quality of soil, might be exposed to different microclimatic conditions, and therefore requires different kinds of care.

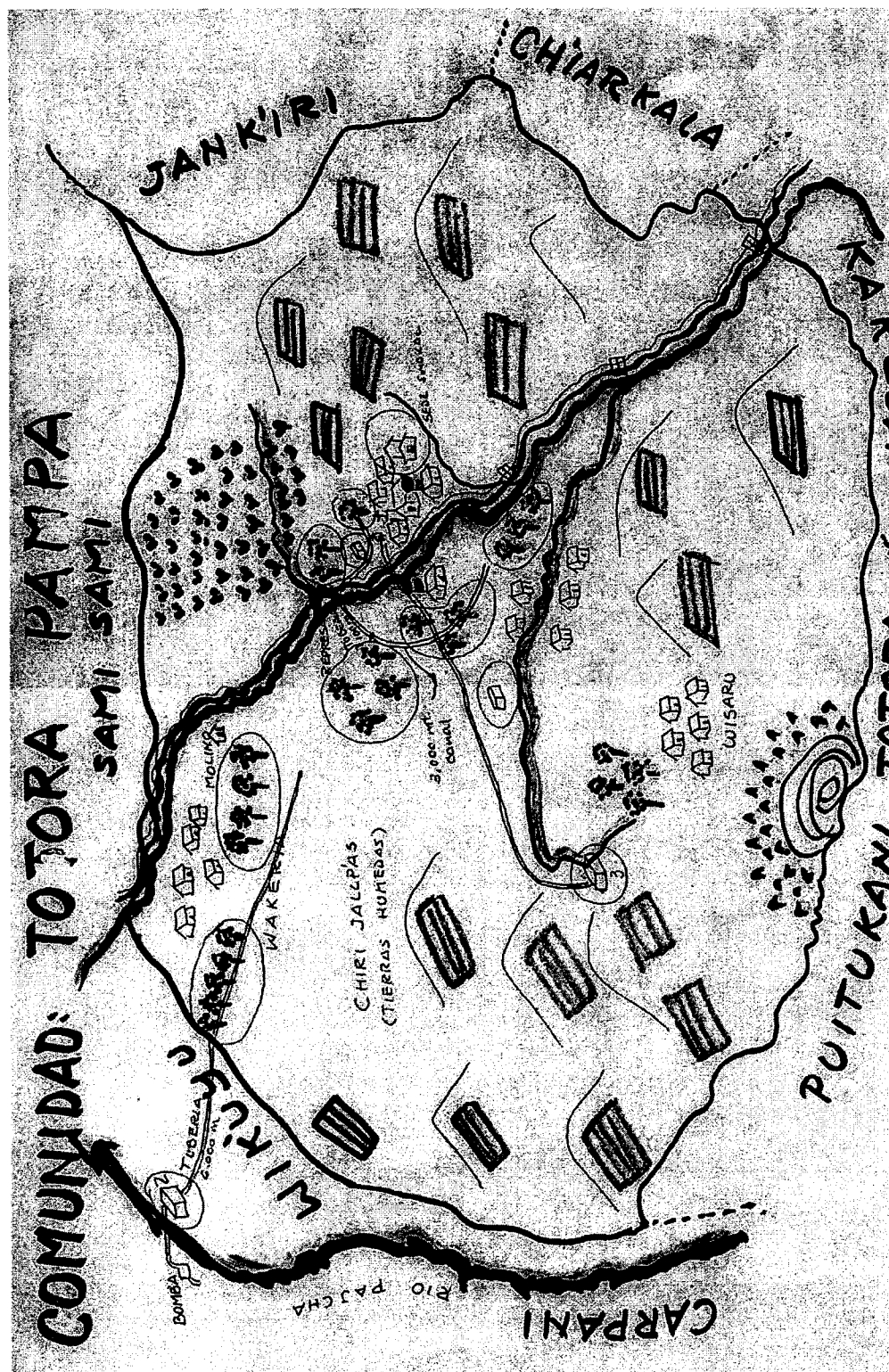
According to the records kept in the community file (Totora Pampa 1995), the village of Totora Pampa or, more strictly speaking, the *sindicato agrario* of Totora Pampa is formed by 82 households and has a total population of 384 inhabitants (48% men and 52% women). From the 82 households, 50 live in the dry area and 32 in the humid area. The main settlement (the village or what Totora Pampeños would like to be officially recognized as ‘pueblo’) is located within the area of the *aynuqa* of Totora Pampa. There we find the church (which opens when the priest of Tacopaya comes twice a year), the school, the authorities’ offices, a couple of stores (which open when the owners are around and there is some special event), and the health center. Smaller and more dispersed settlements are located in the areas of Qallpa Qallpani and Wisaru (see

map 6). The settlement of the 32 households living in the humid area is also dispersed (except for a few clusters of houses belonging to extended families) and located within the area of the *aynuqa* of Vaqueria. The number of people actually living in these settlements varies in conjunction with the rotation cycle and the movement of the herds.⁶

⁶ Most families have two residences. For example, the year I lived in Totorá Pampa, the *aynuqa* of Totorá Pampa was in fallow and therefore families were living in the village with their herds. When the *aynuqa* is used for agricultural production, most families move with their herds to their second residence. Some members of the household may stay in Totorá Pampa, but the herds will be kept away until the *aynuqa* is left fallow again. A few households (5 or 6) have their second (or main) residence in a neighboring community where they also have access to land (inherited from their parents who bought it or acquired through marriage).

Map 6: Totora Pampa's Map Drawn by *Técnicos* and Villagers

(Source: Totora Pampa 1995 – Community File)



For the sake of clarity it is worth mentioning that the name Totora Pampa refers to different scales of a geographical space. Thus, 'Totora Pampa' is the name of 1) an *aynuqa* (field) within the dry area, 2) the village or settlement built within this *aynuqa*, and 3) the territory covered by all the fields that form the *aynuqa* system (as in 'the *aynuqas* of Totora Pampa' and the *aynuqas* of Vaqueria). Totora Pampa is also the name of the *sindicato agrario* formed by the 82 households who have access to land within the territory covered by both *aynuqa* systems. The 'community of Totora Pampa' refers to these people and this territory. Totora Pampa is also the name of the '*Subcentral*,' the next level in the union organization hierarchy, which is formed by eight neighboring agrarian sindicatos or unions: Totora Pampa, Chiarkala, Jank'iri, Janq'oyu, Kakisa, Llallagua, Puitucani, and Wik'uyu.

Furthermore, what is referred by *Sub-central* has also changed through time. When it was first created during the years that followed the 1953 Agrarian Reform, the Subcentral of Totora Pampa was formed by 13 *sindicatos agrarios* and was coextensive with what had been, until the reform, the hacienda of Totora Pampa. Indeed, before the 1953 Agrarian Reform, Totora Pampa also was the name of a large hacienda, a land estate of 11.258 hectares (Fernandez 1995: 38). Classified as latifundio because of its size, the hacienda of Totora Pampa was one of the 16 haciendas in the province to be entirely affected by the reform. Until the end of the colonial period Totora Pampa was legally recognized as an "Indian Community" and 'annex' to the sub-parish Kirqiawy (see appendix). It probably formed an *ayllu*, or part of an *ayllu*, like the neighboring indigenous communities (*ayllu* Kirqiawy, in the Bolivar province, and the rest of the

ayllus of Northern Potosi; see appendix). Totorá Pampa became a privately owned estate, a *hacienda*, only at the turn of the 20th century, after the 1870s liberal reforms had promoted land commercialization and with it the expansion of latifundia. In contrast to the much older haciendas of the valleys, there was no hacienda house in Totorá Pampa. The Bustos family, the landowners, lived in the town of Tacopaya, where they owned other estates; they also had a house in the city of Cochabamba.

Even during the hacienda regime agricultural production was organized following the *aynuqa* rotation system. The landowner's plots were dispersed within each *aynuqa* like everybody else's plots. The '*patrón*' (boss) -- as landowners were called by hacienda peasants-- would rarely visit this estate, unless he felt the need to assert his authority or the threat of losing his property rights, in which case he would show up accompanied by soldiers, the '*fuerzas del orden*' (forces of order) as newspapers would occasionally report (Fernandez 1995: 18-20). Older people remember when their fathers and grandfathers had to take the products of the harvest to the landowner's house in Tacopaya and take turns working there as '*pongos*' (house servants). Older women remember the stories their grandmothers told them but they never saw the *patron*, nor did they remember his name. They vividly remember the stories they heard in their childhood about the abuses that were committed under the hacienda regime, but they did not experience themselves the harshness of hacienda regime because by the time they got married the situation had already started to change. Indeed, by the end of the 1930s there were already many signs announcing the irreversible end of the hacienda regime. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the 40's were a decade of social unrest in the countryside, especially in the region of Cochabamba. The law and the 'forces of order'

were still on the side of landowners, but that did not stop hacienda *colonos* (peasants living within the hacienda) from uprising repeatedly. Sometimes hacienda *colonos* bought land from the landowner. At other times hacienda *colonos* took over the land and pushed out the landowner; many times this led to violent confrontations with the army.⁷

Totora Pampeños share a vague memory of an ‘ayllu’ past as a legally recognized “Indian community” with corporate / communal land ownership. They know that their ancestors held titles from the Spanish crown recognizing their ownership of that land ‘since time immemorial’. Yet I never heard them saying they wanted to be recognized by the Bolivian state as a ‘*comunidad originaria*’ (the term under which the law of agrarian reform recognized the corporate ownership of land of indigenous communities like the ayllus of Northern Potosi). In contrast, they told me over and over again that they wanted to become a *canton* with Totora Pampa as ‘town’ and that they had initiated the procedure years ago.⁸

Totora Pampeños also know that they were part of an hacienda, and share a very clear and strong memory of the times of the *patrones*, a time of subjugation, exploitation, and abuse. Those who experienced the every-day hardship of the hacienda regime are already gone. Those who are still alive and were born under hacienda regime, grew up during the 1930s and 1940s, a period during which the hacienda regime was in decline. They remember the stories their parents told them but they did not deal directly with

⁷ In Totora Pampa, a few colonos tried to secretly buy the landowner fields. They went to see him in his house in Cochabamba and gave him a down payment. But the transaction was interrupted when another colono found out about it and was able to demonstrate in front of the lawyer that they were not authorized by the community to do so. I was also told that one day the patron arrived in Totora Pampa with soldiers to assert his property rights and mark the fields that belonged to him. I was never able to establish the chronology of these two episodes or their accuracy.

⁸ . ‘Canton’ is the smallest administrative unit of the Bolivian state. The corregidor is the canton authority; he is appointed by and has to report to the provincial sub-prefect.

landowners. The majority of Totora Pampeños today were born after the agrarian reform. However, as we will see later, the idea or the fear that those times still looms large for them.

With the agrarian reform law, the 13 *estancias* of the hacienda became the 13 *sindicatos agrarios* of the *Subcentral* of Totora Pampa. From the 11,250 hectares of the hacienda – and then later the subcentral – around 1,100 hectares corresponded to the *sindicato agrario* of Totora Pampa. At that time (late 1950s), only half of the territory was used for agricultural production (around 548 has.) and was divided into 10 *aynuqas*. The other half was communal grazing lands. (These non-farmed lands are usually called ‘*purumas*’.) The 548 hectares of the agricultural production area were divided into 20 agricultural units of a more or less equal size (ranging from 24 to 33 hectares each) and given to the 20 heads of households that used to farm them as hacienda ‘*pegujaleros*.’⁹ Some of the fields that had been farmed for the hacienda *patron* (a total of about 15 hectares) were kept as communal property to be worked as a cooperative. This term was very much in tune with the modernizing ideas of projects launched by the 1952 revolution; through time, these ‘cooperative lands’ came to be known as communal plots ‘*terrenos comunales*,’ they were never worked as a cooperative.

In sum, in 1961 the recently created *sindicato agrario* of Totora Pampa was formed by 20 households. Only half of its territory (then divided into 10 *aynuqas*) was used for agricultural production; the other half was not farmed and was only used for grazing. Since then, many things have changed. Population increased, the area for agricultural cultivation expanded over the hitherto uncultivated grazing lands, the period

⁹ ‘*Pegujal*’ was the word used to designate the pieces of land that a hacienda peasant could farm for his family; and *pegujalero* designates the person entitled to that land, i.e the hacienda peasant or *colono*.

of *aynuqa* fallow shortened, and the size of agricultural units decreased as land was divided among the children and grandchildren of the 20 pegujaleros who received property titles in the 1950s. Furthermore, during the year I was there, the community of Totorá Pampa was fissioning, the 32 households living in the zone of Vaquería wanted to become a separate 'sindicato agrario' or community.¹⁰

To measure the amount of land to which each household has access is a difficult and uncertain task. As I mentioned before, a household has an average of 85 plots, of various shapes and sizes, dispersed within and throughout the 17 *aynuqas*. Plots are usually measured in terms of the amount of potato seeds that can be planted in them, and this amount varies not only according to the size but also according to the location. Furthermore, besides the average of 85 plots a household owns in the community, there is the land they own outside the community and the land they have access to through sharecropping and /or some other form of reciprocal exchange within and / or outside the community.¹¹ In those areas of the *aynuqas* where irrigation canals could be dug (from the river) families have a plot called "*canchon*" where they can grow vegetables (onions, carrots, alfalfa) all year round. These are private areas outside the communal *aynuqa* management.

In his study of nutritional security strategies, the agronomist Walter García undertook the difficult task of measuring the land used by 6 families (García 1996). According to this study, the total amount of land owned by household ranges between 2.2 hectares to 3.9 hectares, that is an average of 3.1 hectares per household. Following closely the agricultural production of these 6 households during 1993 –1994, García

¹⁰ The changes brought about by the LPP encouraged the formation of independent communities.

¹¹ This is a relative ownership in the sense that there is at there is no land market.

found that the number of plots farmed in the 9 *aynuqas* under cultivation that year ranged between 31 and 45, that is an average of 38 plots per household. The total amount of land cultivated during that year by each one of the households he studied ranged between 2.08 and 3.43 hectares, that is, an average of 2.75 hectares. This included land to which the families had access through sharecropping (within and outside Totorá Pampa) and through inheritance or marriage in neighboring communities. Put differently, from the total amount of land these 6 families cultivated, between 62.42% and 84.9% was family property and between 15.31 and 38.58 % was land they had access to through some form of sharecropping or reciprocal exchange.

I did not undertake the task of measuring land during my fieldwork in Totorá Pampa but, relying on García's data, I rather tried to assess how representative his sample was. What I found was that the sample studied by García does not account for the range of variation resulting from the partition of the property received from the agrarian reform. Of the 20 agricultural units (*melgas* or *pegujales*) distributed in the 1950s, one has remained undivided to this day, 3 were divided into only 2 equal parts and the remaining 16 units were divided into at least 3 parts and at most 10 parts (of different proportions). In sum, combining the data gathered by García and the information I gathered, I estimate that the size of agricultural units in Totorá Pampa ranges between 3 and 40 hectares. While the majority of agricultural units have between 3 and 5 hectares, there are about 6 units that have between 8 and 16 hectares, and one unit that has 40 hectares.

According to local perceptions and criteria of socio-economic stratification and inequality, Totorá Pampeños are all more or less equally poor, with the exception of one family considered to be very well off. Everybody I asked, including them, considers that

this family is much better off than the rest and that no one else in the community could aspire to their standard of living. This is the family that inherited the undivided agricultural unit.¹² Among the rest, the more or less equally poor, 5 to 7 families were considered to be slightly better off. This was not just because they had more land, but also because they had better quality land, were able to produce larger amounts for the market and/or were able to engage in some commercial activity (a store, buying and selling animals), and could thus generate a permanent flow of cash. The 14 families that own some land in the tropical region of Chapare were also considered to be doing better than the rest. They were set apart in the local classification because their well-being did not derive from their situation within the community. At the other extreme, there were 6 families considered to be poorer than the rest because of their low level of agricultural production, which forced them to migrate more often than the rest. They either had less land than the rest or else their land was of a very bad quality, and they did not participate in networks of reciprocal exchange through which they could have access to better land or more labor.

With the intensification of agricultural use of land, overgrazing and deforestation have increased and the conditions for agricultural production have greatly deteriorated. Soils are exhausted, the propensity to erosion has increased, and levels of productivity have decreased.¹³ To these devastating effects caused by the overuse of land, we should

¹² This is the family of Wilfredo Clemente whom I mentined in chapter 1. According to what he himself told me, he had 40 hectares in Totora Pampa, a herd of 400 sheep and more than 30 llamas that grazed in the pastures of his mother's community. He also half-owned a truck with a truck driver – merchant (transportista) who lived in Oruro. The latter drove the truck and traveled throughout the high plateau carrying merchandise and people. This was one of the trucks that would occasionally come to Totora Pampa. It would specially come during harvest time and don Wilfredo would use it to take his potato harvest to the market of Oruro.

¹³ My opinion is based on PROSANA's studies and on the many times I heard people complain about how tired fields are. However this statement has to be taken very carefully. It is almost a commonplace to point

add the ravages caused by severe droughts in the 1980s. Since then seasonal migration is not only part of the old movement pattern to obtain produce from different ecological patterns but the main strategy to obtain an indispensable income in cash.

III. The Conflicting Stories of a Field

As I described in the introduction, I arrived to the community of Totora Pampa on a rainy evening in February 1997 after a long journey through the mountains and the high plateau. I arrived with Yolanda, the field assistant who helped me with the Qhishwa language during the first six months, and 6 other people related to PROSANA and the NGO (PAFKUM) that worked in the area. In the darkness of that cold puna night, I could barely see the long rectangular plaza where we parked and the shape of the house built by PROSANA for the community. One side of the house served as an office for local authorities and community meetings. The other side had a kitchen and two rooms for the NGO *técnicos* and other visitors. This is the house where I lived during my ten-month stay in Totora Pampa. In this house, we had a stove with a gas container and solar panels that provided electric light at night. At that time I was not aware how useful these services would turn out to be for my fieldwork. Indeed, during the many nights that Yolanda and I spent alone in the house (the NGO s would come and go and only occasionally spend a couple of nights), all sorts of visitors would drop by after dinner. Children who wanted to do their homework, adult men interested in discussing the new laws, women who wanted to exchange a cup of dried potatoes (*chuño*) for a cup of sugar,

to the deterioration of this part of the Andean highlands. I've heard many development experts in Bolivia say that the ecological deterioration is irreversible and efforts aimed at improving productivity are doomed to fail. One thing is to say that agriculture in these regions will never yield levels of profit that could be attractive for capitalist investments, another thing is to say that agriculture is not viable anymore. This viability is not a fact of nature, but part of a much larger political question.

school teachers who wanted to share their views about the educational reform, authorities who wanted me to help them write a letter, etc. These were privileged moments in which to verify the information I had gathered during the day and engage with them in long conversations.

My first day in Totorá Pampa started very early with the visit to one of the projects being implemented at that moment. I followed PROSANA's supervisor and PAFKUM's *tecnico* in charge of the project to see the five plots (belonging to five different families) where different combinations of intercropping were being tried out. Most of these plots were located between the irrigation canal built by PROSANA and the Totorá Pampa river, a 15 minute-walk south from the village. Walking along the irrigation canal, I noticed that there was no water in it. The owners of the plots were already waiting for me. From what I could gather, from their very technical discussion, both sides seemed quite satisfied about the progress of the crops. As we walked from field to field, PROSANA's supervisor pointed to the different spots undergoing --or about to undergo-- erosion. For each one, he would suggest a different treatment. For some, it was too late. Most treatments consisted in filling up the holes with wooden logs and stones, and only later would I realize that both were very scarce in Totorá Pampa. Learning to read the threatening signs of erosion through the eyes of the *tecnicos*, I soon realized the extreme fragility of this environment. The terrain where these plots were located was about 10 meters above the river bed. Walking along the edge I could see parts of the river undermining the base of the terrain where we were standing. I was particularly appalled by the sight of parts of the edge, where I could see entire chunks of cultivated plots sunk down some five meters.

By the time the *tecnicos* left, shortly before noon, all villagers had left for their fields and the village seemed deserted. The only place where some human activity could be perceived was the school compound. Schoolteachers had arrived a few days before because the school year was scheduled to start the following Monday.

While walking around in the deserted village during that first day in Totora Pampa, Yolanda and I ran into a couple of schoolteachers who were going to a water source. We followed the schoolteachers to the stream of water running down the hill behind 'our house' and learned about the different water sources hiding at the base of the hillside facing the plaza.

From the bottom of the hill I could see, in the middle of that hillside, a field fenced with barbed wire. I couldn't see anything growing inside but a few bushes or saplings about a meter high. It seemed to be the only area under cultivation on that slope. At that time I did not know that this hill was part of the *aynuqa* of Totora Pampa. Walking up the stream I saw, at the bottom of another hillside, another fenced field. This time the fence was made of stone and mud. Inside there were a couple of poplar trees and clear traces of the field being cultivate. This was the greenest spot I had seen so far. I did not know then that this was one of the 'canchones' that I described earlier; i.e. an irrigated small private family plot that did not follow the rotation cycle of the *aynuqa* and where families grew some vegetables. What caught my attention at that moment was the view of the fence.

The contrast between the mud-stone fence and the barbed wire fence reminded me of the conversations I had with two of the *tecnicos* during our trip the day before.

PROSANA's supervisor pointed to mud or stone fences, explaining that these were called

‘portas’ and indicated the existence of a local technology of fence building. He emphasized, in front of the other *tecnicos*, the importance of supporting local ways and local practices instead of barbed wire that had to be bought in the city. Later on, one of PAFKUM’s *tecnicos* (the one in charge of the family-plot project) confided to me his disagreement. In his opinion, barbed-wire fences were more efficient because its construction was less time-consuming. “It is true,” he had told me, “that peasants here cannot afford to buy barbed wire and that wood for the posts is extremely scarce, but if the institutions can provide the wire and bring it from the city in their pick-ups, why shouldn’t peasants take advantage of it? It was as if he wanted to question the right of urbanites to prevent impoverished rural peasants from sharing, at least for a little while, a little piece of market modern comfort. I countered with the argument of dependency and sustainability, i.e. development projects should not promote the usage of resources that local communities would not be able to afford once the project was over, but I was far from convincing him. That conversation was the beginning of a long dialogue that I developed with this *tecnico* throughout my fieldwork in Arque and about which I will say more later. Suffice it to say for the moment that based on the information I had, fences would attract my attention. The sight of barbed wire fences would make me wonder how the decision was made, who had brought the wire, and what was the connection to which development project. The plots I had visited in the morning all had barbed wire fences. But they were being intensively farmed. In contrast, this lonely hillside plot seemed rather abandoned. Since this hillside faced the house where I lived, I was able to observe this lonely field from the window of the main room.

I went to the field and I saw that there were trees planted, some of them were 50 – 80 centimeters high, which meant that they had been planted 4 years earlier. Some of the saplings were planted in a horizontal line, others were around the fence, meaning that in the future they would become a fence. I could also see that erosion cracks were filled with white plastic bags filled with stones. There were signs of some terracing, but by and large the field looked rather abandoned. There were holes in the fence. Very soon I realized that nobody paid much attention to this field, nobody seemed interested in taking care of it, nobody felt concerned or responsible by what was happening to the field. I became very intrigued. I wondered what was the story: was it that the project had failed; that the institution had abandoned the project; or that the community was unresponsive?

I started asking questions. At the beginning I only got very vague answers or technical explanations. From my neighbors I learned that this '*parcela*' was a communal field where PROSANA had started working years ago. Nobody seemed to know what was going to happen there. From their perspective it was PROSANA's responsibility, but PROSANA had left and PAFKUM *tecnicos* did not seem to care about it.

The *tecnicos* working in Totora Pampa while I was there had come after PROSANA left; they had not been hired to work on the *parcela* but seemed willing to do the follow up if the community would ask them. From their perspective, if the field remained untended it was because community people were either lazy or not interested. They explained to me that this '*parcela* agro-forestal' was a pilot experiment to develop agro-ecological techniques of mixing inter-cropping agriculture with forestry within a single field. They explained to me the most basic technical aspects and I must thank them for their patience; my ignorance in those matters might have been exasperating. From

them I learned about the properties of native species and of “exotic” (foreign) species. From them I also learned that to prevent erosion on a hill it is necessary to terrace, plant trees horizontally and vertically, re-grow a layer of vegetation, plant in a certain direction, and dig canals. To stop erosion once it starts it is necessary to fill the holes and crevices with plastic bags filled with stones and dirt. In sum, they knew what the project was about in technical terms and seemed prepared to do a technical follow up. However, none of them knew about the politics and the history of how this particular *parcela* project had come into being.

These answers, which were either too vague or too technical, only increased my curiosity; but it took me a long time to identify those who knew the history and the politics of the *parcela* project. I was only able to interview them towards the end of my stay. In the meantime, however, I learned about other aspects of the history and life of Totorá Pampeños and their interactions with development projects. Although in an indirect way, a lot of this information was crucial to start making sense of what that abandoned, barbed-wire fenced field in front of my window was all about.

A. Observations and Indirect Information

Women’s rumors about barbed wire and ‘patrones’: understanding new times through old timers’ memories: The day after my official presentation at the community meeting, I visited the ‘presidenta del club de madres’ (president of the mothers club), an all-women organization that had been created by Tacopaya’s priest, Father Luis, in 1991 when religious institutions gave away food for work. She was my neighbor, her family was part of the five family-projects I had visited with the *tecnicos*, and her family also had barbed wire fences around their plots behind their house. When I told her that I was

interested in learning about the work of development institutions in the region she replied: “We know that institutions are here to improve our land so that landowners will be able to come back. Those fields that are fenced with barbed wire, those are the fields that the landowners are going to take.” Surprised, I asked “if that is the case why did you let your husband put barbed wire in your family plots?” She told me that her husband was very “vivo” and that he wouldn’t let anybody take his field away, that nobody would dare to mess with him: “He is taking advantage of what the institution is offering but he will not let anybody fool him.” As if she was voicing the fears of everybody in the community, the rumor about “*patrones* coming back” was recurrent in most of my conversations with women.

I was very struck by the women’s way of explaining the presence of institutions and even more struck by the fact that, for them, the barbed wire announced the return of landowners.¹⁴ In relation to the intriguing *parcela*, this idea that barbed wire was being put in fields that were going to be taken away by the returning *patrones* was a very bad sign, one element pointing towards a problematic relationship between local residents and the development project. Of course this could not in itself be the whole explanation of why people were not concerned with the *parcela*. Other fields were also fenced with barbed wire, and yet people were working on them.

I was even more struck by the continuous reference to *patrones* of the old hacienda times, a reference that to me seemed totally baseless. This reference was even more common when speaking to old women (in their seventies or eighties). For example,

¹⁴ While they were talking to me I was wondering what they could possibly mean. From my perspective, it was very clear that landowners would not want to take the land back. Not only because the agrarian reform was passed 50 years ago, but mainly because this region is so poor and so dry that who could be interested in investing in doing agriculture there. No investment would give any profits.

one old woman told me that the conditions of agricultural production had deteriorated since the *patrones* left. Her explanation was that when they were forced to leave, *patrones* took 'the good luck of the land' with them. Another old woman said that *patrones* had sent planes to fly over the community and spray poison over the fields

From my initial inquiries, I had another important piece of information about the intriguing *parcela*, i.e. that it was a 'communal field'. This element also pointed to a possible connection to hacienda times. As I mentioned earlier, under the hacienda regime, the *patron's* plots were within each *aynuqa*. The peasants farmed these plots and gave the harvest to the *patron*. When the agrarian reform took place, the plots that belonged to the landowners were declared communal plots. These communal lands were, and still are, used in two ways: a) they are subdivided among the members of the community or b) one is given to the *jilangu* in exchange of his services that year.

Putting together the threads of the information I had with the rumors I had heard, I could weave one possible story. The *parcela* was located within an *aynuqa* but it was not treated like the rest of the *aynuqa* plots. It was fenced and cultivated outside the rotation cycle. In the past it belonged to the *patron*. Because he could return to claim it, it was fenced, and this is why these outsiders wanted to improve it.

Of Rights and Obligations, Communal Lands and Communal Work: Totorá Pampa is a peasant community in which all members have access to communally managed lands, and share and cooperate in many community activities. However that does not mean that they all share everything, or that everything belongs to everybody and that everybody gets everything. Rights and obligations are highly regulated, and records are kept of who

does what and therefore have access or rights to what. When something is communal, the community convenes a formal meeting to decide what to do with it. No individual or household would make use of any communal property if the community did not formally bestow the right to do so.

The *parcela* was a communal field that had not been divided into family plots, but had been given to PROSANA to develop a pilot experiment. From my observations so far, I understood that nobody within the community would take care of it (independently and on a regular basis) because it had not been assigned to them. I could see that the lack of concern could be related to the lack of clarity about who was supposed to take care of it.

One day within my first month there, a pick up arrived with three PAFKUM *tecnicos*: William (in charge of fixing the problems of the irrigation canal), David (in charge of the family project) and Carlos (who had to gather information for future project proposals in surrounding communities). They brought some 10 small tree plants. Since in all these projects it is always the case that the institution brings material (cement, barbed wire, etc.) and the community contributes the labor, there was a meeting to organize the work.

Usually, *tecnicos* addressed themselves to the leader or to 'the community' as represented by those present at meeting. At the meeting that took place that day, the *tecnicos* explained the activities for which they needed people and asked the community to decide how to organize themselves to meet the work requirements for those activities. Because not everybody was in the community that day (people travel to take their

products to the market, or to El Chapare to work for cash) and not everybody was available for working in the projects, only two thirds showed up.

From the *tecnicos* perspective it was just a question of dividing the people into teams of different sizes according to the number of people required by the different activities. A large team was needed to dig an extension of the canal. A team of three had to identify the emergency points along the river where defense- walls would be placed in the future. People were also needed to plant the trees in the *parcela* agro-forestal.

From the perspective of those present at the meeting, the various activities that the different teams had to take care of were very different: they took different lengths of time and required different skills and amounts of physical effort. The work on the canal was hard work, it involved the cleaning of big stones, digging into hard soil to build an extension, cement preparation, etc. The identification of risky points along the river course required just a couple of hours of walking and watching. An eight-hour job could not be equivalent to a two- hour walk, that is, it could not be reckoned to be an equivalent contribution to the project. In relation to the intriguing field -- and this is when it started to intrigue me -- only one person showed up to plant saplings in the *parcela* agro forestal in the afternoon. According to one of the *tecnicos* it was because “they are lazy and are not motivated for this, we had to put a lot of pressure on them to have them work on the canal. I guess one day of work is enough for them.”

According to the one person who showed up, he went to the *parcela* because he “couldn’t make it to work on the canal, and nobody was coming to work here and then I said to myself, why not me.” Many months later I learned that the one person who shown up to on the *parcela* that day actually had some claims to some land within or next

to the *parcela agro-forestal*. He was don Marcelino, a man in his 70's whose house was next to the health center. When the health center was to be built in 1993, there was a discussion about where should it be located, and it was decided, at a community meeting, that the space behind the church was the most appropriate. Since that area was part of don Marcelino's property, he would be compensated with an equivalent area of land if he accepted to relinquish that area for the health center. According to don Marcelino, the area that he was supposed to get was on that same slope where the *parcela* was located, but the arrangement was never finalized. Thus it was not by chance that don Marcelino was the only one who showed up at the *parcela* that day. But I only figured that out many months later.

Since nobody seemed to be interested in working on the *parcela*, the next time Carlos came with white plastic bags to fill the *parcela*'s erosion holes, he decided to make a deal with the school director. The new curriculum designed in the context of the educational reform prescribed that 5th graders should be involved in a community activity. So far the director had been unable to come up with an idea to follow that prescription. The activity that Carlos was proposing (to have the kids fill the bags and place them in the erosion holes) fit the mandate very well.

In sum, the elements of information about the intriguing *parcela* that I accidentally found when walking through the community and talking to people were: a)barbed wire; b)communal land (with unclear agreements); c)both elements triggering associations with landowners memories; d)the lack of concern with the *parcela* (people would not show up to work there); e) changing *tecnicos* and the fact that the *tecnicos* didn't know much about the politics of the projects; and f) lack of clarity about whose responsibility it was.

Halfway through my stay I realized that I had to be more systematic about gathering information that would allow me to trace the history of each one of the projects.

Participant observation had given me a sense of the community and had allowed me to identify issues and appropriate informants. By then I also felt that people were more trusting and increasingly willing to participate in more structured interviews. For the *parcela* project, I interviewed four peasants of Totora Pampa and the *tecnico* who had been in charge of starting the *parcela*. In what follows I will present two different narratives about the history of the *parcela*. First I will present the version of the *tecnico* as gleaned through my interview with him, and reconstruct the institutional point of view based on documents and fieldwork. Second, I will present the story of the *parcela* as represented by community members in interviews, and I will reconstruct the point of view of the community based on my fieldwork.

B. The *Tecnico*'s Version and the Institutional Vision

Ramiro Galindo is an agronomist ('*técnico agrónomo*') who, as a CORDECO employee, joined PROSANA in 1991. As described in chapter 3, during the first stage of implementation, PROSANA's teams of field workers worked in selected communities. Between 1991 and 1994, Ramiro was part of the team based in Tacopaya. He was one of the first PROSANA *tecnicos* to work in Totora Pampa and to start the *parcela* agro-forestal. When in mid 1994 PROSANA redefined its strategy in the province, Ramiro became supervisor in another area (Huancani - Changolla). Finally, when PROSANA supported the creation of NGOs to carry out the strategy designed in the municipal development plan in 1996, Ramiro became the director of PURISANA (see chapter 3).

When I interviewed him about the history of the *parcela* in 1997, he was in charge of PURISANA projects in the area of Tacopaya. Since the area of Totora Pampa had been engaged with another NGO, PAFKUM, Ramiro did not know much about what had happened to the projects he initiated in Totora Pampa; he had never gone back after 1994.

In his account of the history of the *parcela*, Ramiro linked the origins of the project to PROSANA's concern with reforestation, which, at the beginning, consisted mainly in promoting plant nurseries. What follows is a reconstruction of his account, i.e. an edited summary of his responses to my questions.

"My first contact in that area was with somebody in Bolivar, a guy who had started a plant nursery with some initial support from CORDECO's forestation division. He heard we were around, he contacted us and ended up working in the plant nursery we then started here in Tacopaya. (...) He knew some people in Totora Pampa and suggested the possibility of planting trees around there. At that time, the road between Tacopaya and Totora Pampa was practically non-existent and we would only occasionally visit that area of the province. I was already overwhelmed with the work around Tacopaya and further down, and I could not contemplate taking up the area up there too. But since he was already trained in taking care of plant nurseries and planting trees, we thought that we could start something in Totora Pampa and then he would do the follow up and we would just provide supervision and guidance (*asesoramiento*). Within PROSANA, we always talked about projects' sustainability and replicability. This was a good opportunity to put these ideas into practice i.e. to train people and provide technical advice and then they would know how to do the rest. That is how we used to think at the beginning, but reality proved to be more complicated than that. We had to get much more involved, embedded, and do much more. Even reaching a basic agreement with a community was so much more difficult. What we would consider, from our technical point of view, as priorities would totally differ from what they said they needed most. At the beginning, they asked for corrugated zinc, gas containers, soccer balls, that sort of thing. They would not see the need for planting trees. There was a lot of work to do at that level. They did not really grasp (visualize) what reforestation was all about. Also during the meetings, this guy, I don't remember his name, would discourage the others, saying that we shouldn't be planting any trees because later we would want to take their land away.¹⁵ We actually started to work with the 'Club de madres' (mothers club), since they had a plot where women members cultivated vegetables. We thought it was a good idea to start the plant nursery there. They asked for water and we built a small pool to irrigate the plant nursery. They were also in contact with PAFKUM and we had

¹⁵ Since when I did this interview I already knew the people of Totora Pampa, I was able to identify who this person was: he was actually don Wilfredo Clemente, he was known in Totora Pampa as the 'man' of don Juan Ortuño, a member of the same political party (A.D.N); he thus wanted to be appointed sub-alcalde

an agreement to cooperate with this NGO.¹⁶ It was also part of PROSANA's early policies to strengthen local NGOs so that they could continue working in the region in the future. PAFKUM's work was limited to forestry, and we always emphasized the importance of combining agriculture and forestry, and we thought that we would best convey this approach if we could work a plot, implementing agro-forestry techniques. We attended several community meetings and organized several workshops to inform and train community people. Very soon they started mentioning the shortage of wood. They needed wood for cooking and they had to walk further and further away to find it. They themselves identified the utility of planting trees to have firewood. So we started planting trees. In the workshops we explained how agro-forestry helped soil conservation. Planting trees and sowing crops should be seen as complementary activities, combining trees and crops would allow them to rescue damaged fields. We told them that different species of trees could be combined with different sorts of fodder. There was also a shortage of fodder. For some people our explanation made a lot of sense. They perfectly understood the principles of agro-forestry and fully grasped its potential. But there was always this guy who kept discouraging them and saying that they should not agree to work with us because we were going to take away their land. So one day I had to stop him and I confronted him in front of everybody. I asked him to show us the proof of his accusations. He didn't have any answers to my questions, he could not prove anything. I shut him up, he made a fool of himself, and he had to leave the meeting. I had faced similar situations in other places and I already knew how to handle them. After that episode, the way of talking changed and they agreed with the idea of starting with a plot (*parcela*) and then expand the work progressively. So I initiated the *parcela* with PAFKUM and then I left. PAFKUM was going to continue implementing the agro-forestry approach along with other projects as well.

In sum, by conducting informational and training workshops the *tecnicos* were able to "motivate" villagers (men) to think beyond the necessity of trees for wood and to consider the advantages of agro-forestry as a way of improving soil quality, preventing erosion, and protecting the plot while at the same time solving the shortage of firewood. According to Ramiro's account, the institution (the *tecnicos*) proposed to start a pilot agro-forestry field and "the community" (i.e. the village men who attended the meetings) accepted the idea and decided where and how to do it. The institution would provide barbed wire and posts to protect the field, fodder seeds, and different species of young trees. The 'community' would provide the work.

¹⁶ PAFKUM stands for, Proyecto Agro-forestal Kunan Minka

Concrete details concerning the decision-making process for location and work organization were more difficult to get. A long time had passed and I had to break down my general questions into specific details to encourage Ramiro to remember things that were now vague in his memory. Since this interview took place after I had heard a lot of stories in Totora Pampa, I was eager to verify the information I already had. In Ramiro's recollections (prompted by my detailed questions) the *tecnicos* proposed the idea of a pilot experiment, but the decisions concerning the where, the who, and the how were taken by the people of the 'community' without external intervention. They chose the place, comprising mostly a communal field but also including parts that belonged to individual owners. The community members made their own arrangements and decided that the owners would lend the individually held land to the project for a period of ten years. When I asked Ramiro whether the *tecnicos* had determined the specific portion of the plot to be used in the project, he replied, "The community indicated which parts of the hillside should be enclosed. They determined the amount of land to be enclosed on the basis of how much work each could afford to contribute that year. They would start with little that year and then they would expand." The decision to enclose the field with barbed wire was a joint decision. Everybody agreed that was the best way to prevent animals from entering the field and destroying the young trees.

As for the work organization, Ramiro did not remember any specific discussion concerning who would do which tasks and who would get what share of the output. There were no lists, no records. In his recollection, "the whole community participated, a lot of people showed up and they all participated, women, men, children. We were able to finish the enclosure rather quickly. Then, they all worked together. We would give them

some guidance, where to dig the holes for the plants. We would measure the distances, some would dig the holes, others would plant the trees. I guess they would all have access to the wood from those trees. (...) When we sowed the fodder, there were fewer people. They all worked together but it was a smaller group. They talked about the possibilities of using that fodder to get good seeds, but nothing was said about how they would distribute the harvest, at least not while I was there.”

My question concerning the choice of tree species to be planted gave rise to a very interesting explanation about the properties of different species and a reflection about the tensions between the *tecnicos* who want to push native species, that is to recover the native fauna, and community people more interested in exotic (i.e. foreign) species like the eucalyptus. (The advantage of the latter is that it grows much faster.) Ramiro told me that at the beginning the ‘community’ asked for eucalyptus, but later they put the decision in the *tecnicos*’ hands. “They delegated to us the final decision. They wanted us to give them advice, and said we knew better which species would grow better in that place. We decided to try a mixture of native (kishwaras and q’ewiñas) and exotic (pine, eucalyptus) species.”

From the institutional point of view, this pilot field served as a learning experience that would provide long-term benefits and encouragement for the ‘community.’ It would also allow an assessment of which species of trees could better adapt to this specific environment. Local peasants would understand the principles and advantages of agro-forestry, and would become interested in farming their own family plots according to these principles. They would learn the relevant techniques and gain access to saplings. Ramiro did not know if these goals had been met because he stopped

visiting the village shortly after they enclosed the field and planted the first round of trees and fodder seeds.

C. The Local Versions and Visions

Towards the end of my stay, when I knew enough about the different projects in Totora Pampa and what to ask of whom, I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews to reconstruct the history of each project. For the *parcela* project, I interviewed Mario Ignacio, the *sub-central* secretary general; Rene Guiterrez, formerly a local official and currently the notary public, a man in his late 40s whose opinion was very respected; and Eduardo Mamani, a man in his early 30s who, like Mario, had been secretary general. Together they refreshed each other's memories and remembered the details of how the *parcela* started. Since I had already developed a certain basis of trust with them, I could dare to be somewhat more probing and insistent, and they were more playful with me. In what follows I will present excerpts from my interview with them adding, here and there, complementary or contradictory details and observations that I gathered from conversations with other people in the Totora Pampa.

Question: Who proposed the idea of starting an agro-forestal parcel in Totora Pampa?

Answer: The project ¹⁷ proposed it, and we chose the place. We thought it was a good place because there was available land. They (the *tecnicos*) told us that it would be useful, at least to get firewood. Ramiro was the *tecnico* that started the *parcela* forestal. He held meetings with the whole community and explained what the project would be all about. He explained that they would enclose and reforest the whole slope of that hillside. That was not done ('no se cumplio' meaning that promise was not fulfilled). The best plot (*parcela*) was chosen and work was done only there. The original idea was to improve the most damaged plots and to reforest the whole landscape because native species were disappearing. It would take about four years to implement this plan and get results.

Question: So, Ramiro from PROSANA started, when and how did PAFKUM take over?

¹⁷ Here they meant PROSANA. In general, 'the project' or 'the institution' were interchangeable terms to refer to either PROSANA or the NGOs in charge of implementing development project.

Answer: There was a *tecnico* from PAFKUM who was at the workshop that Ramiro organized, he continued and took over after Ramiro left shortly after. This *tecnico* from PAFKUM is the one who had to give us the wheelbarrows; he is one who comes in a pick-up¹⁸

Question: Were you informed about the kind of agreement made between PROSANA and PAFKUM?

Answer: We don't know anything about it. Nobody explained to us why they were doing that, they just informed the *dirigente* (union leader) that PAFKUM would take over. From the very beginning they were working together, they built together the tree-nursery in the women's *parcela*, but nobody took care of it and the animals destroyed it.

Question: How did PROSANA start working in Totora Pampa? What were the first projects?

Answer: They first arrived offering saplings and the *parcela* was one of the first projects they implemented. The irrigation canal and the health center came later.

Question: What was the agreement with PROSANA, what did the community commit for?

Answer: It was not easy to reach an agreement. We demanded that big fields be farmed, but they (the *tecnicos* – the institution) didn't want that. They limited themselves to doing a little demonstration plot. As for the work, the community committed itself to digging the holes for the plants, building the terraces, and participating in sowing potatoes and barley within the *parcela*. At the beginning, there were many of us. That is why we organized ourselves in groups (without the intervention of the *tecnicos*), and those who arrived late had to carry water. At the beginning, we worked well, “habia control entre nosotros” (we were able to keep work organization under control). But not everybody participated in seeding potatoes and barley. Only 19 people participated and for this we made a list ('se controlo por lista'); the harvest was shared among them. At that time the *sindicato*'s leader was don Senobio.

Question: Who chose the tree species to plant in the *parcela*?

Answer: We wanted pines, eucalyptus, poplar; they also wanted qiwiña and kishwara. Then we told them to decide on the basis of what they knew would adapt better to our area. (...)

Question: Who brought the seeds?

Answer: Walter Garcia who also worked in the *parcela*.¹⁹ A lot of *tecnicos* have come and passed through, but they all vanished ('se perdian'). There would not be any constant presence. There has not been any continuity. One *tecnico* would think and see things one way, the next one would think differently, see everything in a different way.

Question: Is the *parcela* part of the *aynuqa* (farming zone) of Totora Pampa?

Answer: Of course, the *parcela* is located within the *aynuqa* of Totora Pampa. Before, the *jilanqu* farmed it. In the old times, there were not that many people and all the *aynuqas* would have common fields. In the *aynuqa* of Totora Pampa, there were three 'commons': two below the canal (now we have already divided them among us) and the one that is now the *parcela forestal*. (...) It seems that all common fields used to belong

¹⁸ Wheelbarrows and other tools were often given to the community when the institutions started their first project there. The PAFKUM tecnico they are referring to had actually left the NGO and moved out. I never met him. As I mentioned before, the *tecnicos* working with PAFKUM while I was there had not been there when the project started.

¹⁹ As mentioned before, Walter Garcia was one of PROSANA's agronomist who lived in Totora Pampa for one year studying the community for his engineer's degree and who wrote the thesis I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (Garcia 1996). Actually he is not the only who gave them seeds, but ...

to the *patrones*. Now most common fields have already been subdivided among us. *Jilankus* will not have commons anymore.

Question: Did you ask for the enclosure of the *parcela*?

Answer: Yes, we wanted a fence for the whole hillside slope facing the plaza, as it had been agreed, but they just enclosed that little plot, they fooled us ('como una burla).

Question: Some people in the community are saying that enclosed fields will be for the *patrones* or for the gringos ...

Answer: Oh yeah! They all say that, enclosed *parcelas* will belong to the *patrones* again. Others wonder why we decided to put up the fence. Some of those who said that are now asking for barbed wire for their own fields.

Question: Why did you choose this *parcela* instead of any other one?

Answer: They told us that they would improve (recover) a field that was in very bad shape, all eroded ("t'ajra" shredded), so we gave them that one for them to improve, but until now nothing has been improved.

Question: What was your idea when you accepted the project?

Answer: We thought it would look very nice with trees and since they were offering help, we accepted it. We want Totorá Pampa to be a town (pueblito).

Question: Why do you think the institution put money for this project?

Answer: It was for us to know about those practices (agro-forestry), also, trees call the rain (ask for rain) and prevent water from washing away the soil.

Question: Who benefits from the *parcela*?

Answer: The community, or those who worked on the *parcela*. At the beginning a lot of people participated in planting the trees, they will benefit from the right of getting wood from those trees when they grow. Actually the exact list got lost. As for the seeding only a few showed up and only those would have a share of the harvest. In last year's seeding-time (1996) even fewer showed up; but nothing has been distributed yet, the leader got all the harvest and that has not been accounted for. Some say he is sowing the seeds somewhere else, he is never around. There is no more control.

Question: What kind of work is done on the *parcela* during the year?

Answer: Nothing, nobody takes care of the *parcela*, only the rain remembers it. At the beginning the groups would take turns, but now nobody remembers it.

Question: Nowadays, who is in charge of the *parcela*?

Answer: Nobody, the plants are just growing by themselves (de puro gusto).

Question: What will happen to the *parcela* when the institution stops working here?

Answer: It will just stay like that until the plants grow. Then we will see what we do with it. At least we will be able to use the branches for firewood and we will be able to use some branches to plant new trees as we saw them do.

Question: What did you learn from the *parcela*?

Answer: We have seen how to handle the plants. We can do the same now, and we also now know which species are better adapted to this area.

Question: What about the white plastic bags, who put them there, what are they for?

Answer: We don't really know who decided to put them there or what they are for. It seems that the job was done with the kids, somebody was saying that the kids should take care of half of the *parcela* and the community the other half. It seems that the white bags were put there to fill up the crevices caused by erosion to prevent the soil from sliding down with the rains.

Question: Did anybody follow the example of the bags in his own fields?

Answer: How could anybody, without material, bags and stones ...

Question: There is no way to replicate on your own *parcelas* what you learned from the project?

Answer: We could but here there are no saplings, no bags, not enough stones to copy it. It would be good to do the same all over the place. It would look nice.

Question: I have heard you and other people mention several times that there are more and more people and less and less land. If that is the case, why is it that a project like the *parcela forestal* did not mobilize the community more? Why is it that preventing further land degradation does not appear to be a priority in the ‘carpeta comunal’ (community file)²⁰?

Answer: (jokingly) Okay, okay we will put it in the next revision of the carpeta.

Question: Oh, come on, I was just wondering what land will be there for your children and grand-children!

Answer: (even more jokingly) We will stop making children ...

At this point we all burst into a big laugh, followed by more jokes and more laughs. I knew the interview had lasted long enough and it was time to wrap it up. I thanked them for their time and closed with a final question:

Question: Sorry if I sounded too pushy, I just wanted to understand what was the problem with the parcela project. If land degradation is a concern of yours why is it that the community was not interested in working on it? This parcela is now laying there abandoned. You know, many *tecnicos* complain that people don’t respond when the institutions ask them to do communal work. Could it be that the institutions end up having a demobilizing effect?

Answer: I don’t really know. Sometimes we don’t know how to explain that either. It is not that we are lazy; you’ve seen how hard we can work when we really want to. Maybe there is not enough interest sometimes. But, you know, with the last governmental reforms and laws, people are very scared, they are afraid they will lose their land, they are afraid the institutions will end up claiming ownership.

IV. Conclusion

Trying to understand the reasons why Totorá Pampeños did not engage in the parcela project by listening in between the lines of this interview, I hear them saying, “We will not put in our time and resources without a guarantee that *tecnicos* know what they are doing and the proof that it will work.” Other, deeper reasons for them to doubt the value of investing in the parcela are related to the larger context of their experience and the organization of their livelihood as well as their understanding of this larger context. Totorá Pampeños are very aware that they have surpassed the carrying capacity

of their environment. Over and over, they would tell me that there were now too many people for the amount of land they had access to, and that population pressure has forced them to overuse the land. They don't have any more *puruma*, or new land, to expand; they had to reduce fallow time (I witnessed that in case of Viluyo). They are very aware that they have saturated the farming possibilities. Totora Pampeños are also aware that the larger context, the economic space to which they were articulated has been steadily declining. The conditions for agricultural production have increasingly deteriorated.

What a good number of peasants in Totora Pampa want for their community is to become a town, to become a center of services for the region, and to have a weekly regional market. Legal town-status would entitle them to a series of state benefits and services. They are working on making their community into a place that could obtain town status. Of course, from a *tecnico*'s perspective it is such a small and remote rural place that we can hardly make sense of how it could become a town. Also, there is no way that NGOs that are paid to implement rural development projects would want to support them in making of Totora Pampa a town.

As I discussed in chapter 3, the interest in the region seems to be purely a question of charitable assistance to extreme poverty. It is not a question of investing for it to become a flourishing economy. And yet, development institutions tell community members that they know how to improve agricultural production. In a way, this is a deceiving / confusing picture. It is true that the *tecnicos* know how to improve agricultural production but they do not know how to re-organize the political economy of the region. It is not that the *tecnicos* are lying, but they do not bring into their discussions the full picture. The peasants, on the other hand, are very aware of the big picture. They

²⁰ As mentioned in chapters 3 and 5, in the context of the LPP planning process, each community has a file

know that more than techniques of agro-forestry is required for the economic well-being of the region to improve.

There is a contradiction between the discourse of the *tecnicos* (“we are here to recover old local knowledge and to improve the conditions of agricultural production, you will do the work and we will be supportive) and the reality around which points towards the disarticulation of the economic space in which they are inserted.

Misunderstandings are not due to pristine cultural differences, or communicational differences. Misunderstandings are related to their different visions of a viable future, visions grounded on different experiences. The accumulation of misunderstandings produces confusion.

Indeed, contradictory messages create confusion and suspicion. Totorá Pampeños cannot figure out what it is that the institutions are really doing in their midst, and what the effects of the legal reforms will imply for them. They hear that the popular participation law opens a space for them to express their demands but they also know that the asymmetries of power within the larger society have not changed. The larger society, the outside world is a very powerful world. In that larger society, people know how to make laws, how to interpret them, and how to enforce them. The peasants lack such knowledge and power. They don’t know how to figure out what the real intentions are behind those who design the laws. They never know what is going to come from the outside. Their historical experience of disenfranchisement makes them suspicious: any morning anybody could come and tell them that laws changed. How are they to make sense of what is going on? By trying to read through the codes they have. What are the codes they have? The ones developed through their historical experience of relations with

the outside. The outside world is the world where the landowners lived. This is the paradigm to understand the outside.

In sum, this rhetoric of popular participation (we, the state, will support you in making your own decisions for your own future; we are bringing development projects to help you build your own future, you are the agents, you decide, etc) can only be very suspicious. It is confusing to be suddenly told that residents are empowered agents when they never had any such a power. It produces a lot of noise and confusion. They very well know that the grounds underneath the power relations between them and the larger society have not changed. The challenge is to keep a balance: to take advantage of what is offered (materials, services) without risking to loss the relatively autonomous spaces that allow them to exert some control over their livelihoods.

CONCLUSION

POPULAR PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND CITIZENSHIP

In the Andean rural highlands of Bolivia, change – in the name of ‘progress,’ ‘modernization,’ or ‘development’ – has been at issue ever since the independent republic was founded in 1825. Nineteenth century liberal (free-trade) policies sought to eliminate ‘archaic’ colonial institutions like Indian corporate landholding and tribute in the name of ‘more advanced’ principles of individual property. These reforms aimed at incorporating indigenous peasants – as ‘free and equal’ individuals – into the nation and land – as a commodity – into the market. While all citizens were recognized as equal under the law, the colonial hierarchical structure of ethnic/racial differences continued to shape the practices of state institutions; thus relegating the indigenous population to a subordinate position: Indians were to undergo a process of ‘civilization’ in order to attain equality and citizenship. The 1952 nationalist revolution proclaimed the liberation of the nation from an oligarchic elite that had perpetuated colonial forms of domination. Based on the nationalization of the mines, the agrarian reform, and the universal vote, the populist reforms that followed the revolution allegedly pursued the construction of a socially integrated and culturally homogenous Bolivian nation in the name of modernization.

In the Andean highlands, the 1953 agrarian reform sought to eliminate the ‘feudal’ regime of the hacienda and promote the development of a market oriented smallholding peasantry. Although the Andean peasantry represented an important force for the nationalist revolution, highland agricultural production was not (and still is not) an

economic priority for policy makers. Mining, oil industries, or agribusiness in the lowlands were considered more likely to contain the seed for an 'economic miracle' of modern industrialization. The implementation of the agrarian reform was not only incomplete but gave rise to increasing land fragmentation and new forms of economic exploitation. Land redistribution was very uneven and came together with greater market integration, socio-economic differentiation and new forms of economic exploitation, and deterioration of the terms of exchange between the rural and the urban sectors. The organization of peasant unions, instrumental in the implementation of the reform, was the object of governmental co-optation or repression. In the context of the populist ideology of the 1952 National Revolution, 'modernizing traditional peasants' became a euphemism for 'civilizing backward Indians.' In their efforts to resist and accommodate to the facts of domination (in liberal or populist disguises) Andean rural populations have appropriated in different ways the messages accompanying the unfulfilled promises of equality and citizenship and enacted different configurations of what it means to be an Indian, to be a peasant, and to be a Bolivian citizen.

The alarming levels of ecological degradation and rural impoverishment identified by development experts in the Arque province in the late 1980s illustrate not only the ecological fragility of Inter-Andean valleys but, more importantly, the outcome of a long process of economic decline and deterioration of the material conditions of agricultural production. Geographically isolated from the 'development poles' of the Cochabamba region since the 50s, Arque became a remote, out-of-the-way place where temporary migration to the coca-leaf producing tropical frontier increasingly constituted an indispensable part of peasant survival strategies. Invisible in the eyes of economic

planners until the 1980s, Arque became visible again as a paradigmatic case of extreme poverty when, after the embrace of neo-liberalism, the Bolivian government launched poverty-focused programs to counterbalance the impact of structural adjustment measures. While in the context of neo-liberal orientations issues of economic redistribution are expected to be solved by the invisible hand of a free market, state intervention in the management of poverty is necessary to guarantee the governability of the citizenry, the actual or potential market participants. The ethnographic material discussed in this dissertation suggests that if Arque became visible because of its unruly poverty, unruliness – and not poverty – may have been the underlying cause of the state's intervention.

Prescribing free market as the only remedy for economic ills and celebrating multicultural diversity as evidence of the solution of the 'Indian question' – a question silenced but not solved in the project of an homogenous mestizo nation – the 1990s neo-liberal reforms combined privatization of state enterprises and decentralization of state administration with the rhetoric of sustainable and participatory development, 'good governance,' rule of law,' and 'the strengthening of civil society.'

It is in this context that, in spite of a largely shared skepticism regarding the economic viability of peasant agricultural production in the Andean highlands, the region of the Arque became the target of legal reforms that enlarged the participation of rural villages in the affairs of local government and a ten-year development program that, expressing the new orientations of development discourse, defined its mission in terms of promoting the active participation of the local population; the recuperation of indigenous forms of knowledge; the empowerment of grassroots organizations and the ecological

sustainability of agricultural production. This dissertation has explored the practices and perceptions of the different actors involved in the implementation of those legal reforms and development programs. It has attempted to show that in spite of the good intentions of development experts and the potential reconfigurations of power relations in the spaces opened by the popular participation law, the interactions between development experts and Arque peasant villagers reproduced old power/knowledge asymmetries.

As an ethnography of a development project, this study has documented the production and enactment of development discursive and institutional practices in different sites. Thus this study is not about the impact of a development project on an Andean peasant village; nor is it about the tactics the less-powerful use to resist the strategies of the powerful. Rather, this work is concerned with the power/knowledge effects of the development encounter, an encounter that presupposes the marginality of the 'underdeveloped' in relation to the developed world is thus predicated on misrecognition of the fact that the history of highland peasant marginality is the history of their relations to modernizing states and is inextricable entangled with the history of the modern world system.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 analyzed the role PROSANA played in the reconfiguration of social / power relations in the Arque province and the interactions between 'developers' and 'developees' at different levels, and showed how the implementation of PROSANA's development projects and the popular participation law opened arenas of contestation. In these domains of contestation every step was susceptible of contradictory interpretations and old social / racial / ethnic tensions were recast in new terms. This process revealed the coloniality of power, i.e. the persistence of colonial

race/ethnic hierarchies as the foundation of forms of inter-subjective relations of power. The discussion of the obstacles encountered by Arque indigenous peasant representatives when they sought to exert their rights to political participation stipulated by the LPP illustrated the ways in which the coloniality of power shapes discriminatory practices of exclusion from citizen's rights. The discussion of the participatory planning process carried out by PROSANA's staff – a particular instance of current technologies for the so-called participatory development planning – revealed the symbolic power of development experts and the reproduction of the very same power/knowledge asymmetries 'participatory' methodologies intend to reverse. The misunderstandings, contradictory interpretations, effects of confusion, and responses of suspicion that marked the forms of domination and resistance expressed in the interactions between developers and developpees indicated that Arque's indigenous peasants were particularly sensitive to the fictitious bracketing of power/knowledge differentials at work in the development contract; and to those instances in which the coloniality of knowledge prevented them from acquiring dominant forms of knowledge. This particular sensitivity was most clearly expressed in the notion of development as awakening through which Arque's indigenous peasants expressed their concern with learning the rules by which citizens can effectively assert their rights and, more importantly, understand how those rules are made.

In sum, through the discussion of peasants' ambivalent and contradictory perceptions of and responses to development initiatives, this study has argued that in their own situated visions of development, Arque's indigenous peasants articulate their historical experience within modernity and coloniality; denounce what they view as the oppressive terms under which they have been incorporated as citizens of the Bolivian

state; and propose to link their notions of development with unfulfilled promises for equal citizens' rights. I thus conclude that these indigenous actors simultaneously reconstruct the notion of citizenship rights and redefine the notion of development to include the acquisition of those elements of the dominant knowledge systems that will empower them with the instrumentalities by which to envision a viable future. In other words, the denunciation of a state of darkness that accompanies Arque peasants' visions of development as awakening – that which allows seeing and understanding – reveals a historical awareness of the mechanisms through which the colonality of power and knowledge operate. Development as awakening is not the expression of a demand for development; it is a subversive appropriation of a never fulfilled promise.

APPENDIX

OF UNEQUAL ENCOUNTERS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF PROSANA'S 'TARGET AREA'- THE ARQUE REGION

I call a *strategy* the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (...) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets and threats can be managed. As in management, every 'strategic' rationalization seeks first of all to distinguish its 'own' place, that is, the place of its own power and will, from an 'environment.' (...) The 'proper' is a *triumph of place over time*. (...) It is also a mastery of places through sight. (...) It would be legitimate to define the *power of knowledge* by this ability to transform the uncertainties of history into readable spaces. But it would be more correct to recognize in these 'strategies' a specific type of knowledge, one sustained and determined by the power to provide oneself with one's own place. By contrast with a strategy, ... a *tactic* is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. (...) It does not, therefore, have the options of planning general strategy and viewing the adversary as a whole within a ... visible and objectifiable space. It takes advantage of 'opportunities' and depends on them ... It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse. (Michel de Certeau – The Practice of Everyday Life – 1984:36-39)

I. Introduction

In spite of many debates and increasingly elaborate definitions of the 'target populations' as 'beneficiaries' or 'agents' fully participating in the development enterprise, the development encounter between 'developers' and 'developees' presupposes the marginality of the latter in relation to the developed world. Misrecognizing the fact that the history of their marginality is the history of their relations to modern and modernizing states (and thus it is inextricably entangled with the

history of the modern world system), development experts put their best knowledge and intentions into work to incorporate these populations into the developed modern world. The 'target population' of PROSANA's projects was the rural population of a remote place, the rural villagers / peasants / *campesinos* of the Arque province, an out-of-the-way place represented (in the context of the knowledge produced within the development discourse) as a paradigmatic case of extreme poverty. Despite well-articulated theories and participatory methodologies, PROSANA's role in and attempts to turning Arque's rural population into 'agents' of their own development were as ambivalent and contradictory as were the responses and reactions of the *Arqueños*.¹ Who are the *campesinos Arqueños*, the 'target population' of PROSANA's development initiative? Who are these rural villagers of this out-of-the-way place in the Bolivian highlands? And how should we understand their ambivalent responses?

To address these questions, I take a historical detour through the warp of Arque's socio - cultural tapestry to briefly describe some of the key threads *Arqueños* use to weave the fabric of meanings through which they make sense of who they are, what is the world they live in and how to interact with and within that world, this fabric of meanings is a product of that history. This appendix discusses some important milestones of the historical process through which Arque's peasantry has constituted itself as a political subject in relation to the colonial state.

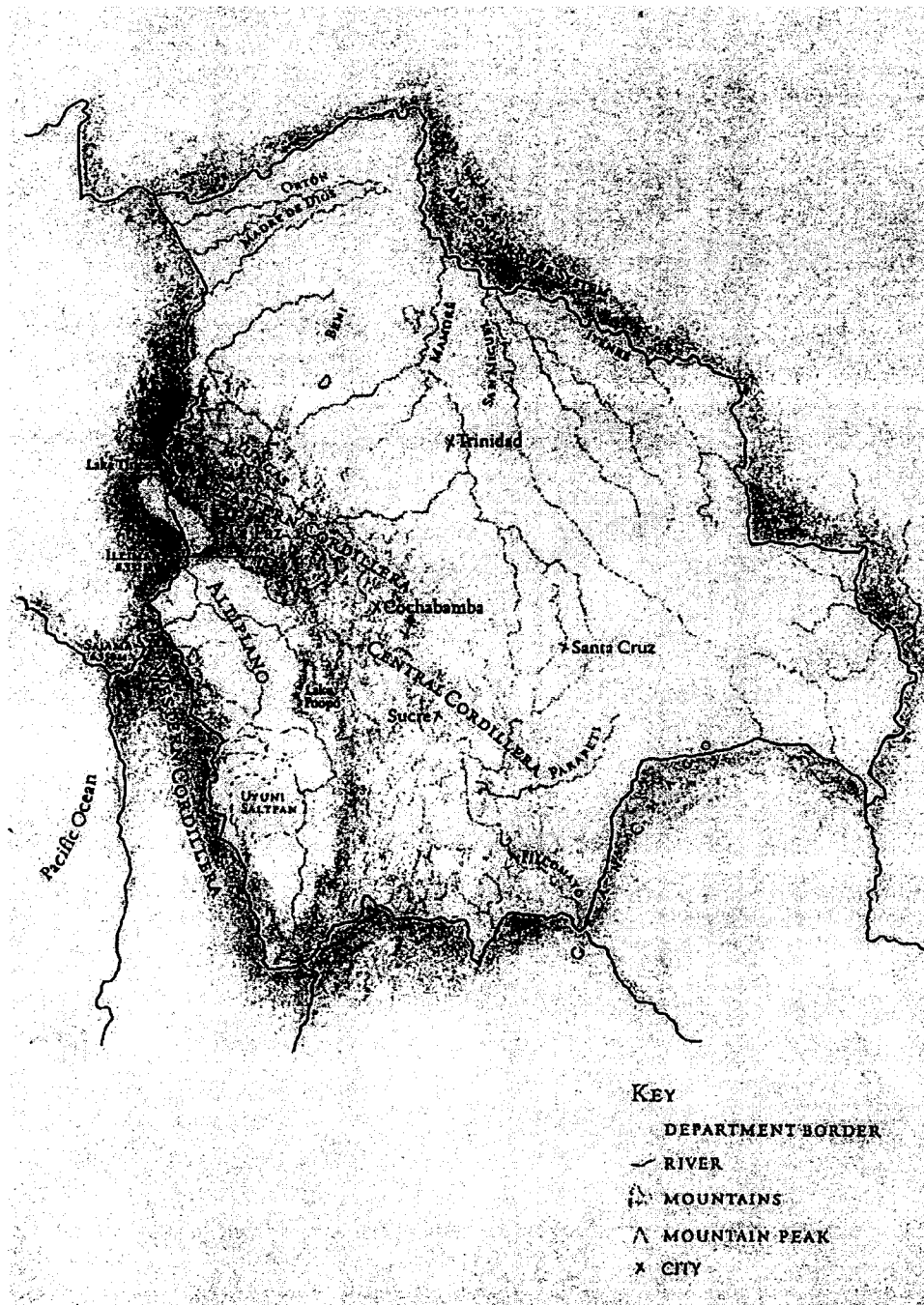
¹ For example, by supporting its organization and consolidation, PROSANA contributed to the 'empowerment' of Arque's peasant organization. However, as supervisor of the implementation of governmental reforms, PROSANA contributed to the process which eventually would undermine the political strength / power of that peasant organization. On the other hand, while it is true that Arque villagers and specially village representatives regularly, religiously, and massively attended most of the meetings and workshops organized by PROSANA, it is also true that there were at different points and in different places various and even sometimes violent expressions of outright rejection to initiatives launched by PROSANA (and / or the related NGOs).

I will briefly trace the history of the relations between the people who have inhabited the region of Arque and the larger societies / states of which they have been a part. Since the history of the specific region that is now the Arque province still remains to be done, I rely on historical and ethno-historical research on surrounding areas to draw a picture of the ways in which larger social, economic and political processes shaped the lives of the people who have lived in Arque's rural villages.² I begin with a general overview of what might have been the place of Arque in the pre-Columbian Andean world. I then turn to the colonial encounter and discuss how Arque's indigenous peoples were affected by and responded to some key colonial reforms.

² The sources for Andean history pre-colonial were written after colonization, under colonial rule

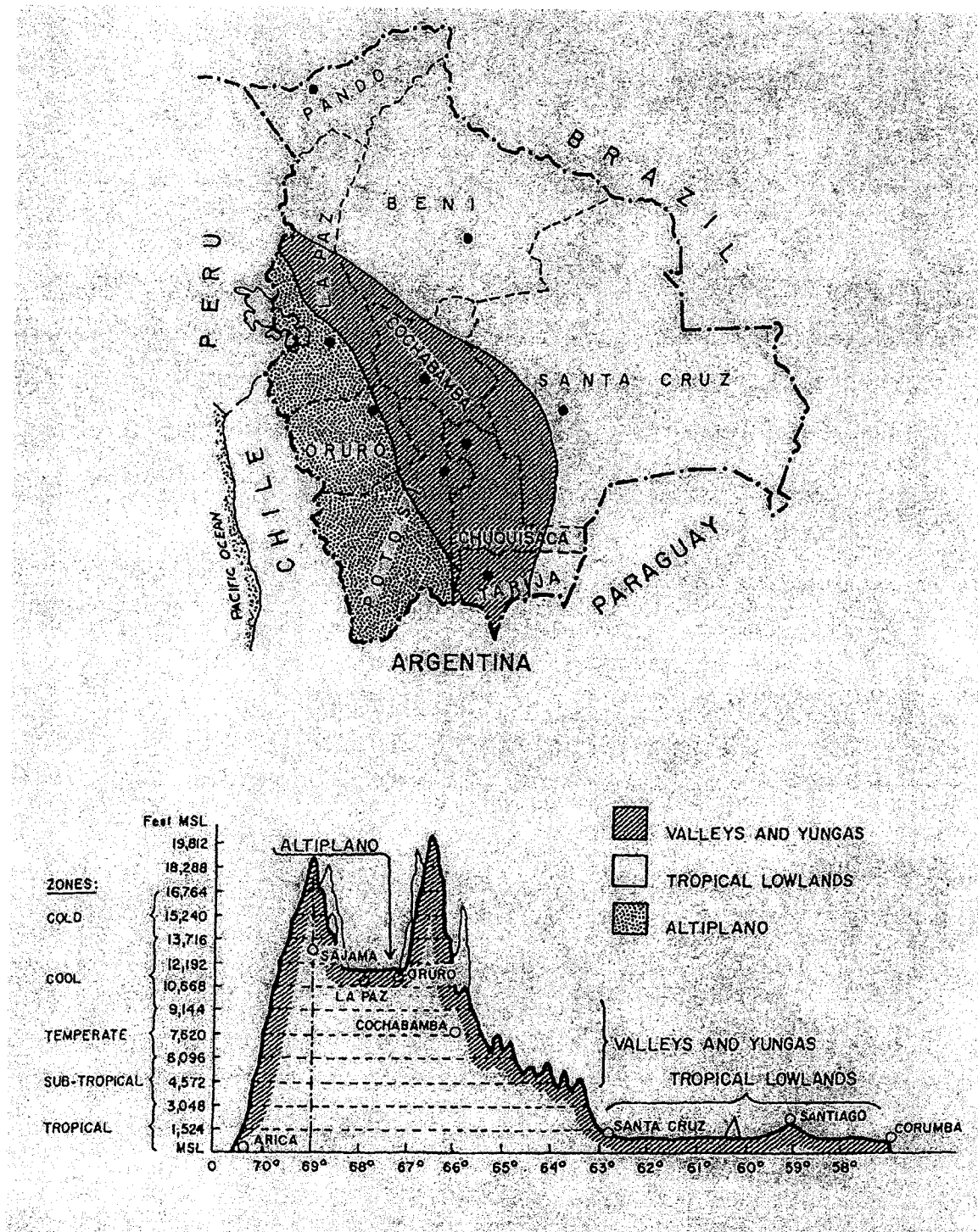
Map 7: Topography of Bolivia

Source: Healy 2001



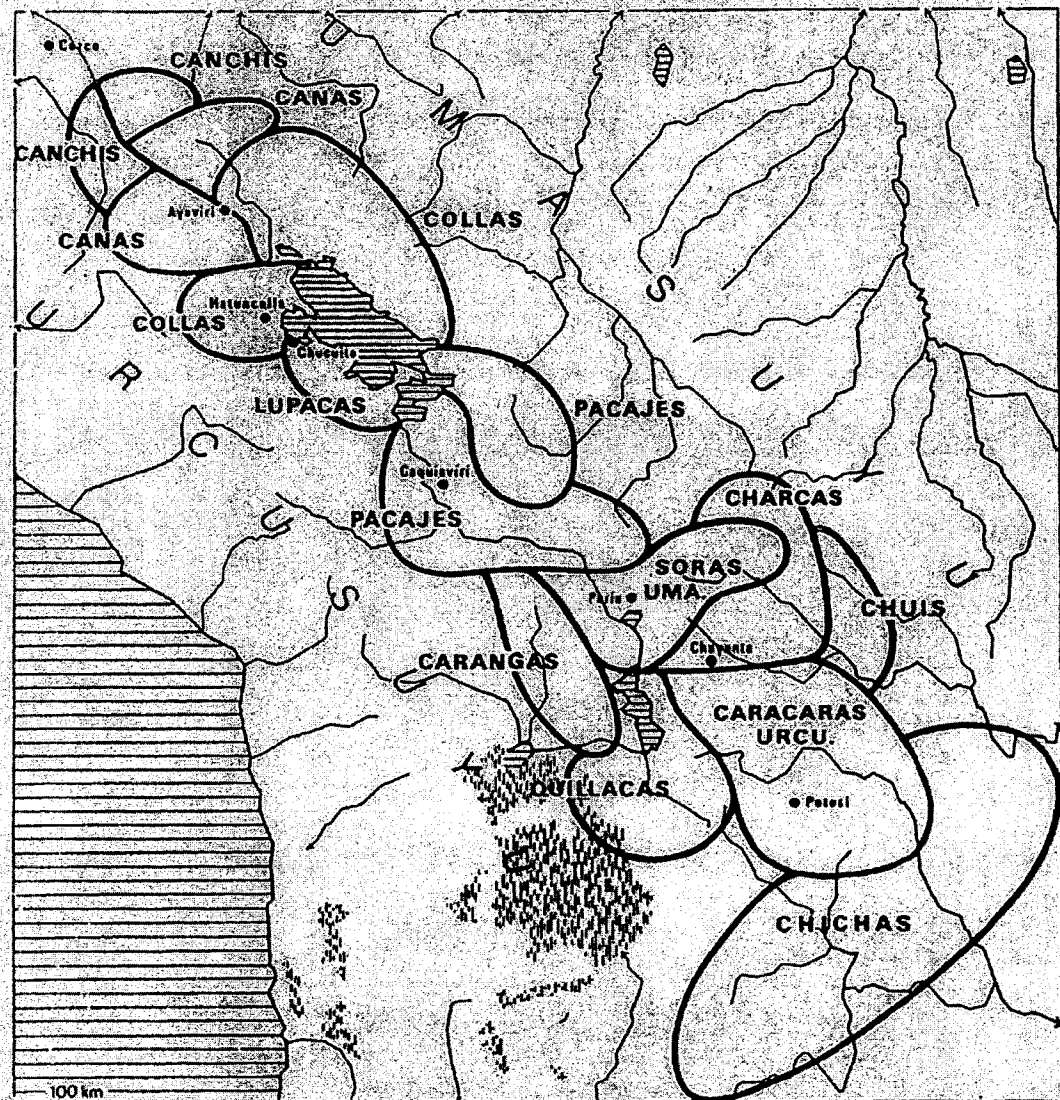
Map 8: The Bolivian Altiplano

Source: Larson 1988



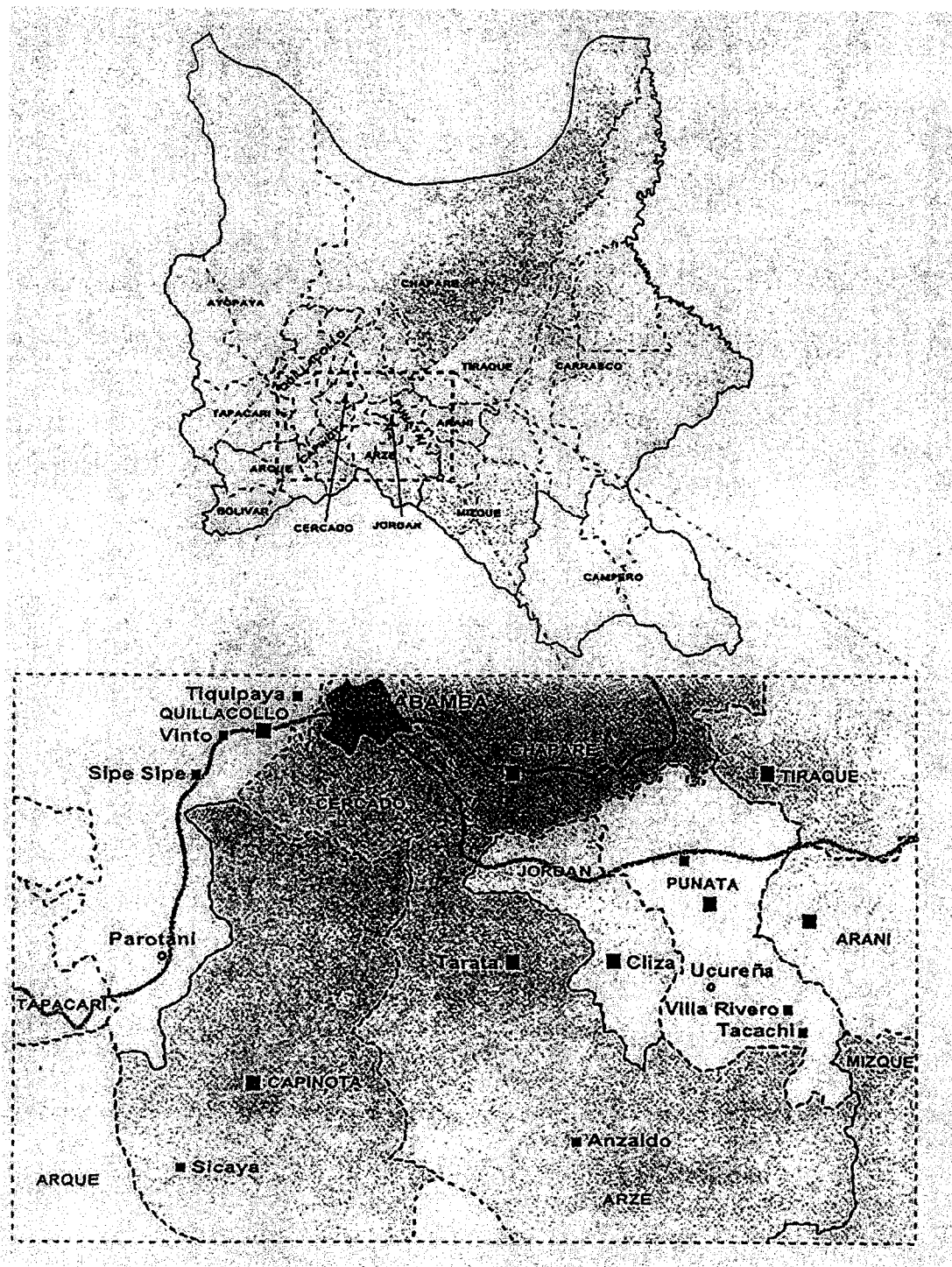
Map 9: Pre-Columbian Aymara Lordships or Diarchies

Source: Bouysse-Cassagne 1986



Map 10: The Valleys of Cochabamba

Source: Gordillo 2000



II. The Land and the Peoples of Arque in pre-Columbian Times

Before undertaking our brief historical journey, it is important to visualize the geographical and environmental characteristics of the southeastern region of the Central Andes where Arque is located.³ A long vertical strip of rugged land, the territory of the Arque Province starts on the eastern edge of the Bolivian *altiplano* (high plateau) at 4000 meters (13,123 feet) above sea level and crosses through the eastern range of Andean mountains (Cordillera Real) descending along the Arque river down to the lower valley of Cochabamba at 2700 meters above sea level (8,858 feet).⁴ Like the other inter-Andean valleys that fall down the southeastern edge of the *altiplano*, Arque's is a dry craggy landscape with high peaks, deep narrow canyons, and steep slopes. Bright sunny warm days are followed by often freezing cold nights. Long dry seasons may be followed by short rainy seasons during which strong thunderstorms can cause monumental (dramatic) landslides that sweep away the thin layer of fertile soil leaving a barren land susceptible to devastating erosion processes. See Map 7 and Map 8.

The complex yet fragile ecological systems of these inter-Andean valleys include three distinct farming areas: high Andean herding (4,200 – 4600 meters above sea level),

³ Central Andes is the area comprised between the southern part of Colombia and the northern parts of Chile and Argentina which roughly corresponded to the territory of the Inca empire. The southeastern region is the region of the eastern half of the Bolivian high plateau and its interconnected valleys.

⁴ The Bolivian high plateau or *altiplano* originates northwest of Lake Titikaka (southern Peru) and extends about 950 kilometers (600 miles) southeast to the southwestern corner of Bolivia. Its width varies from a few miles to about 160 kilometers (100 miles). The cities of La Paz, Oruro, and Potosi are located on this high plateau. With an average altitude of 3,650 meters (about 12,000 feet) this enormous tableland is created by an opening of the Southern Andes into two distinct mountain ranges: the Western range (*Cordillera Occidental*) which today marks the border between Bolivia and Chile and the Eastern range (*Cordillera Oriental*) which is far broader and much more broken containing fertile plains and river valleys at altitudes from about 4500 meters (14000 feet) down to about 500 meters above sea level. These are the above mentioned inter-Andean valleys which also provide access to eastern foothills (tropical hills known as the *montaña* region or *yungas*) and the eastern lowlands (Amazonian basin to the north east and Pilcomayo basin to the south east).

puna agriculture (3500 – 4200 meters above sea level), and valley agriculture (2500 – 3500 meters above sea level). Each ecotype presents a wide range of micro-climates which together may provide access to a variety of crops and animals. Because of extremely unstable energy flows, agricultural activity in the puna ecotype of the altiplano and its eastern edges is susceptible to high risks. As anthropologist Tristan Platt (1982: 30) points it out, “crop diversification across differing tiers and micro-climates, in order to create ‘multiple resource bases,’ (...) has traditionally constituted an essential strategy for surviving the uncertainties of the high Andean climate.” The valleys that run down through the jumble of mountains of the *Cordillera Oriental* (eastern mountain range) greatly vary according to altitude and extension. In the lower parts these valleys are usually long open plains which for the most part have a temperate environment and good ground water, although relatively dry climate. In the words of historian Herbert Klein (2003: 4-5), “[t]hese broad middle altitude valleys were major zones of pre- and post – Conquest production and settlement. Best exemplified by the Cochabamba valley system, these valleys were the primary producers of maize in the pre-Columbian period and of wheat after the Spanish Conquest. (...) Given the importance of all these crops, these valleys were in constant contact with the core highland populations.”

Benefiting from the presence of Lake Titicaca, the eastern half of the altiplano, especially the area of the Titicaca basin, has relatively more fertile soils and warmer climate. Archaeological research revealed that this area was not only the scene of the domestication of animals (llama, alpaca, vicuña) and staple products (potatoes) but, more importantly, “one of the greatest nuclear centers of New World civilization” (Stanish 1992:1). Tracing back the origins of the development of complex societies in this area to 1200 BC, archaeologist Charles Stanish (1992:1) states that

“For 2,000 years prior to the Inca conquest, the Titicaca Basin states controlled or influenced peoples throughout the south central Andes, a region that extends over 400,000 square kilometers. One of the most outstanding achievements of these Titicaca Basin polities was their ability to exploit lower ecological zones up to several hundreds kilometers away. From the earliest complex societies in the region to the last pre-hispanic occupation of the area by the Inca empire, Titicaca Basin groups were able to secure access to these economically critical areas. (...) By the beginning of the first millennium AD, two complex polities, known as Pukara and Tiwanaku, had developed in the north and south sides of the basin respectively. By A.D.900, Tiwanaku had developed into a true empire that rivaled other pre-hispanic New World states in power, organizational complexity, and territorial extent. The collapse of Tiwanaku provided the context in which the first historically known ‘kingdoms’ developed three or four centuries before the arrival of the Spaniards. These Aymara kingdoms (...) were major rivals to the Inca and were subdued only after a long and bitter military and political struggle.”

While the core settlements of these Aymara polities were located in the cold lands of the high-plateau and puna, their territories included a series of “islands” at different altitudes down the eastern valleys thus forming what John Murra (1972 / 1975) has denominated as ‘vertical archipelagos.’⁵ Imagining the geography of these polities, Brooke Larson (Larson 1988: 20) makes the following description. “This “archipelago” pattern of territoriality, (...) required kinsmen to trek many days through diverse landscape and ‘foreign’ territory to their outlying colonies. (...) A bird’s-eye view of the eastern cordillera and intermountain basins would reveal a mosaic of multiple (often competing) hamlets, sealed off from their neighbors but bound tightly through kin ties and ideology to their distant ethnic ‘headquarters’ in the highlands.”

The economy of vertical control and reciprocal exchanges among different ecological tiers was embedded in a sociopolitical organization in which kinship provided

⁵ This system of vertical control of different ecological niches was common to most Andean people specially those inhabiting the highlands of what today is southern Peru and Bolivia. The ‘archipelago’ pattern allowed Andeans to “harness the ecological diversity of the vertical landscape and ensure their social reproduction (...) without embarking upon the indigenous development of a market system Larson 1988:20). In the conceptualization of John Murra, whose path breaking ethnohistorical studies were the first to show the complexities of Andean vertical control, verticality was not just a model of ecological adaptation. As part of the ideology and worldview of Andean societies, verticality was one of the ideals that shaped social relations of production and exchange. The discussion of the verticality model has given rise

the language legitimating a complex amalgam of corporate and stratified social structures thereby guaranteeing the cohesion and unity of kin groups scattered across space.

Aymara polities were formed by 'confederated lineages' or, more precisely, sets of nested kin groupings or *ayllus*. The Qhishwa word *ayllu*, translated as 'grouping' or 'lineage,' designates social organizations at different levels of size and complexity. In its smallest expression, an *ayllu* is formed by an extended network of households and constituted the cell of pre-colonial Andean societies. Based on his ethnographic and ethno-historical research, Tristan Platt (1978 / 1986: 231) proposes a segmentary lineage model to represent the nested structures of the *ayllu*. At its minimal level, an *ayllu* is formed by an extended network of households. A variable number of minimal *ayllus* form a minor *ayllu*, a variable number of minor *ayllus* form a major *ayllu* or moiety, and two major *ayllus* form the maximal *ayllu*. More importantly, the nested structure of the *ayllus* is expressed in the social organization of the vertical space. The territory of the maximal *ayllu* is divided into an upper half and a lower half corresponding to the upper moiety and the lower moiety. Each moiety or major *ayllu* has land in the puna and in the valley, and so does each minor *ayllu* and each minimal *ayllu*. Although the terms 'kingdom' (e.g. Murra 1968 / 1975) and 'lordship' (e.g. Bouysse-Cassagne 1987) are frequently used to refer to these pre-Columbian Aymara polities, the term 'diarchy' (e.g. Abercrombie 1998) seems more accurate because there is no evidence of the existence of a single higher authority over the two lords of the two moieties.

Ayllu membership involved common rights to land, which probably implied a communal corporate form of land tenure. However, there is indication that chiefs, nobles,

to a large debate in Andean anthropology. See for example Lehmann 1982; Masuda, Shimada, and Morris 1985.

and elders held land independently of the ayllus and were able of mobilizing labor and extracting surplus from the ayllu members they governed, thus suggesting an “incipient class structure” (Klein 1992: 17). Aymara nobility would have been associated with ayllus of the upper moieties and commoners with lower moieties (ibid.). Furthermore, “[b]esides the complex sociopolitical and economic structures that existed in the core highland regions, both [chiefs] and ayllus also had colonists working for them in different ecological zones. Called *mitmaq*, these highland colonists were the vital link binding the interregional and multi-ecological economy that was so crucial in maintaining highland population. each ayllu and each nation and its nobility had colonists farming the temperate and semi-tropical valleys” (ibid.).

Authority in this complex nested structure of ayllus was vested in an elaborate nested hierarchy of chieftains, lords of moieties and regional chiefs who symbolized the unity, common interests and identity of the group, had to uphold certain standards of justice and equity, but also had the power to mobilize ayllu members for different purposes including personal services, collective works, and going to war. While acknowledging that in these stratified societies reciprocal exchanges often took asymmetrical forms, we also must recognize the importance of reciprocity principles as ideals and idioms of sociopolitical organization. In the end, as Larson (1988:22) puts it, “[t]heoretically, the contradiction engendered by the ideals of verticality and community, on the one hand, and the appropriation of surplus by ethnic elites, on the other, found its resolution in the services and gifts [the lords and chiefs] offered to the community at large or to individual kin.”

The southeastern edge of the altiplano and its interconnected valleys were the territory of a confederation of Aymara diarchies comprising the Charkas, Qaraqaras,

Chuyes, Chichas, and Soras (see Map 9, Bouysse-Cassagne 1987).⁶ According to Izko (1989) and Schramm (1990), the area in between the territories of the Soras and the Charkas was inhabited by the smaller lordship of the Torpas or Turpa. This territory corresponds to what is today the ayllu Kirkyawi (i.e the Bolivar province which was part of Arque until 1985) and probably included the valley lands of Tanga-Tanga and Taraqachi in the southern side of the Arque province. Taraqachi is a couple of miles southeast of what is today the town of Arque. While Izko (1992:21) suggests that the Torpas could have been an independent polity, “a micro-confederation in between the larger confederations of the Charka – Qaraqara and Soras,” Schramm is more inclined to think that they were part of that confederation. The rest of the Arque, “perhaps intermittently” as far as Capinota, was mostly controlled by the Soras or Sura (Wachtel 1982:203).

As del Rio (1990: 77) describes it,

“The parallel river valleys of Arque and Tapacari constitute the natural corridors connecting the western altiplano and the central valleys of Cochabamba. Both cross a transversal inter-ecological space that was hegemonically controlled by the Soras. At the time of the [Spanish] conquest, these territories separated, in the form of a wedge, the core settlements of the Pacajes, Quillacas, and Carangas, located on the altiplano, and the political centers of the so-called ‘Charca Confederation’ located southwards.” (my translation)

At the time of the Spanish conquest, the federation of the Soras included besides four Sora subgroups (Soras Paria and Soras Caracollo in the altiplano; Soras Tapacari and Soras Sipe-Sipe in the valleys) another aymara speaking group, the Casaya, and a non-aymara group of pukina speaking Urus (del Rio and Gordillo 1993: 28). According to del Rio (1990), it is not clear yet whether the Soras were originally from the area or were brought at some point during the expansion of the Inca empire to control a multi-ethnic

⁶ This information is based on 16th century colonial records, it corresponds to what the Spaniards found

population. What seems certain is that, in contrast to most Aymara lords, Sora lords (*kurakas*) collaborated with the Incas. As a result of this alliance, Sora *kurakas* were designated as 'Incas by privilege' and occupied important administrative positions under Inca rule thus gaining a prestigious status that they kept in colonial times (del Rio 1990).

In spite of the respect Aymara lords and warriors inspired to their Qhishwa invaders, Inca expansion into the southeastern edge of the altiplano and its interconnected valleys brought important transformations, specially after Inca Wayna Qhapaq (1493 – 1525) converted the valleys of Cochabamba into a vast state enterprise of maize-cultivating colonies (see Map 10).⁷ Although they retained considerable autonomy for their internal organization, the polities incorporated into the Inca state became “ethnic groups that occupied particular places in the imperial division of labor and state organization” (Patterson 1992:79). The expansion of the empire involved a process of class formation resulting in new conditions of surplus appropriation and forms of labor mobilization of an unprecedented scale. Invoking old principles of reciprocity, community, and verticality, the Incas built on existing political structures resignifying and reorienting them to meet the needs of the imperial state. Whether we see in the development of Inca state institutions the creation of new forms of political organization or the reconstitution of already existing ones is, as Patterson (1992: 75) argued, a matter of theoretical or historical perspective.

when they arrived in the area.

⁷ Although the whole Department of Cochabamba consists of a multiplicity of valley systems, the terms 'valley of Cochabamba' or 'Cochabamba valleys' refer specifically to the broadest and most fertile of these valley systems. The Cochabamba valleys include the Valle Bajo (lower valley, mainly provinces of Capinota and Quillacollo), the Valle Central (central valley, Cercado province where Cochabamba City is located), and the Valle Alto (upper valley, most of the provinces of Esteban Arze, Jordan, Punata, and Arani and parts of Tiraque) see Map 7.

After they became part of the Inca empire, the Aymara polities of the altiplano made substantial contributions and Aymara warriors fought with the Inca army expanding the empire's borders far away from the altiplano. Aymara polities were rewarded with grants of maize valley land and exempted from certain tribute obligations (e.g. serving the mita in Cuzco). Larson (1988:26) considers the case of Aymara polities "a striking example of indirect rule." As she explains, "[t]he Incas grafted extractive institutions onto local ones and worked through the existing ethnic hierarchy, allowing the ayllu and the ethnic polity to retain considerable autonomy under their rule. Peasants had to contribute their labor to cultivate state and religious lands, but they did so in much the same way as they participated in ayllu tasks and in obligations to their ethnic lords and community. Tribute obligations to the state therefore overlapped and blended with communal obligations, without eroding the subsistence base of the local group."

Often represented as a pyramid, the politico-administrative organization of the imperial state had the Inca at the top, immediately below the prefects of the four quarters of the empire, and below them the regional governors who also were members of the Inca nobility. At the lower echelons of the administrative hierarchy were the non-Inca local authorities, i.e. lords of the conquered polities and chiefs of relocated multi-ethnic groups. The Incas sought the loyalty of these local authorities through gifts, marriage, indoctrination, and privileged access to land and labor, [thereby incorporating them "into the emerging dominant class of the imperial state" (Patterson 1992: 78).] Articulating the Inca and non-Inca levels of administration was a vast bureaucracy of inspectors, census takers, tribute collectors and other state officials who preserved the internal order and ensured that tribute obligations were met satisfactorily. There were two kinds of labor taxes imposed by the Inca state. One, known as mit'a, consisted of a specific number of

days of labor in public works projects, in personal service to state officials, or in the army. The other one consisted of agricultural or pastoral work in the fields or with the herds belonging to the state, to the Inca or other members of his corporation (*panaqa*).

Building on the model of vertical control of ecological tiers, the Inca implemented important resettlement policies to defend the expanding frontiers and increase the agricultural production for the state. Breaking up ethnic groups that were hostile or rewarding those that were loyal with access to new valley lands, the Incas relocated large segments of population into different and sometimes very distant areas thereby changing the ethnic composition of the conquered territories. Resettled populations, called *mitmaqkuna* (or *mitimaes* in Spanish colonial records) formed multiethnic colonies and retained, in principle, their ethnic ties with their native communities. In practice, however, they were under direct supervision of state officials and administrators. The specific situations varied greatly in the different areas of the empire. Thanks to the work of Nathan Wachtel (1982) we know something about the mitimaes of the Cochabamba valleys.⁸

Inca Tupaq Yupanki (1471-1493), father of Wayna Qhapaq, conquered the valley of Cochabamba and claimed the fields of Cala-Cala (in today's Cochabamba City) to himself. In his effort to consolidate the territorial expansion of his empire, he transferred part of the autochthonous population further southeast where they were to guard the new borders against the indomitable lowland Chiriguano chiefdoms. Larger agrarian transformations took place when his son, Wayna Qhapaq (1493-1525), seized the lands to "set up a state-owned 'archipelago' for the purpose of large scale maize production,

⁸ The information analyzed by Wachtel comes from documentation he found in the Historical Archive of Cochabamba. It concerns a "lawsuit that took place during the years 1560-1570 between the valley's

essentially for the use of the army” (Wachtel 1982:217). The labor force for this vast enterprise was recruited from a very large area ranging from the Cuzco region to Chile, mostly from the altiplano Aymara polities. The testimony presented in the colonial record mentions the number of 14,000 ‘Indians’ brought from ‘different nations.’ If this number is correct, it indicates, as Wachtel (1982: 218) points it out, “ an undertaking of an unprecedented scope.” Indeed, it stands in stark contrast to other known cases of state-owned archipelagos which only involved the resettlement of 1,000 or 2,000 heads of households (ibid.). Although there aren’t any data concerning the distribution according to region of origin or status, it seems certain that the 14,000 included both *mitimaes* and *mitayos*, that is people permanently resettled in the valley and people who rotated on yearly basis as part of the labor tax system of the *mit’a*.

With the exception of a few small areas owned personally by Wayna Qhapaq, the lands seized in Cochabamba were part of the state domain. All the fields were farmed by the *mitimaes* and the rotating *mitayos* controlled by their respective ethnic authorities, but all placed under the authority of two Inca governors. For their sustenance, the workers were allotted certain fields and allowed to cultivate the upper and lower margins of the Inca fields. Some land was also given to ethnic authorities who were expected to practice ‘generosity’ and redistribute the products of that land among those who cultivated it. As subjects of the empire, *mitimaes* and *mitayos* also benefited from the Inca’s ‘generosity’ and received maize from the Inca’s granaries. Redistributions aside, all the maize produced in Cochabamba was collected at the storage center of Paria in the altiplano and from there taken to Cuzco. The transportation between the Cochabamba valleys and Paria

encomenderos (Rodrigo de Orellana and Polo de Ondegardo) and the Caranga, Quillaca, and Sora Indians” (Wachtel 1982: 200).

was handled by the llama herders of the Soras of Sipe-Sipe and royal herds were tended in Sipe-Sipe.

How did this vast state enterprise affect the people living in the highlands and valleys of Arque? It seems that the Torpas or Turpa of Kirkyawi, Tanga-Tanga and Taraqachi were relocated into the Cochabamba valley. Whether they were entirely relocated or not is a question that we cannot answer yet. On the basis of colonial legal documents concerning old ethnic border conflicts between the ayllus of Sakaka (from the Charka federation), Izko (1992) suggests that some Turpa either remained in Kirkyawi or returned from Cochabamba valley during colonial times. As for the Soras or Sura, the fields assigned to them by the Inca were located in the Valle Bajo (Lower Valley), immediately next to their territory. Indeed, the valleys of Arque and Tapacari lead into the Valle Bajo. Because of this proximity, the Soras probably saw the new valley islands as an extension of their own territory and Sora mitimaes were able to keep close ties with their ayllus of origin.⁹ However, they were not anymore the only ones travelling through their territory for the valleys of Arque and Tapacari became the main passageways for the transport of maize for the Inca and the travel of state officials from Cuzco and mitayos from different areas of the empire. With the development of a state-owned archipelago in Cochabamba, the Soras and their territory became part and parcel of a much larger empire.

⁹ In 5 of the estates (*chacaras*) where they shared fields with three other Aymara federations (Killaka, Caranga, and Colla) they obtained the largest number of fields (32 out of 77) (Wachtel 1982: 210). All of the groups belonging to the Sora federation (the 4 Sora subgroups, the Casaya and the Urus) obtained valley land from the Inca (Wachtel 1982). Although, as previously mentioned, it is uncertain how far went the valley colonies of the Soras in pre-Incaic times, at the time of Wayna Qhapaq (shortly before Spanish colonization), the Sora, Casaya, and Uru of Paria and Challacollo had valley islands in Sicaya, Capinota, and around what today is the town of Arque (Wachtel 1982: 234). According to Xavier Izko (1992:20) it would seem that the site of Arque, from which the province was to derive its name, was founded by the Sura of Challacollo. What we know for sure is that indigenous chiefs (*caciques*) from Challacollo, near the

Although the social and political structure of the Aymara federations of diarchies remained unchanged their lords kept a substantial degree of autonomy to rule over their territories (specially the highland core settlements), they were tributaries of the Inca state. As Brooke Larson (1988: 31) points it out, “[w]hether as soldiers of the emperor, or as migrant field hands who harvested the crop that fed those soldiers, the people of the altiplano bore a heavy burden of empire under the Incas.”

The contrast between the policies implemented by the Incas in the multi-ethnic colonies of mitimaes established in Cochabamba Valley (i.e. lands seized for the state) and the strategies they used to subordinate large polities such as the Confederation of the Charka – Qaraqara has led historian Brooke Larson (ibid) to identify two different models of ruling used in the development of the empire.

The Inca operated in two ways. “Through methods of indirect rule and strategic alliance with the powerful Aymara lords in the highlands, the Incas drained off young men to stock their imperial armies (...). In return, the emperor granted the ethnic lords lands, personal retainers (...), and special privileges in the process probably buttressing the lords’ power and prestige within their own societies. In contrast, the [Cochabamba valleys] afforded entirely different opportunities, which the Incas exploited with remarkable success. They focused their collective efforts on the fertile valleys of Cochabamba, where they vastly expanded the empire’s maize production. Unlike the case in the puna, where the Incas ruled in subtle, almost invisible ways through ethnic intermediaries, the Incaic presence in the valleys loomed large. The state intervened in the productive process, shaping economic life in the valleys partly in accord with

altiplano city of Oruro, kept an ‘ethnic hacienda’ in Chapapani (3 miles north from Arque town) throughout colonial times and until the Bolivian Agrarian Reform of 1952.

traditional principles of reciprocity and ethnic communalism but turning it toward new, imperialistic ends.”

Thus, by the 1530s, when the Spaniards arrived in the region, the Cochabamba Valley was a Qhishwa speaking multi-ethnic large scale maize-producing state domain under the direct control of the Incas and the high plateau the stronghold of federations of Aymara diarchies which, while contributing to the Inca state, retained considerable autonomy for their internal organization and economic self-sufficiency. It is upon this human landscape that the conquerors imposed the colonial rule of the Spanish crown. The different models of Inca rule in the valleys and the highlands gave rise to different colonial patterns in these two areas. Although in the long run and in general, Spanish colonization dismantled the political organization of Aymara diarchies, truncated ethnic archipelagos and altogether disarticulated the political economy of the vertical control of ecological tiers, the possibilities for Andean peasants to recreate / reinvent ayllu – ethnic ties and partial models of vertical ecological control varied greatly in these two areas. The gap widened as the valleys of Cochabamba became the stronghold of Spanish landowners that acquired large estates for the production of cash crops to be sold in the markets of Potosi’s silver mines.

III. Colonial Milestones

A. The Valleys and the Highlands: A Widening Gap

When, in the 1540s and 1550s, the king of Spain rewarded the conquistadors of these new lands with grants of native labor and tribute –*encomiendas* or *repartimientos*–

the colonial state, still in formation, lacked the institutional structure to enforce tribute extraction.¹⁰ The new lords—the *encomenderos*—had to rely on the ‘willingness’ and ability of the local ethnic authorities to ensure the flow of labor and tribute. While in the core highland territories of the Aymara diarchies they met powerful ethnic lords whose order they had to respect, in the valleys they found a disparate mixture of *mitimaes* and the vestiges of an order that had collapsed (Larson 1988: 32-42).

In the highlands powerful ethnic lords controlled the basic process of production and distribution of their still then self-sufficient communities. They were legitimate representatives of strong unified ethnic polities. Forcing them to ask from their communities more than what was permitted by the social norms by which their authority was bounded could undermine their capacity to govern over their people. In this context, the best way to guarantee the production of a surplus that could be in turn appropriated by outsiders was to operate through indirect rule, that is to respect the Andean traditions that legitimized the authority of ethnic lords and to preserve the conditions of their self-sufficiency. Aymara ethnic lords were thus in a position of relative strength to negotiate the terms of their obedience to their *encomenderos*, who, in turn, had to walk carefully the thin line between coercion and consent. As Larson (1988: 38) puts it, [the] mixture of force, negotiation, and alliance that characterized the early relations in the highlands

¹⁰ From the verb ‘encomendar,’ in English ‘to entrust’, an *encomienda* was a grant of the right to collect tribute from the native communities of a designed area. The holder of an *encomienda* grant, the *encomendero*, in exchange, was responsible for the welfare of the inhabitants of those communities and their indoctrination. Originally a medieval feudal institution, the *encomienda* underwent several transformation since its inception. Because of the abuses committed by *encomenderos* and because the crown feared the development of a powerful class of feudal lords in the Americas, a series of regulations were introduced from the 1540s on limiting *encomenderos*’ rights. Officially the feudal *encomienda* was abolished in 1542 and replaced by the *repartimiento*, a more limited and more state controlled grant. The specific forms that *encomiendas* and *repartimientos* took in the different and distant corners of Spanish colonial America varied greatly.

reflected the European's heavy reliance on the traditional power and prestige of native chiefs."

In the valleys, on the other hand, Spanish colonizers, who received grants in the 1550s, found a social and power vacuum. During the years of conquest wars, the carefully designed state enterprise of maize production had been plundered and dismantled. Inca governors and state officials had lost their authority basis, some *mitimaes* had fled back to their communities of origin, others had broken apart from their ethnic groups. *Encomenderos* had to appoint native chiefs hoping that they would be able to command the flow of labor and tribute from a population put arbitrarily under their authority. "Their legitimacy was defined in colonial terms and their authority rested precariously on the support and patronage of their overlords. Unlike their Aymara counterparts, (...) valley caciques leaned heavily on their European patrons to enforce their own authority over the disparate colonies of *mitimaes*" (Larson 1988: 39 - 40). When later in the 1560s Aymara lords of the highlands reclaimed rights over their valley *mitimaes* and the lands received from the Inca, valley appointed chiefs allied with their Spanish overlords to keep those *mitimaes* under their control. This alliance was not to last and valley chiefs (called *caciques* by the Spaniards) were soon to be caught in between a stronger colonial state that imposed on them a reconstituted form of rotational labor tax and a greater number of Spanish settlers who arrived into the valleys to buy land and establish wheat cultivating haciendas.

B. Colonial Strategies: The Case of the Toledan Reforms

a) Building Empire - Institutionalizing the State

The 1570s represented a major turning point in the strategies employed by the Spanish Crown to rule over both colonizing Spaniards and colonized Andeans. Pressed by financial needs and concerned with the decline in Potosi's silver mines, evident signs of native population decline, and the threat of millenarist¹¹ movements throughout the highlands of Peru, Philip II appointed a new viceroy to address the crisis in Peru. Viceroy Francisco de Toledo (1569 – 15881) was instructed to conduct a new inspection /census (*visita*), readjust the tribute system, limit the power and privileges of the *encomenderos*, and revitalize Potosi's silver production. Hence, Toledo's reforms were designed to strengthen Spain's institutional presence in the Andean region and to consolidate the colonial state as agent of metropolitan interests and direct claimant of native resources (Larson 1988:50).

Limiting the *encomienda* / *repartimiento* to two generations (after which time the grant was reverted to Crown) and imposing state officials between the remaining *encomenderos* and their tributes, Toledo not only rid the *encomienda* from feudal vestiges but sentenced it to gradual disappearance.¹² More important than the transformation of the *encomienda* was Toledo's ambitious program of massive forced resettlement of "Indians" into fixed villages to be managed, evangelized, and taxed more efficiently. An assault on Andean kin networks and patterns of discontinuous territoriality, the plan was to 'reduce' Andean scattered settlements into reconstituted

¹¹ During the 1560's the highlands of Huamanga (in today's southern Peru) witnessed the spread of a movement of nativist redemption where men and women possessed by Andean deities and prophesized the expulsion of the Spaniards and their Christian gods. Known as Taki Onqoy (dance sickness), this movement was one of the many challenges to Spanish control that pressed colonial authorities to tighten their grip on Andean peoples. Harshly repressed, this movement had practically disappeared by the time of Toledo's arrival. For the history and extensive discussion of this movement see Stern 1982: 51-70. For an interpretation of Taki Onqoy as a struggle over memory, "a battle of histories," see Abercrombie 1998: 218-223.

“Indian communities” to be governed by an elaborate hierarchy of ethnic and colonial authorities. In these “*reducciones*” local chiefs, called *caciques* or *kurakas*,¹³ were to become paid state functionaries in charge of collecting tribute and delivering levied labor under the close supervision of *corregidores*, parish priests, and other colonial officials.

Tribute and labor regimes were significantly redesigned giving rise to two principal forms of tribute extraction from ‘Indian communities.’ First was a tax in money to be paid by tributary indians, heads of landholding households. This rationalization of the tax structure would eventually force Andean peasants into Spanish economy, wage labor, and the market.¹⁴ Second was a labor tax that Toledo symbolically referred to as the *mita*. Turning the draft of Indian labor into a state enterprise, Toledo instituted the rotational labor tax to redress the labor problem in Potosi’s silver production. Probably inspired by *mit’a* system used by the Inca state to produce maize in the Cochabamba valleys, the Spanish *mita* provided Potosi’s mine owners with around 13,000 each year.¹⁵ The reorganization of the mining economy was indeed a major objective of Toledo’s policies. Addressing the labor question was only part of a larger scheme which included the introduction of new technologies based on mercury amalgamation, the production of mercury under state monopoly in Huancavelica (Peru), and the establishment of a mining

¹² The transformation / abolition of the *encomienda* was considered necessary not only because the Crown wanted to limit *encomenderos*’ power and privileges but also because it was not as remunerative as it had been. Klein 1992:38 argues that this decline in profitability was linked to the severe population decline.

¹³ The Taino term ‘*cacique*’ was widely used in Spanish colonial America to refer to native chiefs, Spaniards coined the term *cacicazgo* for native chiefdoms. In the Andean region the Qhishwa word *kuraka* (spelled *curaca* in colonial records) was used as often. The Aymara word *mallku* was used also in more exclusively Aymara areas.

¹⁴ Royal inspectors assessed the amount to be paid by tributary thereby further undermining *encomendero*’s and *cacique*’s roles. The tax amounts to be paid as well as combinations of the tax in money with a tax in goods produced by the community varied greatly according to the different regions of the viceroyalty. See Sanchez Albornoz 1978, Larson 1988, Saignes 1995.

¹⁵ Wachtel 1982 suggests the parallel between Cochabamba’s Inca *mit’a* and Potosi’s Spanish *mita* by pointing to the similarities not only in numbers (14,000 vs. around 13,000) but also in areas of origin: the districts designated by Toledo as *mita* supply areas (*provincias obligadas*) were roughly the same as the ones that had sent laborers to Cochabamba some 50 years earlier.

code with new ownership regulations.¹⁶ In sum, Toledo's comprehensive reforms set up the frame for the development of mercantilism and entailed new forms of turning Andeans into "Indians" and "Indians" into disciplined subjects of the empire. Thereby these reforms marked a significant new turn in the process of Spanish empire building. While the outcome greatly differed from the original design and colonial institutions underwent substantial transformations in the following centuries, Toledo's reforms set the grounds for an institutionalized and ubiquitous presence of the colonial state. A state that, as Silverblatt (1995: 283) puts it, "was weak, but is was still hegemonic." It is within the hegemonic space drawn by colonial institutions that Andeans traced their own trajectories and devised tactics of resistance fitting the strategies of colonial domination.¹⁷

b) Toledo's *Reducciones* of Indians

Upon his arrival in Peru in 1569, Toledo embarked into an extensive and thorough inspection of the 600 *repartimientos* or *encomiendas* distributed throughout the territory of what was then the viceroyalty of Peru (Cook 1975: xiii).¹⁸ He wanted to learn about the history and the culture, "know the people of the kingdom, understand their talents and inclinations, personally verify the facts of the matter in order to better govern the kingdom and better serve god and His Majesty" (cited from a letter addressed to

¹⁶ Discussing the extensive literature on Potosi's silver production Larson (1988: 61-62) shows that the mita only supplied a small part of the labor used in Potosi's mines, wage work and other labor arrangements were predominant. The mita however "ensured a stable disciplined labor force, (...) expanded the pool of people available for wage work, (...) and "represented an enormous subsidy to the recipient mining enterprises."

¹⁷ I use here 'trajectories,' 'tactics,' and 'strategies' in the sense defined by de Certeau 1984: xviii-xix: "Although they are composed with the vocabularies of established languages ... and although they remain subordinated to the prescribed syntactical forms ..., the trajectories trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop."

¹⁸ 82 out of the 600 repartimientos were in Upper Peru, i.e. today's Bolivia; and 21 out of the 82 were repartimientos of more than a 1000 Indians, a number that reveals how powerful encomenderos still were (Cook 1975).

Philip II in Cook 1975: x). For this comprehensive inspection or *visita general*, as it was called, Toledo hired the “most skilled and educated men at the service of the king in the Indies” and prepared for them detailed instructions and questionnaires (Cook 1975: x). These ‘experts’ were to collect not only demographic information but also more extensive data concerning the human and economic resources, the rights and obligations of ethnic authorities before and after the conquest, the tributary system under Inca rule, the habits of people, the geography of places. Furthermore, Toledo instructed the inspectors to proceed against encomenderos, caciques and other authorities who had committed abuses against ‘their Indians’ (Cook: 1975: xi). At the end of the ‘visit’ inspectors were to give orders for the ‘reduction’ of Indians into ‘towns’ for their indoctrination and good governance. He thus instructed:

“Vos mando que visitéis personalmente los indios en la susodicha (provincia) y sus pueblos, contándolos y sabiendo las edades que han, y sus tratos y granjerías y posibilidades que tienen, y los tributos que daban en los tiempos del Inga y los que dan ahora, y lo que sería bien que den en adelante. Otro si, vos mando que procedáis contra los encomenderos, caciques y principales y otras personas que hubieran hecho malos tratamientos y otros agravios en cualquier manera, procediendo contra ellos. (...) Y así mismo proveeréis y daréis orden como los dichos indios se reduzcan a pueblos para que mejor sean doctrinados y mantenidos en justicia y tengan sus repúblicas fundadas y se gobiernen entre si, dándoles ordenanza y manera de vivir; guardando cerca de todo lo susodicho” (Cook 1975: xi)

Toledo’s *visita general* was indeed a penetrating systematic census with the scope of a socio economic and anthropological study, an act of government, and the starting point for his ‘reduction’ / resettlement policy. As Abercrombie (1998: 237) puts it, “it was simultaneously the last state-sponsored direct investigation into pre-Columbian affairs and the most thoroughgoing effort to transform Andean society.” And transformed it was, although not quite as planned. What is important to stress here, however, is that Toledo’s design of the *visita general* established the production of a systematic body of knowledge

as the basis for policy planning thus revealing a quite modern rationality in the arts of Spanish colonial government.¹⁹ At the roots of Toledo's resettlement policies and tribute reforms was the idea that systematic information about the empire's conquered subjects was a necessary –though not sufficient-- condition in order to better govern them, more systematically tap their resources, and more systematically transform their ways of life. Thus, Toledo's *visita* is to be understood as part of Philip II's efforts to gain a global understanding of his realms. Perhaps inspired by the thinkers of early modernity or just concerned with the efficient government of his expanding empire, Philip II wanted "his subjects to be representable, to conform to the units and readily observable identities that his statisticians and geographers required" (Abercrombie 1998: 247). More than 400 years separated Toledo's experts from PROSANA's experts walking through the same mountains, but the questions they asked were probably of a similar kind.

The coerced resettlement of hundreds of thousands²⁰ peoples and the reduction of thousands scattered small villages into larger nucleated settlements was an extremely ambitious project not only because of its unprecedented magnitude but because of its multiple and in practice incompatible aims (though in Toledo's rational imagination of an impeccable logic). Indeed, indians congregated in a fixed nucleated settlement could be counted more easily, taxed more systematically, drafted for the mita and managed more efficiently, governed more competently, indoctrinated more thoroughly, 'civilized' more systematically. Yet the sustainability of this project (and of the colonial economy in the

¹⁹ Toledo was neither the first nor the only one, but the one who consistently carried these reforms through as far as possible in the Andean region. His reforms were one example of the of empire policies expressing debates of early modernity political philosophers and renaissance humanists. For the influence of early modernity thinkers in Spanish empire building see, for example, Pagden (1990: 37 – 65) "Instruments of Empire: Tomaso Campanella and the Universal Monarchy of Spain."

²⁰ According to Ann Zulawski (1995: 66) "it has been estimated that 1 million people were removed from their homes and forced to live in newly created *reducciones*."

region) depended on these reconstituted Indian communities being able to take care of their own reproduction. As Larson (1988: 65) argues, “Toledo fully realized that the state had a vested interest in protecting the internal capacity of Andean communities to provide a basic level of social welfare for its members and to absorb the state’s fiscal and labor’s demands. (...) The issue of the social reproduction of local Andean economies was inextricably linked with the enforcement of economic subsidies to strategic colonial enterprises and ultimately with the power and wealth of the state.” Thus, assigning space for nucleated settlements and redistributing the land around as a continuous territory with clearly marked borders allowed for greater control and also was a way of preserving indian’s agrarian base and legitimating their land tenure.

Keeping the balance between tapping natives’ resources and guaranteeing the conditions for the production of those resources is a challenge that the implementation of resettlement policies did not meet. In launching his reduction policies Toledo was walking several thin lines between controlling and protecting, extracting and providing, transforming yet preserving. It is in the interstices of these thin lines that Andeans found the forms to respond, resist, and claim their rights as subjects of the empire. As Silverblatt (1995: 283) points it out, “Spanish political ideologies and practices riddled Indian /Spanish relations with contradictions. Indians were demeaned by colonial institutions, official policy and popular prejudice. But paradoxically, Spanish political theory proclaimed their equality, or nearly: Indians , like Spaniards, were fully human, free vassals of the Crown. As social minors of the state paternalism, Indians were guaranteed corporate rights to land and special court protections; and under Spanish law they could fight their very guardian over abusive labor and tribute demands.”

The 'reduction' reforms caused tremendous upheaval and took "at least a century or more to be consolidated" (Klein 1992: 39). Dismantling what was left from pre-Columbian ethnic territories and stripping ayllus from their traditional land rights, royal officials uprooted ayllus, drove people from their ancient lands and joined them with alien ayllus and lineages in a larger nucleated settlement officially designated as *pueblo real* or royal town. As Abercrombie (1998: 239) puts it, "[a]rbitrarily, [royal inspectors] decreed which old settlements within the district of a repartimiento would move to what new towns, and the lands pertaining to those that were moved into a new town now fell under the town's jurisdiction." The 'reduced' population was regrouped by ayllu and as such they were assigned particular streets and areas within the jurisdiction of the new town. However, since the process of *reduccion* arbitrarily divided the territories of the diarchies thereby dissecting its internal social units, the ayllus formed in the new towns did not correspond to the ones prior to the *reduccion*. In other words, members of an ayllu could end up in different towns and a new town ayllu could be formed by people who hitherto belonged to different ayllus or different segments of an ayllu. Hence, while maintaining the ayllu form of organization the *reduccion* process entailed a thorough reconfiguration of ethnic groups. Whereas prior to the *reducciones* settlements had an average of 140 persons, the new towns had an average of 2,900 persons each (Klein 1992: 39).²¹ The idea was that 500 tributaries, i.e. 2,500 to 3,000 people, constituted the number of people a single priest could catechize (Zulawski 1995: 67, Abercrombie 1998:238).

²¹ In the case of the Sura federation (comprising Sura, Casaya and Uru) for example, the repartimiento of Paria had, according to the Toledan census, 3,801 tributaries (males between 18 and 50 years old: 420 Sura, 823 Casaya – Sura, and 2,558 Uru) and a total population of 17,334 (2,285 Sura, 4209 Casaya – Sura, and 10,840 Uru) (Cook 1975:16). These Sura, Casaya, and Uru were living in 53 villages which were reduced to 6 *pueblos reales*, 2 for each group (information contained in a copy of the Toledan tasa made in 1785; Thomas Abercrombie, personal communication).

Combining elements from Iberian agrarian communities, Castilian towns, and Andean norms, the Toledan state guaranteed corporate rights to land to these reconstituted Indian communities and legitimated usufruct rights for the households of the Indians registered as tributaries. But through detailed sanctions and ordinances Toledo also regulated how this land should be used, as the following description illustrates (Larson 1988:69):

Toledo ordered communities to designate parcels of potato and maize lands as *chacras de comunidad*, whose yields were to feed the poorest inhabitants. In good years, a village was to sell part of the crop and put the proceeds in its *caja de la comunidad*, or community treasury. (...) Through cultivation of communal lands and participation in the product market, the Indian community was to guarantee minimal subsistence even to the poorer families. These risk-sharing mechanisms would establish some kind of social equilibrium within the village economy and presumably prevent the poorer peasants from fleeing their communities and their social obligations to the state in times of scarcity. Thus, the Toledan state took advantage of traditional Andean norms of reciprocity and redistribution and turned them to its own ends. (...) Toledo sanctioned a normative order that absorbed elements of the moral economy that had governed social relations in Andean society. (...) Form without content, customs without context; the Andean cultural and ideological system that gave meaning to kinship relationships were under assault by the very colonial policies that were theoretically meant to protect certain customs and traditions. (...) Even at the most mundane levels, the state altered Andean lifeways even as it sought to preserve them. For example, while Indians were supposed to continue to observe their communitarian practices of sharing scarce resources (under state supervision), they were at the same time ordered to till their fields with oxen and plow rather than with the traditional digging sticks.

Toledan *reducciones* came also with a new set of institutions formed by an intricate network of Spanish and ethnic authorities. With the *corregidor* (magistrate) and the parish priest at the top, the Spanish hierarchy also comprised a protector of Indians, a jailer, and a judicial officer. The ethnic hierarchy included the *kuraka* (or *cacique*), the *principales* (heads of ayllu segments also called *jilaqatas*), the *mita* captains, and a series of other secondary chiefs. The *kuraka* remained a hereditary position (until the 18th century), but Spanish authorities had to approve the nominations. With this rule and a

host of ordinances defining the functions and privileges of ethnic authorities, Toledo set mechanisms for state intervention in the internal affairs of Indian communities.

Summarizing the functions defined in Toledan ordinances Larson (1988: 71) writes:

They were to oversee the outflow of tribute twice a year and the dispatch of the mitayos. They were to track down fugitive Indians, mobilize work parties to build churches, bridges, and roads; and coordinate the traditional communal activities, such as terracing fields, cleaning irrigation works, and cultivating communal lands. And, as was customary, they were to reciprocate for labor services by offering drink, food, and seeds to their workers. They were also to distribute rights to land and pasturage, arbitrate local disputes, and mediate between the [ayllu] and the colonial authorities.

Spanish and ethnic authorities were in charge of both the enforcement of state exactions and the administration of the town. In both functions, native lords were key pieces and their collaboration was rewarded with privileged access to labor, land, and a fraction of the tribute collected. According to Thomson (2002: 30) “[f]rom the Spanish vantage point, the crucial intermediary—the cacique or Indian community governor—was by law identified with the (effectively subordinate) Indian republic, yet was also certified as a native lord with the honors and the privileges that befitted a nobleman. Community members recognized his backing by the colonial state and, at the same time expected the cacique to uphold certain traditional norms of Aymara lords (mallkus).” Reflecting on the ambivalence inherent to the position of these power brokers, Rasnake (1988: 107) argues that native lords were not “simple puppets of the state (...) [taking] advantage of their traditional position in the community to accumulate wealth and power

in the new economic order. ... [They were not either always using] their personal estates to buffer their communities from the excess of the system. ... In their efforts to mobilize resources to comply with the requirements of the state, some kurakas no doubt did abuse their position; but theirs was a balancing act between powerful conflicting demands, If they were agents of the state, it is clear that they were much more than that.”

Spanish and ethnic hierarchies were also interlocked in the religious and administrative institutions of the new towns or *pueblos reales*. In this context the functions of colonial and native authorities included the application of a strict order of behavioral rules to ensure a ‘civilized and Christian’ way of life. In his detailed and insightful analysis of Toledan reducciones Abercrombie (1998: 237 – 251) writes:

“each new town was simultaneously a unit of civil administration (reduccion) and a unit of ecclesiastic ministration (doctrina). The priest (...) was charged with carrying out stringent measures to convert his flock to Christianity and make sure they did not wander back to old idolatrous ways. (...) [T]o guarantee properly performed rites and full devotion to Christian beings, several sorts of specialized roles were assigned to indians, ranging from choirmaster and musicians, to mayordomos, alfereses, and other functionaries of regular cult to the saints. Taken together theyr reduplicate the kinds of devotional offices attached to all Spanish churches

On the civil side of things, administration of the community chest, the collection of tributes, levying laborers, capture and trial and punishment of delinquents, and also services to aid the indoctrination efforts of the new town’s priest were entrusted to a town council, a consejo or cabildo or regimiento (meeting in the building so named), composed of several kinds of offices and numerous individuals. (...) The council included four *regidores* (aldermen), two *alcaldes* (mayors), and one *alguacil mayor* (major bailiff), and two *alguaciles menores* (minor ones), along with a scribe, a *fiscal* (prosecutor), a schoolteacher, and a *mayordomo*. (...) Toledo’s general ordinances specify that no more than half of these posts could be held by privileged relatives of the noble cacique lineage; the rest were to belong to common indians” (244-246).

Irene Silverblatt (1995: 279) rightly argues that “Spain’s colonial enterprise might have sought the New World’s wealth and labor, but it was built through the making of new social relations and social perceptions: a cultural revolution....” The scope of the colonial state’s intrusion into Andeans’s everyday lives and its techniques of disciplining

surveillance is perhaps more clearly revealed in the spatial layout of the new towns and the rules concerning the use of time and space. Each *pueblo real* had a regular grid plan of streets leading to a spacious public plaza located in the center. Flanking this central plaza were a church with its parish house, a town council hall (*cabildo*), a jail, a market or storage center (*tambo*), and a house for visiting Spaniards. The resettled Indians, now residents of the new towns were to build their houses along the grid patterned streets and following specific instructions. Indeed, Toledo ordered his inspectors

“to lay out Indians houses with doors opening onto the public streets, so that no house opens into the house of another Indian, but that each have a separate house. Item: You shall procure that the houses of Indians are laid out such that the room of the wife and daughters and maids, is separate for that of the male children and male Indians of the house.” (Cited in Abercrombie 1998: 248)

Commenting on a longer version of this passage, Abercrombie (*ibid.*) writes:

So the town plans were explicitly oriented towards the gaze of the colonial observer, so that behavior regulated in new ways could be monitored, by the priest and corregidor, but also by the appointed members of the town council, who had to go out on scheduled circuits of the town to keep curfew and guard, most against idolatries, public drunkenness, and sin, especially of the sexual sort. The disciplining colonial gaze was to be internalized within indigenous society itself, in the form of mechanisms for social control oriented towards acts defined by new logics of ‘wrong,’ and also as conscience, to be activated in confession and directed into penitential acts in public procession.

Toledo’s reforms produced contradictory and unintended effects and met with multiple forms of resistance not only from the native population but also from Spanish who saw their plundering ambitions severely limited. Before I turn to the description of the main ways in which Andeans responded to coerced resettlement and confronted state tribute extractions, let’s have a closer look to the impact of Toledan reforms in Cochabamba valleys.

c) Contradictory Effects of Toledo’s Reforms

In the valleys of Cochabamba the indians of the 5 repartimientos created in the 1550s were “reduced” into 5 royal villages: Sipe-Sipe, El Paso, Tiquipaya, Tapacari, and Capinota (Larson 1988: 79; Cook 1975).²² The total population of these repartimientos amounted to about 18,000 indians, of which 3,600 were tributaries. Toledo established that the 5 reducciones should send 409 mitayos to Potosi every year (Larson *ibid.*).²³ The amount of maize to be delivered as tribute was reduced to a “symbolic remainder of the past.” About one third of the tribute in money was claimed royal income and had to cover the salaries of the *cacique*, the priest, and the protector of indians, along with the expenses of *mitayos* in Potosi. Although, as we will see shortly, Toledo had to recognize rights to valley lands for some highland ayllus, “[t]he thrust of Toledo’s reforms in the valleys was to bind together the disparate, fragmented cultural groups into ‘royal villages’ (*pueblos reales*) beholden to colonial bureaucrats (and their native intermediaries) for subsistence rights” (Larson 1988: 79). Kin – ethnic ties between valley and highland villages were broken for most of the cases. An important exception, however, was the case of the indians ‘reduced’ in Capinota who maintained kinship relations with highland villages in Paria until the 18th century (Larson 1988: 79). Even though valley indians found ways to resist ‘reduction’ disciplining and to circumvent *mita* quotas, Toledo’s tributary reforms imposed harsh conditions on them. Furthermore, the advance of Spanish landowners establishing haciendas throughout the valleys posed the greatest threat to the self-sufficiency of these valley peasants. Despite Toledo’s

²² Tapacari had 6,014 inhabitants, of which 1,173 were tributaries; Sipesipe 3,691 with 819 tributaries; El Paso 3,298 with 684 tributaries; Tiquipaya 2,573 with 504 tributaries. The published version of Toledo’s visita general (Cook 1975) does not mention Capinota. Based on information from a revisita in 1612, Larson (1988: 79) mentions that Capinota had 419 tributaries in 1612.

²³ According to Larson (1988: 81) the royal villages of Cochabamba were never able to meet that quota.

intentions to protect indian communities from Spanish individual entrepreneurs, colonial official failed to protect the valley indian communities.

Toledo's reforms in the valleys of Cochabamba had multiple and contradictory effects. While, on the one hand, Spanish *encomenderos* saw their rights limited and their authority superseded by the increasingly institutionalized presence of the state, on the other hand, Spanish settlers in the valley were given access to private land ownership. Indeed, in the valleys Toledo founded the Spanish town of Oropesa, later to become the city of Cochabamba. The act of foundation not only provided royal sanction to the settlement of Spanish colonizers in the valley but also conferred landholding rights to the Spaniards that were already there. This was the beginning of the formation of a class of Spanish private landowners and of the development of commercial agriculture, which by the mid 1600s was firmly established in the valleys of Cochabamba.

The increasing number of Spaniards who arrived into the coveted fertile valleys from the 1560s on established their haciendas often in lands bought from valley *caciques*. The peasants working in these haciendas were referred to as *yanaconas*, indians whose official status derived from informal bondages to Spanish landlords. Detached from their communities of origin and working for Spaniards, these tenants of haciendas were immigrants from diverse origins. Some came with Spanish *encomenderos*, others came from the old valley colonies of *mitimaes*. In his effort to rationalize the tribute system and institutionalize the presence of the colonial state in all domains of social life—whether Spanish or Andean—Toledo opened up for state intervention the private domain of Spanish haciendas. He enacted a series of ordinances regulating the relations between landlords and tenants. Landlords had to ensure the presence of a priest and allot land to

all tenants for their subsistence. More importantly, all indians tenants of haciendas were to be counted as tributaries and therefore taxed.

Given the contrasts (discussed earlier) between the Cochabamba valleys and the highlands of the southeastern altiplano, it is not surprising that Toledan reforms had a different impact on indian *reducciones* of these two regions and encountered different forms of resistance. Valley *caciques*, who were in a weaker position to begin with, ended up caught in between the colonial state that appointed them but failed to keep its protective promises and the Spanish colonizers who confronted them over land, water, and labor. This was an unequal confrontation that valley *caciques* could not win and did not win. By the 1630s Cochabamba's Spanish landed elite controlled most of the land and the native labor.

In contrast, for the highland ayllus, Spanish colonizers were not such a threat because they were not that interested in developing haciendas in the cold puna. For these ayllus the major problem was to retain access to their maize valley lands and to their members living in those lands. With more success than their valley counterparts—and sometimes against them—they turned to their advantage the interstices of colonial power and especially so the judicial rights they had as subjects of the Spanish Crown. Thus, for example, native lords of the Charka federation not only dressed as Spaniards and expected the crown to recognize the prerogatives of their nobility, but more importantly, they learned to read and write in Spanish and to handle the intricacies of the Spanish judicial system.²⁴ A testimony of this is the famous '*Memorial de Charcas*,' a petition presented to the Spanish Crown by the *kurakas* of the Charka and the Qaraqara in 1582

²⁴ For a description of the case of the *cacique* of the Charka, don Fernando Ayavire y Velasco see Elaine Zorn (1997: 74 – 75).

(the year Toledo died). Given that the Spanish court had already confirmed the Sura's, Killaca's, and Karanga's rights to certain lands they held in Cochabamba, the authors of the *Memorial* demanded a similar confirmation for the Charka and Qaraqara. To support their demands they invoked the agreements they had had with the Inca. Since the Inca had distributed lands to "all the nations of the Charcas, Caracara, Soras, Quillacas and Carangas" why should some have their rights confirmed and others not? (cited in Wachtel 1982:203).

This very long document contains valuable information about the history of the Confederation of the Charka – Qaraqara and their relations to the Inca, or at least what they wanted to present to the Spaniards. Beyond the accuracy or not of the history they present, what this document reveals is their effort to translate their demands in terms the Spaniards would recognize as legitimate. Through these and other "hybrid strategies" highland reconstituted ayllus were able to reconstruct "micro-variations" of ecological vertical control and kin-based reciprocities (Larson 1995: 23). Despite mercantile penetration and trying tributary demands, they "continued to inhabit free holding communities until the 19th century" (ibid.). Connecting the highlands and the valleys, Arque and Tapacari were caught in between these two distinctive patterns of colonial developments. As we will see in section 2.4, while haciendas expanded along the lower parts of Arque river valley, the highlands of Arque remained the stronghold of Indian communities until the end of the colonial period.

The colonial state that emerged in the economic space articulated around Potosi at the end of the 16th century, was a centralized state regulating and mediating the relations between three major social actors with conflicting interests over Andean laborers: Potosi's mine owners, Spanish hacienda landowners and reconstituted Indian

communities.²⁵ Mine owners wanted all indians to remain in the assigned *reducciones* to guarantee a stable flow of mita workers. Hacienda owners pressed indians into peonage by whatever means possible and were willing to hide those indians who escaped their *reducciones* to avoid the mita. Indian communities and, more specifically, their *caciques* needed to retain their members to fulfill their mita quota. Toledo whose main concern was, after all, the revitalization of silver production and the expansion of the state's scope of extraction understood the importance of guaranteeing the conditions for the sustainability of Andean economies. Making (or trying to make) of the colonial state a Patron state, his reforms guaranteed corporate land rights and special court protection to controlled and reconstituted Indian communities in order to protect them from falling into the grips of individual entrepreneurs. In the last instance, however, these goals were subordinated to the Crown's and Potosi's requirements. The pressure for tribute and mita workers was not counterbalanced with an efficient enforcement of protective measures. Toledo succeeded in rescuing, modernizing, and increasing silver production. Potosi's impressive boom however did not last more than thirty years, by the early 1600s began to decline again. Whether intentionally or not, Toledo's reforms also succeeded in incorporating Andean peasants into the market and in opening opportunities of mercantile accumulation for a broader spectrum of the colonial elite. Where Toledo did not succeed was in creating sustainable, self-sufficient, segregated Indian communities, especially in the valleys of Cochabamba. Severe population decline and massive flights from royal towns in the years that followed Toledo's reduction policy are a testimony to the disruption this policy caused. As Larson (1988: 93) argues, "the Toledan scheme to

²⁵ For the study of the articulation of diverse productive sectors and regions to the requirements of the mining economy and the model of internal 'economic space' in the southern Andes, see Sempat Assadourian et al. 1981.

rationalize extraction while preserving communal access to resources set migratory streams in motion all across the Peruvian landscape.”

C. Andean Tactics of Resistance to Toledo's Reforms

Besides a myriad other forms of everyday resistance, Andean peasants, *kurakas* and commoners, responded to state exactions in three major ways: by resorting to the legal system, by engaging in commercial activities, and by fleeing the *reducciones* where they were registered as tributaries. In these responses they struggled over the meanings of the terms through which the colonial state interpellated them as subjects of the crown, translated their experiences in terms understandable for the Spaniards and translated Spanish institutions in terms meaningful to them, and sought to gain some control over the conditions of their incorporation into colonial society in general and into the market in particular.

a) Legal System

As the protector of Indian subjects, the paternalist Spanish state recognized a series of legal rights to indigenous people and established legal mechanisms for Indians to claim those rights. Direct appeal to the king of Spain was one of those mechanisms and the above mentioned *Memorial de Charcas* was an example of it. In this lengthy petition, the *kurakas* of the Charka and the Qaraqara not only claimed rights to valley land and laborers, but also expressed a litany of complaints against the arrangements for labor and monetary taxation. More common was the resort to Spanish courts and the engagement in interminable litigations over land and labor. Analyzing a series of records of the legal battles that Andeans undertook in the region of Huamanga (today's southern Peru) in the

1600s, Steve Stern (1982: 294) found that by the 1600's, Andeans "had developed legal forms of struggle into a major strategy for protecting individual, *ayllu*, and community interests." Some legal battles concerned the land usurped through the system of *composiciones de tierras*, a system which allowed Crown inspectors to award 'unused' land to petitioners. Although Indians won some victories, they often had to withdraw the suits because of insufficient funds or because the chances to win were too slim. However, they stubbornly persisted in those litigations concerning labor, especially the *mita*. Even if their claims seldom prevailed, Indians often succeeded in disrupting or temporarily interrupting the labor draft by using a series of legal ruses. They contested the ways of counting the quota of natives fulfilling specific *mita* duties or claimed that the number of tributaries had diminished due to population decline. The latter claims involved the long process of calling for a new *revisita* to recount the number of tributaries and thus revise the *mita* quota. The continuous disruptions in labor practices and obligations made of the *mita* an unreliable source of labor and eventually led colonial elites to develop alternative forms of labor based on more private arrangements and less dependent on state authority.

Thus, Andeans not only learned to defend themselves through legal tactics but also learned to manipulate the legal system to sabotage colonial tributary impositions. Stern further argues that what gave natives room for maneuver were the internal conflicts and contradictory interests opposing different sectors of the colonial elite. "In the long run, all colonial elites shared a common general interest in exploiting the Indians through political coercion. (...) Still, they were in the colonial world to make money; and their narrower interests as competing exploiters often clashed. For native Andean peoples, these contradictions, in conjunction with a juridical system susceptible to their claims,

represented an opening to defend themselves on issues concerning labor, lands, and tributes” (Stern 1982: 299).

However, judicial politics also fed internal conflicts within and between ayllus and reinforced the development of individualized interests and private property thereby pushing further class divisions. More importantly, by using the system of colonial justice Andeans increased their dependence of the colonial state which in turn undermined the possibilities of a wider organization of the peasantry. As Stern (1982: 311) puts it, “[t]o the extent that reliance on a juridical system becomes a dominant strategy of protection for an oppressed class or social group, it may undermine the possibility of organizing a more ambitious assault aimed at toppling the exploitative structure itself. (...) The Indians’ struggle for Spanish justice subjected a good many colonials to constraints and hardships and even forced some of them to search for alternative ways to extract labor and profits. What it could not do, however, was challenge colonialism itself. (...) [I]t set into motion relationships that sustained colonial power, weakened the peasantry’s capacity for independent resistance, and contributed to the oppression of Andean peoples.”

b). Market

Engaging in commercial activities in the various markets created by the colonial economy was another way of avoiding the dreaded mita and/or financing excessive tribute. There is ample evidence from mita draft areas that by the 1620s Andeans, as individuals or as corporate groups, were engaged in product and labor markets in order to purchase exemption from the mita. In some cases mita workers as individuals or *kurakas* as ayllu representatives used the money earned in selling charcoal, lumber, food crops, or

ceramics to hire Potosí's wage workers (*mingas*) to stand in for ayllu members in the mita (Rasnake 1988:113). In other cases, mita workers in Potosí were able to avoid their mita jobs by working temporarily for wages where they could better negotiate the conditions of the job (Larson 1988: 93). Because of population decline, diminishing subsistence basis and / or cyclical droughts and other climatic risks, Andean ayllus were often unable to fulfill their tribute obligations. To confront tribute under these circumstances, or to save funds to cover tribute during the cyclical crises, kurakas often sold or rented out communal land, transformed valley lands into commercial haciendas, or engaged in different market sectors (e.g. food crops, interregional transportation with llama caravans).²⁶ While market participation entailed a greater incorporation into the colonial economy, in many cases it constituted, as Stern (1995: 90) puts it "a precondition for the continuity of subsistence and for the ongoing corporate integrity of ethnic ayllu groups."

c) Flight and Migration

Running away from the royal villages where they were registered as tributaries and *mitayos* was, for many Andeans, the most radical way of avoiding tribute and labor obligations. This tactic of resistance, however, increased the pressure on *kurakas* and kin groups who had to find the money to cover for the tribute and work harder to cover for the absentees' labor. As Brooke Larson (1988: 94) points it out, "the residents who fled were not only abandoning their ancient lands and huacas, relinquishing their kinship ties

²⁶ As the literature on Andean market initiatives has shown, relations with the market included a variety of responses ranging from taking advantage of certain market opportunities to defend the ayllu's well-being, maintain a certain degree of autonomy or alleviate tribute pressures to more opportunistic ventures of individuals or households who established a private business at expenses of the ayllu (for a discussion of these issue see Larson, Harris, and Tandeter 1995).

and forsaking their complex of rights and obligations, they were also throwing the burden of their mita turn onto the rest of the community. It was the entire community, and ultimately the *cacique*, who carried the responsibility for the mita.” Burdened with more obligations, increasing numbers of tributaries fled their homes seeking other arrangements as ‘*forasteros*’ (strangers) in cities, mining camps, haciendas, or other indian villages. This new phenomenon of Andeans resettling in new places as ‘strangers’ would not have expanded to the extent that it did if landowners, mine owners, urban entrepreneurs or even *caciques* had not been so willing to hide their new workers and shield them from claims arising from previous affiliations. Tax collectors and *caciques* followed these “economic refugees” (as Larson 1988: 94 calls them) into distant lands hoping to redeem the debts owed.

As Saignes (1995: 176) argues, “[f]iscal pressures and demographic changes both conditioned and reflected the responses of the Indian towns to colonial demands.” Thus, the unintended effect or the result of the failure of Toledan reforms was widespread resettlement, migration, and the emergence of new social categories entailing yet another social and geographic reorganization of the south Andean world. Throughout the 17th century, “Indians” were further categorized as *originarios*, i.e. natives living in their community of origin where they were registered as tributaries; *forasteros*, i.e. strangers living in a community other than that of their kin group; and *yanaconas*, i.e. dependents of a Spanish overlord.

However, flight and re-categorization did not necessarily end in complete severance of ethnic ties. As Saignes’s study (1995) shows, “beneath the apparent changes” there is evidence that in many cases migrants maintained links with their original communities and eventually returned. Pointing to the regional variation resulting

from the different methods of tribute payment Toledo had established, Saignes describes a complex picture of constant movement, double residence, contradictory records, and different patterns of migration some of which were recreations of the vertical dynamic between altiplano and valley lands. “The routes, the numbers, and the categories of migrants all depended on the type of relationship that linked inhabitants of puna and valley, such as ethnic affiliation, mixed marriages, preferential exchanges, or wage labor” (Saignes 1995: 172).

Flight and migration compounded with population decline (worsened by several epidemic outbreaks) exposed the shortcomings of Toledo’s tribute and mita systems and forced Spanish officials to constantly readjust colonial policies and seek new strategies to impose state exactions. The census carried out in 1680 revealed the magnitude of population decline and dispersion: between the 1570s and the 1680s the indian population declined by almost 50% and, in places like Cochabamba, the *originario* population declined by 75%. Spanish authorities then ordered to register all *forasteros* resettled in ‘foreign’ places and redistribute tribute and mita obligations among *originario* and *forastero* population (Larson 1988: 97-99). These measures were not enforced (until the 1734 decrees) and *forasteraje* (resettlement as ‘strangers’) continued to increase; by the mid 18th century *forasteros* amounted to more than half the tributary population (ibid.).

The distribution of *forasteros* was, however, extremely uneven. While altiplano *forasteros* lived mostly in mining towns and the rural population was predominantly *originario*, in the valleys of Cochabamba rural population of Spanish haciendas and indian villages was predominantly composed of *forasteros*. By the end of the 18th century *originarios* represented only 4% of the population. According to Larson (1988: 100) “[o]f all the provinces of Alto Peru, Cochabamba developed the most extreme imbalance of

forastero population.” The preeminence of *forasteraje* in Cochabamba significantly contributed to shape the process of identity formation in the valleys. To a greater extent than in other regions, ethnic identifications of rural migrants soon faded away and the distance between ‘forastero Indian’ and ‘mestizo’ diminished, especially outside the Indian royal villages (Larson 1988).

In sum, while resorting to the legal system, participating in the market, or adopting colonial categories implied greater dependency of the colonial state, in initiating these engagements they struggled to gain control over the terms of their incorporation thereby avoiding “more abject surrender” (Stern 1995: 90). Furthermore, in their efforts to resist and accommodate to colonial domination, Andeans appropriated (used) colonial institutions, manipulated colonial categories and interpreted ‘civilizing’ messages, and thereby shaped the very fabric of colonial society in ways unforeseen by the colonizers. Spanish empire building was thus a “protracted compromise” (Silverblatt 1995: 283). The order Toledo had envisioned of a colonial society based on the well contained division between Spanish and Indian towns each one with their nobles and commoners and both ruled by an efficient bureaucracy of Crown’s and Church officials actually resulted in a “complex amalgam of classes, casts and groups both within the rural Indian world and in the Spanish dominated urban centers as well” (Klein 1992: 51).

D. Colonial Andean

Ethno-historical analysis (e.g. Larson, Harris, and Tandeter 1995) shows that when resisting / engaging with colonial institutions (e.g. the market, the judicial system) Andeans were not necessarily preserving pre-Columbian traditions or opposing a pre-colonial order to the colonial order but making a calculated use of elements of both

thereby developing what Stern has conceptualized as an ‘Andean colonial logic.’ A logic which “enhanced long-term well being by **avoiding** clear cut commitments to either a “traditional Andean” or a “colonial European” pattern of political economy (Stern 1995: 85). By devising tactics of resistance to circumvent the strategies of colonial power Andeans had forged by the 17th century a new culture, a colonial Andean culture.

Abercrombie’s analysis of Indian responses to Christian indoctrination in altiplano *reducciones* throughout the 17th century adds an important dimension to our understanding of this colonial Andean culture of resistance and (while at the same time) sheds light on the dialectics of Andean tactics of resistance and Spanish colonial strategies of domination. Discussing in detail three cases of baptized indians who were reported to perform Christian rites –confession, mass, veneration of catholic saints—and were accused of using these apparently Christian practices to cover for idolatrous rites for pagan deities, Abercrombie shows that for Spanish extirpators of idolatries, Andean appropriations of Christian practices were as condemnable (censurable) as pre-Columbian religious practices. The cases described took place at different moments between the 1570s and the 1670s. Comparing the different ways colonial records reported accusations and investigations Abercrombie also found that, as time passed, inquisitors were less able to provide evidence to prove that the accused were indeed performing pre-Columbian religious practices. Without denying the persistence of clandestine rites for Andean deities, Abercrombie argues that in many cases, indigenous performances of catholic rites were expressions of genuine devotion for catholic saints and beliefs. “For indigenous peoples in their new towns, influenced by incessant priestly harangues and also by the pomp of Christian ceremonies in which they participated ... had begun their own process of transculturation, selecting suitable pieces of Christian belief and practice

and knitting them into their lives in their own manner” (Abercrombie 1998: 266). That Spanish priests persisted in claiming the contrary, further argues Abercrombie, was not only because, in the context of the counter reformation, the catholic church could not allow any usurpation of priestly authority but, more importantly, because, in the context of Spanish colonization, colonizers constantly needed to reassert their difference and distance from the colonized. As Abercrombie (1998: 486) puts it, “[t]here could be no tributes or forced labor from such successfully converted indians, who would in theory gain the rights of any Crown subject along with their civilization and Christianity. To serve god by preserving the empire, and to preserve the empire by maintaining its colony, indians had to remain fully ‘other.’”

E. The Bourbon Reforms and Andean Rebellions

Keeping the native subjects of the crown within a clearly bound tributary category of ‘Indians’ required permanent adjustments as Andeans found more and new ways of circumventing definitions and escaping this category. The decline in the number of tributaries became a particularly acute problem in the context of mining recession and severe epidemics during the first decades of the 18th century. Perhaps nowhere like in the valleys of Cochabamba was the blurring of boundaries more extended and thus more worrisome for colonial authorities. Thus, for example, viceroy Castelfuerte (1724-1736) suspected that in Cochabamba tributaries were not only undercounted but were passing as *mestizos*, a category that was exempted of paying tribute. The category of *mestizo* was, at that time, relatively new and was used to designate those who had one European parent. Those who were only ¼ European—i.e. they had only one European grandparent—were designated as *cholos* and were not exempted of tribute. The viceroy suspected that the

“alleged mestizos” were simply Indians or “cholos who had changed their indigenous garb for western clothes and identity” (Larson 1988: 111). As reported by Larson (*ibid.*), the viceroy was under the impression that if “cholos were exempt, Cochabamba would be without tributaries.” According to Larson (*ibid.*), there is no evidence to support or contradict the viceroy’s impressions, but his “observations about cholos reveal the ambiguity of socio-cultural statuses in the eastern valleys and the extent to which the caste system had eroded.” What seems certain is the fact that racial / ethnic passing became a viable tactic once *forasteraje* was not anymore a way of escaping tribute. A royal decree passed in 1734 ended the tax exempt category of landless Indians and established that all Indians whether originarios or forasteros, with or without access to land were subject to pay tribute. Viceroy Castelfuerte instructed census takers to register as Indians all those who claimed to be mestizos but failed to provide legal proof of their status. The presence of stricter inspectors in the region of Cochabamba gave rise to a series of riots where mestizos, cholos and indians protested together against taxes. Throughout the 1730s was known as a region of restless people (Larson 1988).

The last decades of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century were trying times for the viceroyalty of Peru and renewed efforts to tighten tribute did not suffice to overcome fiscal problems, and mining recession. The continuing decline of Potosi’s silver production caused a severe economic depression that reduced the capacity of the colonial state to maintain the institutions it had established. Already by the 1670s not only had the revenue from Potosi greatly diminished but a large share of it went to cover the growing cost of an increasingly ineffectual colonial bureaucracy. The response of the crown was to sell colonial offices. Spanish *corregidores* (magistrates) bought their posts and thus felt entitled to use them in their own ways to make money in the Americas.

One way was through the embezzlement of tribute, another way was by forcing native tributaries to buy—usually on credit—commodities distributed by the *corregidores* or their agents. Viceroyalty had little power to check the authority or misconduct of this commodified bureaucracy and the crown did not only overlooked the forced distribution of merchandise (*repartimiento de mercancías*) but legalized it in the 1750s establishing a tax for this distribution commerce. By the mid-18th century, as Larson (1988: 124) puts it, “the political apparatus of Peru was in shambles: it neither ensured the functioning of the extractive institutions (tribute and mita) nor did it protect the subsistence economies that underpinned those institutions. And finally, the state did not have the leverage or authority to arbitrate effectively among conflicting colonial interest groups.”

The second half of the 18th century was a period of uneven economic recovery during which the production of silver increased slowly but steadily and population began to grow again.²⁷ This period also was characterized by political unrest. Economic recovery did not smooth the social and political tensions and neither did the systematic measures imposed by the crown (now in the hands of the Bourbons) to generate more tax revenue in the Andes.²⁸ The heavy burden of steady taxation and, more importantly the excessive abuses and corruption of *corregidores* and their collaborators—including hereditary native lords—gave rise to a climate of permanent unrest. At first Indian communities resorted to colonial courts to denounce corrupt *corregidores*, their forced

²⁷ The recovery of Potosí was only partial and silver production never reached the level it had in the late 16th century. In the late 18th century silver production in Mexican mines was more important than in Potosí.

²⁸ About Bourbon reforms in 18th century, Silvia Rivera (1993) writes: “Es lógico que las reformas introducidas por los Borbones desde mediados del siglo XVIII tuvieran un gran impacto sobre las complejas formas de acomodo que había conseguido la población en el contexto del pacto toledano. ... Así, lo que para Europa eran medidas inspiradas en el nuevo sentido humanista de la Ilustración, en las colonias se convertirán en nuevas e ‘ilustradas’ maneras de negar la humanidad de los indios; lo que en España fue una centralización del aparato estatal y un ajuste de sus dispositivos para facilitar la libre circulación mercantil, en las colonias se inyectará con el mercado cautivo y coactivo de los repartos [de mercancías], en

distribution, and their interference with the appointment of local kurakas. Soon unsuccessful legal battles turned into a multiplicity of local conflicts and uprisings the targets of which were corregidores and collaborating caciques (kurakas). Between 1780 and 1782 the entire region from Cuzco to Potosí (and even further south) was engulfed in massive indigenous insurgencies that went far beyond the protest against corregidores and constituted a liberation movement seeking to overthrow the preexisting regime of domination.²⁹ Although brutally repressed by the royal army, the rebellion forced the crown to abolish the forced distribution of commodities, the post of corregidores, and the hereditary character of the post of kurakas or caciques. However, the reforms undertaken by the Bourbons in the late 18th century also aimed at increasing the control over Indian communities.

F. Arque at the End of the Colonial Period

Pointing to the regionally uneven and contradictory effects of the “century long” economic depression (the 1700s), Klein (1992: 67) argues that the decline of Potosí (and with it of Spanish urban market demands for labor and products) “ultimately benefited the peasants who now were able to keep a larger share of their surplus production as well as retain more of their own labor time.” Furthermore, the growth of haciendas stopped thus diminishing the pressure on the land of Indian communities. When the Indian population began to grow again Indian communities could expand without the encroachment of the haciendas. This “relative relaxation of exploitation” gave rise to a

la fragmentación de intereses privados de los funcionarios, en la multiplicación de barreras al comercio interno y en el bloqueo a las iniciativas mercantiles populares e indígenas.”

²⁹ The ‘great rebellion’ as it is often called of 1780 – 1782 had three main centers of insurgency, the first one in the royal town of Macha, near Potosí, led by Tomas Catari; the second in the area of Cuzco led by

period of relative growth and consolidation of peasant economies and markets (Klein 1992: 74).

In the valleys of Cochabamba, the decline of Potosí entailed a decline in the power of the Spanish landowning class and the reorganization of haciendas into sharecropping arrangements and/or rental of parcels. Thus emerged the trend towards the fragmentation of agricultural units and small-scale agricultural production and valley peasants started to engage in petty commerce as traders and artisans.³⁰ “As petty commodity producers, the valley peasants were remolding the contours of the regional economy, diversifying production and evolving a network of peasant markets. They were giving shape to an emerging peasant economy, one that was outside the domain of the traditional Andean community and that has made a deep imprint in the region down to the present day. Most importantly, they were forging a rival economy that increasingly encroached on the economic power of the landowning class.” (Larson 1988:209) These economic trends did not affect in the same way the trade corridors that connected the central valleys and the altiplano, i.e. the river valleys of Arque and Tapacari. Because of the low prices, valley landowners and merchants did not want to pay the freight to take the grain to the cities of the altiplano cities. They just sent the grain with their porters and watchmen to the “port towns of Arque and Tapacari” where they were exempt from municipal taxes and could take advantage of the proximity of grain mills” (Larson 1988: 240). The town of Arque became an important marketplace dominated by wholesale

Tupac Amaru; and the third in the area of La Paz led by Tupaj Katari who held the city of La Paz under siege during six months..

³⁰ Tracing this trend back to 18th century and documenting in detail the socio-economic processes that led to its emergence is precisely one of the major contributions of Brooke Larson’s (1988) study of the Cochabamba valleys.

grain dealers and flourished with activity while the highland Indian communities suffered from the competition of valley landlords and speculators.

In 1782 the province of Cochabamba – Santa Cruz comprising the ‘corregimientos’ of Cochabamba and Mizque and the capitania of Santa Cruz, was established as an *Intendencia*, which in turn divided into 8 ‘*partidos*’ (Arque, Tapacari, Ayopaya, Sacaba, Cliza, Mizque, Valle Grande, and Santa Cruz), the city (‘villa’) of Oropesa (Cochabamba) and the ‘nuevo Yunga of Yuracare. The creation of Cochabamba as an intendency in the 1780s brought to Cochabamba, as *Intendente General*, a very interesting character, a man inspired by his times’ ideas of progress and entrepreneurship. Don Francisco de Viedma began his mandate with a visit to all the *partidos* (provinces or districts), thanks to that we have a description of Arque partido at the end of the 18th century i.e. last years of the colonial period. Let’s turn to Arque as seen by Viedma in the 1790s. After independence, the partido de Arque became the Arque Province.

According to Viedma (1969), The *partido* de Arque comprised 4 parishes (*curatos*): Arque, Colcha, Capinota and Carasa. The latter was considered the “best of all the valleys of Cochabamba, the rest is a jumble of mountains” (Viedma 1969:69). Along the Arque River there were many haciendas. Land for cultivation was more or less fertile, especially along rivers (wheat, maize, barley, and anything one might want to plant). On the slopes and in the highlands there was wheat, potatoes and quinoa. Creaks and slopes had some forestation: low trees and bushes. Pastures were scarce but could support some herds, mainly goats (ibid: 69 – 70). An important piece of information is his mention of mines in the highlands: silver, tin, and lead. Finally, according to his estimations, the size of the population was of 22,174. It is worth noting the break down

of racial categories he used to classify the population: Spaniards, mestizos, cholos, mulatos, Indians, and blacks (always listed in that order!).

Concerning the area (two parishes) that form today's Arque Province (with the exception of Kirqiawy Ayllu), Viedma provided the following details:

Parish of Arque: the town of Arque was the 'capital' or 'cabecera de partido.' The town had been founded by the Indians originally from ('originarios') Challacollo – Paria. The land belonged to the community of Indians of Challacollo ("el terreno de la poblacion es perteneciente a aquella comunidad"(ibid.:70). There were irrigated corn fields, 12 mills and non irrigated corn fields in the highlands, all of which was under the administration of the 'cacique' of Challacollo. The 'poor suburbs' (arrabal) of Cochi were at the other side of the 'rio Guayllia' (Wallia River) and there was an important market around there where people from different partidos and neighboring areas went to buy and sell grains, rugs, salt, wool, etc. The area was always under the threat of floods .

The parish had two 'anexos' Apillapampa and Villcabamba.

Along the Arque – Colcha River there were several 'good' haciendas belonging to Spaniards and several mills.

The population of the Arque parish: 393 Spaniards, 732 mestizos, 704 cholos, 42 mulatos, 4044 indios forasteros sin tierras: a total of 5929.

Parish of Colcha: Viedma found in this town the remains of older more prosperous times and lamented the fire that ten ears before his arrival to the area had burned down the church, which used to be "the best of the province." (ibid: 72). The "vecinos" had haciendas, mills, mines and/ or they were 'arrieros' (traveling merchants).

Colcha had 3 sub-parishes, "Berenguela, Tacopaya, and Quirquiavy" (i.e Kirqiawy), and 3 anexes, "Comuna, Aquerana, and Totorá" (i.e. Totorá Pampa, according to Viedma a sub-annex of Kirqiawy at that time). In the sub-parish of Berenguela he found the remains of what had been a richer town when the mines were at their peak. Viedma only found that some work was being done in the poor mines left, work without 'formality or arrangement' (ibid: 72).

Curiously, Viedma gives the exact same numbers for the population of Colcha as he gave for Arque's, with the only difference that he mentions 'indians' without specifying forasteros or landless: 398, 732, 704, 42, 4044, 5= 5929.

Based on the information provided by Viedma and complementary research, Larson(1988) summarizes the main characteristics of the Arque region at the end of colonial time, turn of the 19th century:

- The *partido* of Arque apparently had the greatest number of property units inhabited by tribute paying Indians of any of Cochabamba's districts.

- Arque's mixed –race population was relatively small compared to the number of mestizos in the valleys of Cochabamba. Thus, the overall demographic profile of Arque was one of predominantly Indian population, distributed between a few large grain estates and milling operations located in the river valley, on the one hand, and a multitude of small properties, including many estancias, scattered across the mountainous interior (Larson 1988: 185 ; footnote 38).
- Arque was a district of 'sharp ecological contrasts'. The lower fertile valleys were coveted areas for maize and fruit crops, but in remote hillsides and gorges Indians could tend their herds and "plant traditional highland crops undisturbed by the river-valley traffic and competition for access to superior quality soil." (ibid: 185)
- In the more fertile valleys there were some 50 haciendas producing grains for export to Oruro and other provinces. Along the Arque – Colcha river hacienda owners built grain mills. "Almost one third of the grain mills in the province of Cochabamba were located along the banks of Arque's waterways." (ibid: 186). In 1799 there were 13 hacendados owned 62 mills in the parish of Arque and 9 hacendados operated 31 mills in the parish of Colcha. (ibid).
- "The lands and mills of Arque, located along the trade corridor connecting the central valleys to the altiplano and blessed with water power, gave some landowners of the parish critical advantage in the marketing and processing of maize and wheat destined for the colder lands of the altiplano provinces" (ibid).
- Even though vestiges of pre-colonial land patterns remained (e.g. the existence of mitmaq lands still controlled by the Indians of Challacollo, whose principal ayllus were located in the province of Paria –as reported by Viedma), Arque's river valley nevertheless had become an important Spanish trade route that connected grain haciendas, mills, and highland markets" (ibid).

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