

5 **Indigenous Governance, Protected Areas and Decentralised Forestry: A Comparative Analysis of Two Tsimane' Territories in the Bolivian Lowlands**

Patrick Bottazzi¹

Abstract

The “territorial historicity” related to the Tsimane’ people living in the Bolivian lowlands is a complex process involving many governmental and non-governmental actors. The initiative of evangelist missionary organisations at the beginning of the 1990s led to the formal recognition of two Tsimane’ territories. While one territory was given a double status – Biosphere Reserve and indigenous territory – the other territory was put directly under the management of indigenous people. Elucidating the historical background of the process that led to the recognition and institutionalisation of the indigenous territories enables us to understand that the constitution of an indigenous political organisation remains a voluntary process justified above all by territorial strategies that have been mainly supported by foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Thus, indigenous political leaders are currently struggling to take part in a more formal mechanism of territorial governance emerging from municipalities, governmental forestry services and forestry companies. Faced with the difficulty of reconciling the objectives related to conservation, development and democratisation, the different actors are using ethnic considerations to legitimise their positions. This leads to what we describe as “institutional segmentation”, a phenomenon that makes it difficult to set up a form of territorial planning capable of taking into account the diversity of socio-ecological needs. We argue that the role of municipalities should be strengthened in order to better coordinate territorial management, following the diverse socio-ecological logics that exist in the area. This is one of the most relevant stakes of the new Bolivian constitution’s concept of “indigenous autonomy”.

Keywords: Indigenous people; territory; Tsimane’; forest governance; decentralisation; autonomy; protected areas; Bolivia.

5.1 Introduction

Decentralised management of natural resources has become a key principle of sustainable development. It is currently impossible to consider forest resource conservation without involving/including the local population. Protected areas are an effective means of conserving forest ecosystems only if the local population can be involved in the political and economic management of these areas (Borrini-Feyerabend et al 2004). Responding to the strong indigenous claims arising since the 1990s, the Bolivian government has integrated the principles of inclusive management in the country's new forest regime.² However, today, after almost two decades of implementing reforms, the results remain mainly unsatisfactory (Kaimowitz et al 1998; Kaimowitz et al 1999; Pacheco 2003). Several socio-economic factors hinder achievement of the expected participative and sustainable management of forest resources.

Among these factors, one appears to be very important from a structural perspective: "institutional segmentation". This factor is defined below as the lack of a communicative path between the main institutional and decentralised political spaces. This segmentation gradually increased over the years, based on ethnic, ideological and behavioural differences. The present paper tries to explain how such an "institutional segmentation" came about, by analysing the institutional history of two indigenous territories situated in the Bolivian lowlands. What role does the indigenous social movement play in the way indigenous populations participate in decentralised management of their forest resources? What differences in terms of governance can be observed between the protected areas controlled by the government and those areas directly conceded to local management based on indigenous people's norms? The present paper consists of a theoretical and methodological background and two case studies addressing the following three levels: the level of indigenous territories, the level of the Biosphere Reserve, and the level of municipalities. Finally, the paper discusses the emergence of "indigenous governance" as an interface between the three above-mentioned levels.

5.2 Background

Today, Bolivian indigenous social movements are considered to be the most influential ones in national politics in Latin America. They have demonstrated their capacity to exert bottom-up political influence (Kearney and

Varese 1995; Langer and Muñoz 2003; Vanden 2007). This capacity to influence political processes has taken on a new form since the recognition of indigenous stakes at the international community level. Since the country's independence in 1825, successive governments have been aiming to contain those movements, either through oppression or, more subtly, by trying to formalise communities, giving them rights only to enclose them in juridical categories. In some cases, South American governments have instituted individual property rights and favoured the election of decentralised local authorities, with the intention of breaking down the community logic that was threatening the established regime of governments (Hvalkof and Plant 2001; Urioste 2002, 2003).

Decentralisation policies emerged as the state attempted to formalise local political spaces. Such policies are being implemented in most developing countries (Ribot 2002). Even if many scholars consider decentralisation as significant progress in the democratisation process, it rarely results in a consensus between the state and local stakeholders and is mostly a top-down policy process. This explains the manifold tensions that remain between various local authorities. Therefore, it is very helpful to examine small-scale historical dimensions to understand the complex processes of institutionalisation. Ribot's historical approach shows that decentralisation does not irremediably enforce existing local governments, but can, on the contrary, be complementary to the "traditional" or existing authorities, even if these authorities remain very strong (Ribot 1999). As a consequence, the fact that there are a number of sources of political power leads to various problems such as legal pluralism (dismemberment/dislocation) or splitting of state functions (Jacob 1998a, 1998b; Olivier de Sardan 1998; Benda-Beckmann 2001). In other cases, decentralisation can lead to the complete disappearance of local civil forces, thus resulting in a "recentralisation" of local affairs. This can lead to a chronic lack of a sense of responsibility within civil society and consequently to the re-establishment of state control, drastically reducing local initiatives (Wunsch 2001; Bottazzi 2007).

Rural population participation modalities vary widely according to social contexts. They depend largely on local capacity and cannot be imposed from the outside. As a consequence, the establishment of an integrated and sustainable local governance system for natural resources is a long-term process, depending on local and regional socio-political dynamics on the one hand, as well as on the quality of the national legal framework in which these dynamics are integrated, on the other hand (Utting 1998; Cleaver 1999; Cornwall 2002).

Considering the high correlation between ethnicity and citizen agency (Taylor and Wilson 2004) in Bolivia and in Latin America as a whole, access to decision-making positions in the local government has been structured according to ethnic membership, which in turn has been built throughout centuries of social segregation (Franqueville 2000). Some social categories/classes – mostly indigenous populations – have been marginalised from decision-making processes. This situation has been changing in recent years with the rise of political regimes based on indigenist ideology (Albro 2005). Faced with this complexity and the diversity of ethnic belonging, a simple dichotomy between indigenous and non-indigenous is no longer relevant. From now on, it will be necessary to take into consideration the multiplicity of membership mechanisms among the different ethnic groups in which large discrepancies still subsist (Albó and Quispe 2004; López and Regalsky 2005). The success of a sustainable and equitable management of natural resources undoubtedly comes from a combination between ethnic political dynamics and the institutional practices stemming from a decentralisation process.

The question of political legitimacy is thus crucial. Some empirical studies show that when local authorities benefit from popular recognition, the different actors tend to better respect local rules. Adhering to these rules, populations have a better feeling of “legitimacy” of the benefits generated from their activities (Palmer and Engel 2007). The dynamics of political participation concerning forest resource management are not only motivated by access to resources, but also by a wish for “state recognition” of these local entities as an expression of political integration (Palmer and Engel 2007). However, further studies also show that, with respect to various local governance structures, decentralisation does not de facto guarantee integrated and sustainable management of natural forest resources. Many conflicts continue solely because of the new political challenges that access to decentralised power entails (Tacconi 2007). Decentralisation as a phenomenon should thus be studied as an evolutionary process rather than as an advancement per se (Oyugi 2000).

In Bolivia, one of the most important changes effected by the decentralisation laws is the extension of the local governments’ competencies to rural zones, including the management of forest resources. From a legal point of view, these reforms represent very important progress, but their implementation is still insignificant. Local agents lack competencies in the forestry sector. Means of communication and transportation do not allow indigenous populations to have access to the meetings in which decisions are taken.

Consideration of formal and legal criteria related to forestry activities requires important administrative competencies that are unfamiliar to indigenous populations. Municipalities are not able to levy duties and taxes on forestry activities. The different stakeholders' areas of responsibility are not clearly defined and we see a confusion of territorial legitimacies claimed by municipalities, public enterprises, protected areas and indigenous groups (Kaimowitz et al 1998; Pacheco 2003). These studies allow us to understand the mechanism of deforestation from a governance perspective. It highlights the tensions between stakeholders' practices and the legal system. However, owing to the lack of a historical dimension, we do not fully understand the process of local institutional change.

The main objective of the present comparative study is to show how very specific events can influence the process of institutionalising a territory to the point that the whole system of interrelations between agents is fundamentally modified. In this way we will show that the recent indigenous land titling process in the Bolivian lowlands is certainly the product of joint local and international dynamics of social claims. But we will also show that this process remains very detached from decentralised political spaces. We formulate the hypothesis that "institutional segmentation" results from the history of territorial institutionalisation, and that this segmentation derives from the diversity of ethnic dynamics as well as from the implementation of a multiplicity of state organisations emerging from the reforms in the 1990s.

5.3 Methodology

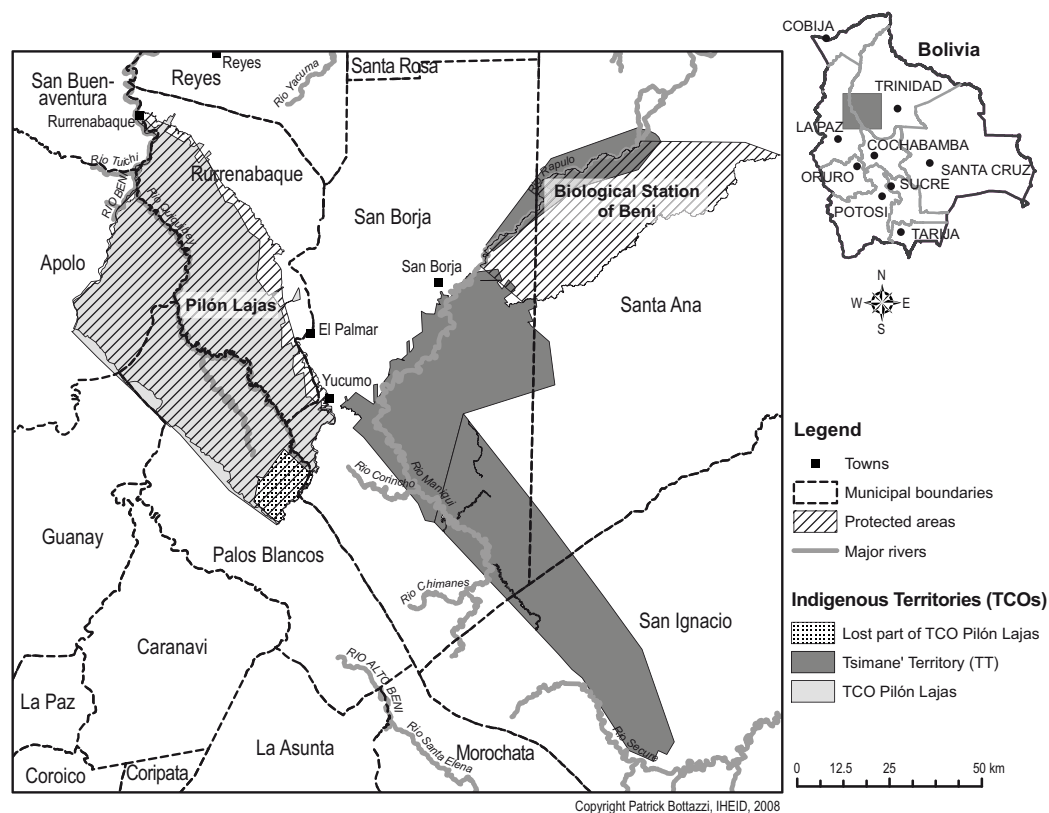
To analyse "territorial historicity", defined as a social process leading to the establishment of spatialised power relations (Raffestin 1980; Di Méo 2001), we use an actor-oriented approach (Long 2001) with the aim of comparing the various social networks involved in the process of governance and management of the territories studied. The historical dimension of territorial governance is taken into account to explain the social antecedents which have brought about the current contentious institutional situation. Particular attention is given to the role of indigenous and settler organisations (Amazonian and Andean), municipalities, NGOs, the national forest agency and private enterprises. This focus helps us to analyse the process of producing territorial norms in relation to the link between "conservation", "development" and "participation" values.

Empirically speaking, this study was based on a comparison between two indigenous territories, now considered formally as *Tierras Comunitarias de Origen* (TCOs)³, situated on the border between Bolivia's Andean piedmont and its Amazonian plains:

- The Tsimane' Territory (TT), located mainly within the municipality of San Borja;
- The Pilón Lajas Biosphere Reserve and Indigenous Territory (Pilón Lajas), located mainly within the municipality of Rurrenabaque.

Fig. 1
Political situation
of Tsimane' Territo-
ries. (Map by
Patrick Bottazzi)

The two TCOs are inhabited mainly by Tsimane' populations and are situated in similar ecological zones. The principal difference between the two territories is that the whole of Pilón Lajas lies within a Biosphere Reserve,



while only a small part of the Tsimane' Territory (TT) is included in the Biological Station of Beni (EBB), the first protected area in Bolivia to be effectively implemented (Figure 1).

5.4 The indigenous social movement for territory in the lowlands of Bolivia

5.4.1 The creation of the Tsimane' Territory and the Grand Tsimane' Council

The first anthropological studies on Tsimane' societies localised them in the southwestern department of Beni, inhabiting mainly the south of the Bolivian province as well as the provinces of Yacuma and Mojos, between the Andean piedmont and the vast savannah plains of Moxos. Until the 1970s, the Tsimane' essentially based their livelihoods on small-scale slash-and-burn agriculture and on gathering, hunting and fishing. At present, their gradual integration into the capitalist market economy is driving them to progressively adopt new modes of subsistence, such as temporary seasonal labour, trade and forestry (Perez Diez 1983).

The Tsimane' forest situated along the Maniqui River is an important reservoir of precious wood materials, such as mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) and Spanish cedar (*Cedrela* spp.). Strong lobbying by forestry companies triggered significant socio-economic change in the 1980s. The damage caused by forest exploitation forced many families to migrate downstream of the Maniqui River and to occasionally move to the urban centre of San Borja. The involvement of an American evangelist missionary, Dino Kempf, and of various other local organisations⁴ was crucial in the Tsimane' people's effort to regain a sense of self-determination. Following repeatedly failed attempts at direct negotiations with traders and the local authorities, Kempf organised a meeting with various representatives of Tsimane' communities held on 4 March 1989 (Lehm 1994). This meeting resulted in the creation of the Grand Tsimane' Council (GCT), the first representative political authority of the Tsimane' nation (personal communication by Jorge Añes, President of GCT, 9 April 2005). On this basis the GCT and the US missionary organisation called "Nueva Tribu" put forward an initial Tsimane' territorial claim, requesting control over an area that includes the entire region of the Maniqui River, the Eva Eva Cordillera and part of the pampas.

The event that pushed the claims of indigenous people to the top of the national policy agenda was without doubt the famous “march for territory and dignity”, organised by the Central de Pueblos Indígenas del Beni (CPIB), i.e. the regional indigenous organisation. This march increased political pressure on the government regarding the “Tsimane’ forest” claim, too. The indigenous people of the Isiboro-Secure National Park and the Siriono also joined the movement. The march took place between August and September 1990. 800 indigenous people from the lowlands walked from Trinidad to La Paz to claim their territorial and citizen rights. However, it seems that the land titling of the first Tsimane’ territory was not the direct result of their participation in the march. A first ministerial resolution was proclaimed five days before the arrival of the demonstrators in the town of San Borja on 25 August 1990. It is not possible to know whether this was a rather quick reaction by the government aiming to weaken the political impact of the march that had started weeks before. In any case, the Tsimane’ profited from the significant political pressure exerted by the indigenous movement. The government’s resolution granted the Tsimane’ the first indigenous territory in Eastern Bolivia. After the arrival of the demonstrators in La Paz, this resolution was transformed into an indigenous land title through a presidential decree by Paz Zamora.⁵ It was thus given an official dimension; five different indigenous populations (Tsimane’, Yuracare, Mojeños, Siriono and Movima) were given titles to four territories.⁶ Those first Bolivian territories remained formalised by presidential decree only until 1996, i.e. when the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) law was promulgated, and then became TCOs. By this decree, the Tsimane’ indigenous territory was officially recognised on 392,220 ha, along the Maniqui River and hence in one of the richest biodiversity areas of the world.

5.4.2 The Biosphere Reserve and Indigenous Territory of Pilón Lajas and the creation of the Tsimane’ Mosekene Regional Council

The present Biosphere Reserve including the Indigenous Territory of Pilón Lajas is the second-largest territory inhabited by the Tsimane’ in terms of surface area and population size. The history of land tenure is intrinsically linked to the progress made thanks to both the 1989–1990 indigenous movements and the wave of movements concerned with biodiversity conservation which began in the region in that period. The Pilón Lajas Reserve is situated 250 km north of La Paz in the Department of Beni, along the Beni River (see Figure 1, p 160). In 1975, this zone was proposed as a National Park falling

under the jurisdiction of the Law on Forest Life, National Parks, Hunting and Fishing (Decree Law 12301), extending over 280,000 ha (Schuerholz 1977). Two years later UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme declared the zone a Biosphere Reserve. This status was recognised by the Bolivian government. Despite these conservationist initiatives, the Reserve remained a "paper park" and was not subject to any particular conservation activity in the first years after its foundation.

On the contrary, between 1977 and 1983, through its National Institute for Colonisation (INC), the Bolivian government promoted a settlement campaign to allow thousands of families from the Andean cordillera to settle in the east of the Reserve, close to the buffer zone. Following the construction of the road between San Borja, Yucumo and Rurrenabake from 1983 to 1991, a second massive wave of settlers as well as forestry companies arrived in the Reserve's buffer zone, considerably increasing the level of human activity. Indeed, between 1993 and 2001, deforestation within the area of the Reserve amounted to 203 ha per year. This rose to 522.2 ha per year between 2001 and 2004 (WCS 2005). Due to the increase in agricultural colonisation by people from the Andes and the presence of forestry companies, the small groups of Tsimane' and Mosetene residing in the buffer zone of Pilón Lajas were forced to migrate further inside the Reserve to pursue hunting and fishing activities that had been greatly compromised by settlement and forestry activities since 1977.

On 15 and 16 August 1991, a first meeting called "Ethno-cultural Tsimane'" was organised by the Centro de Servicios Agropecuarios (CESA, a Bolivian NGO initially working with the Andean settlers) and the Tsimane' Grand Council (GCT) in the community of Alto Colorado, 42 km from Yucumo. The objective of this meeting, which grouped various representatives of each indigenous community, was to define a strategy to protect Tsimane' territories from the advancement of the Andean settlers' front and from pressure exerted by forestry companies. This meeting resulted in a request, formulated by the Ministry of Peasant and Agricultural Affairs, for a second land title to be given to the Tsimane', equal to the one conceded to the GCT in the region of the Maniqui River one year before. This new territory was to be declared a "National Park and Indigenous Territory" in favour of the 250 indigenous Tsimane' families living in the buffer zone of the current Reserve, which was extended up to the Quiquibey River. The formal request made to the government was to stop the planned enlargement of the area for colonisation "in order to avoid clashes between different cultures". Later, the GCT

designated the first Tsimane' representative of the zone of Pilón Lajas, and thus the Tsimane' Mosetene Regional Council (CRTM) was founded. At that time the CRTM was submitted to the authority of the GCT.

From 1992, the radical change in the status of Tsimane' territoriality took a more formal turn. On 9 April, a supreme decree proclaimed the creation of the Biosphere Reserve and Indigenous Territory of Pilón Lajas⁷ covering an area of 400,000 ha, i.e. nearly double of what was requested in the indigenous claim. Thanks to the 1996 Bolivian land reform and the creation of INRA – i.e. the National Institute of Agrarian Reform – the Biosphere Reserve and Indigenous Territory of Pilón Lajas acquired a twofold official status: on the one hand it became a communal land of origin (TCO)⁸ and on the other a Reserve within the Biosphere. Meanwhile, the French NGO Vétérinaires sans Frontières (VSF) received USD 4 million from the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to implement an integrated conservation programme in the area. VSF was attributed the role of management authority of the Reserve and controlled everything in lieu of the Bolivian state and the indigenous organisation, both of which were dependent on the foreign funding.

Eventually, however, both the settlers and the Tsimane' could no longer accept being managed in this way; they asked VSF to leave. The creation of the National Service of Protected Areas (SERNAP) in 1998 and the prevalence of conflicts between various local organisations (Federation of Settlers, CESA and the native indigenous organisations) triggered the departure of VSF after the organisation had succeeded in making the forestry companies leave the protected area as well as putting in place various development programmes in the buffer zone. From that time on, Pilón Lajas was under the co-management of SERNAP (i.e. Reserve) representatives⁹ and the Tsimane' Mosetene Regional Council (CRTM), which had just received official recognition as a grassroots territorial organisation (OTB), allowing them to gain autonomy from the tutelage of the GCT.

Arguably, the establishment of indigenous Tsimane' political structures was intrinsically related to the common claim supported by the alliance of local indigenous and non-indigenous actors with regard to the need for acquiring territorial rights. Territorial needs thus shaped indigenous political formation and centralisation. This sudden territorial and local political centrality of the Tsimane' remains somewhat divided between two poles of the Tsimane' territories: the TT and Pilón Lajas (see Figure 1). The administrative conditions

proposed by the Bolivian government, i.e. to have only one administrative entity related to each land title, contributed to the political fragmentation among the involved Tsimane' communities and resulted in different forms of institutionalisation of their territories. Recognition of the indigenous territory status for the TT was motivated principally by missionary and indigenous dynamics, whilst in the case of Pílon Lajas, indigenous access to the territory status was supported by the conservation organisations working in the area and aiming to protect biodiversity. This contrasted historical background resulted in the establishment of different management mechanisms that ran parallel to political decentralisation.

5.5 The decentralisation process: A new challenge for indigenous citizenship

5.5.1 Principles of the Bolivian decentralisation system in natural resource management

One of the most important reforms in Bolivia during the 1990s was the adoption of the participation and decentralisation laws. From a legal point of view, Bolivia has since then been a decentralised country, with 20% of the national budget made available to the local governments, on the basis of a per-capita allocation. The municipal councils are elected according to the principles of universal suffrage and are bound to administrate both urban and rural areas. Moreover, the forestry law¹⁰ stipulated new responsibilities for the local governments regarding “public forests”. It created the *superintendencia forestal* to replace the *centro de desarrollo forestal*, which was considered as corrupt and inefficient (Contreras-Hermosilla and Vargas Ríos 2002). Since this change, it has been possible for a large part of the municipal territories to be managed by the municipalities as long as they create collective Municipal Forestry Units (UFMs). These UFMs are required to elaborate management plans that have to be approved by the central government and to be in accordance with guidelines from the local association of forest producers (ASL), usually made up of white farmers and mestizos. Ten years after the reforms, studies on the efficiency of the new institutions show very mixed results. The local governments do not give adequate priority to the establishment of local collective forestry structures. Disagreements and conflicts between municipalities and the *superintendencias forestales* are often due to the distribution of taxes collected from extractive forest use. As a consequence, in many cases local actors prefer to continue their illegal

activities, even with the support of the local government (Kaimowitz et al 1999; Pacheco 2002).

Participation of the indigenous Amazonian population in the local government is thus fundamental for decisions concerning resource allocation in indigenous territories and for monitoring the sustainability of economic activities. Unfortunately, despite the reform indigenous people are still excluded from local administrative municipal authorities; as a result, they face underdevelopment and political injustice (Lavaud 1998; Albó and Quispe 2004).

This situation is further complicated by the co-existence of indigenous and municipal authorities, that have different sources of legitimacy, which leads to an overlap of responsibilities. Because of this, indigenous organisations receive no funding from the state and are forced to exert pressure on municipal councils in order to make them consider their requests.

In parallel with these decentralisation reforms, the Bolivian government also adopted a number of important measures with regard to conservation of biodiversity and natural resource management. The General Rules on Protected Areas (RGAP) define participation of a broad range of stakeholders in the administration of protected areas as a fundamental principle. The management committees of protected areas must include representatives of indigenous people, the peasant community, municipalities, prefectures and other public and private organisations.¹¹ The decree regarding Administration Councils in Protected Areas¹² was approved after negotiations between civil society organisations (CSUTCB, CSCB, CIDOB)¹³ and the state. It was established that these councils must be mixed: one half of the representatives should come from indigenous, peasant and “colonist” organisations and the other half from the state.¹⁴ Formally, only indigenous or peasant organisations recognised by the state as OTBs¹⁵ (in accordance with the 1996 participation law) are invited to participate in the management committee of a protected area. Decentralisation and the management of protected areas are thus totally linked in juridical terms.

If a protected area and a communal territory (TCO) both cover the same area, “exploitation of natural resources by the TCO in the protected area has to be under the legal disposition of each resource”¹⁶, which means the forestry law applies to forest resources. In other words, some responsibilities with regard to forest management in the protected areas stay in the hands of the *superintendencia forestal* (central state) and its local units (UOBs). The resulting

– and sometimes contradictory – multiplicity of administrative authorities implicated in the management of indigenous territories considerably reduces attention given to indigenous organisations and entails very heavy administrative constraints on natural resource management decisions.

5.5.2 Decentralisation in Tsimane' Territory and Pilón Lajas

The Tsimane' Territory (TT) and Pilón Lajas are spread over six municipalities, but only two municipalities are affected to a greater extent: 50% of the TT is situated in the municipality of San Borja, while 46.7% of the total area of Pilón Lajas is located in the municipality of Rurrenabaque. It is important to add that the municipality of San Borja also has a small fraction of territory included in Pilón Lajas. This is the sub-municipality (*sub-alcaldia*) of Yucumo, which represents the urban centre of the Andean populations and is located in the buffer zone of the Reserve (see Figure 1). In theory, all the municipalities included in the indigenous territories are supposed to establish relations with the indigenous populations and councils concerned; in reality, however, only one (dominant) municipality is involved in a real process of participatory development in each of the two territories: San Borja and Rurrenabaque. This is particularly due to the establishment of indigenous councils (CRTM and GCT) within the urban centres of the municipalities; this increases the frequency of interactions as well as the network of relationships established between the municipal and indigenous elites.

In the following two sections, the extent to which indigenous political institutions are integrated in the local governance process, especially in the field of natural resource management, is analysed in greater detail. The case of the municipality of San Borja and the TT is examined first, followed by the case of Rurrenabaque and Pilón Lajas.

5.5.3 The municipality of San Borja: Extractive policy-based governance

The Jesuit priests Francisco de Borja and Ignacio Soto Mayor founded the town of San Borja in December 1693, one kilometre away from the Maniqui River. The main objective of this foundation was the evangelisation of the Tsimane' population as well as their socio-economic reorganisation. Following the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, the population of San Borja scattered away entirely, returning to small villages in the forest or being integrated into the colonial administrative centres (towns) of Santa Ana and San Igna-

cio.¹⁷ The economic and demographic rebirth of the town started in 1850 with *quinua* logging, rubber extraction and livestock holding, which are still the most important activities in the area to this day (Vaca 2003).¹⁸ In the 1970s, a certain stratum of society became considerably wealthy through the drug trade, as the town was used as an intermediary storing place before the drugs were exported to Brazil. With assistance from the United States, the government took drastic measures, largely strangling this sector and forcing the powerful families of San Borja to migrate or to turn to new markets, for example those related to the extraction of precious woods and other forest resources.

The municipal territory of San Borja covers 16,000 km². It includes four “special areas”: the Indigenous Tsimane' Territory (TT), Pilon Lajas, the Indigenous Territory and National Park of Isiboro Secure and the Biological Station of Beni.¹⁹ These four territories are superposed on a considerable part of the municipality, making it impossible to manage resources without establishing narrow links between political authorities that are concerned with territorial governance processes. For the past few years, the municipality has been attempting to encourage tourism; however, although a governance structure is currently in place for the Tsimane' Territory, the extent of ecological degradation that has already taken place makes management of natural resources a very difficult task.

The challenge posed by the task of putting an end to the current extractive and devastating economic activities in the Tsimane' Territory can best be understood by examining the nature and functioning of the local municipal authorities. Since the establishment of the municipality in 1942, only *campesinos*²⁰, i.e. people coming to this area in recent migrations from Europe, the Middle East and Asia, have had access to influential positions.²¹ The powerful San Borja Federation of Livestock Breeders (FGSB), which is almost tantamount to a private club, has taken over the task of defending the interests of rich landowners in the region, thanks to their strong representation in the municipal council. Most FGSB members were affiliated with the ADN political party before they migrated to the PODEMOS citizen organisation in 2005.²²

During the last municipal elections in December 2004, the MNR won the majority of seats in the municipal council and took over executive power. As a consequence, ADN members simply refused to be part of the municipal council and preferred not to participate in municipal decision-making.

In December 2005, an accusation of narco-trafficking brought against the Mayor forced him to stand down, leading to a bitter conflict between local political factions. Later, the PODEMOS party (ex-ADN) took over executive power, dismissing all of the municipality's technical personnel in order to allocate these positions to their own political clientele. This factional logic has prevented the constitution of an "institutional memory" and renders impossible any more coherent management of public affairs.

The concentration of local power in the hands of one social category of individuals or corporations has significant consequences on the nature of the adopted municipal norms and rules. In San Borja, this has resulted in the maintenance of large-scale land properties (*latifundios*) and the deregulation of extensive livestock breeding. This causes considerable damage, in terms of unfair land distribution and negative environmental impacts.

The Tsimane' have thus never been in power positions within the municipal government since its foundation. However, this population represents a 25% electoral weight in the area and the dominant local political parties are now interested in capturing their support (interview with Asensio Lero, 15 September 2006). The main issue for the Tsimane' remains their lack of civil identity: the majority of them do not have any civil identity cards, meaning that they cannot exercise their rights as Bolivian citizens.²³ Since 2002, an important civil regularisation campaign (*carnetización*) has been underway with funding from multilateral cooperation and support from CIDDE-BENI and the GCT. The latter has played a major intermediary role in organising, identifying and formulating the necessary administrative steps in the communities.

Apart from its concern to enable political representation of the "Tsimane' people", to reinforce local institutions and to ensure access to municipal financial resources, the GCT has been trying to ensure recognition of an indigenous Tsimane' district in the municipality of San Borja. This new territorial institution is represented by an indigenous sub-municipality (*sub-alcaldía*) and benefits from a small municipal budget to finance its representatives, even though this institution has not been formally legalised to this day.²⁴ In addition to this significant progress, a number of Tsimane' candidates were elected in December 2004 to replace non-indigenous municipal councillors in the local government. The Vigilance committee²⁵ also succeeded in having a Tsimane' representative elected; this person is responsible for social control of the municipal government, consisting mainly in

monitoring the execution of the municipal development plan and the management of the corresponding budgets (accountability). It is interesting to note, however, that in spite of this step forward, the leaders of the GCT do not wish to participate directly in the municipal government because they fear that they may become “dependent on a political rationale”, which might damage their prestige in their own respective indigenous organisation. In order to preserve their positions within the indigenous organisations, they nominate municipal representatives who are less qualified than members of the indigenous authorities who have their own organisational structures.

It is this phenomenon that leads us to speak of an “ethnic multi-polarisation” as well as an “institutional segmentation” of the structures of local governance. In San Borja, the power over political decision-making mechanisms and actions remains largely in the hands of an ethnic minority, the *cambas*, framed by economic traditions and administrative practices shaped by them over the years. The norms, frames of reference and political organisations that determine the institutionalisation of indigenous territories and their resources are based on individuals’ ethnic and factional belonging. This becomes clear when we analyse the distribution of the annual municipal budget. On the one hand it reveals a rather unequal distribution between rural and urban areas, and on the other hand, it is divided between “ethnic sectors”.

Figure 2 shows that the proportion of municipal funds granted to Tsimane’ communities between 2001 and 2003 never rose above 1.8% of the total municipal budget, and that it actually decreased to 0 from 2001 to 2003. Over 80% of the budget was allocated to the urban sector and the functioning of the municipality, which did not allow for any development of infrastructure in the rural areas. This situation compelled the settler and Tsimane’ populations to finance their own development by exploiting forest resources in an unsustainable way as the only option for access to goods and services that require monetary income. The municipal authority’s mismanagement of public rural areas demonstrates the domination exerted by the *camba* communities, who live principally in urban centres.

Following the discontinuation of funds previously provided by conservationist NGOs, the administration budget of the GCT is now exclusively financed by the use of forest resources; this illustrates the structural deadlock experienced by various local agents who are responsible for the management of indigenous territories. The mechanisms of institutional forest exploitation are therefore quite unique, especially regarding the Tsimane’ Territory. After

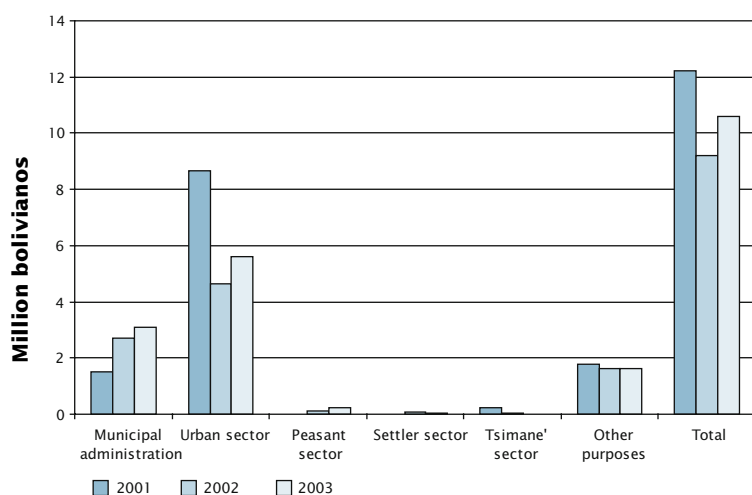


Fig. 2
Distribution of the
municipal budget
by sector in San
Borja between
2001 and 2003.
(Source: municipal
budgets, 2001–
2003)

a failed attempt to set up a forest management plan in 2001 with financial support from the International Trade and Timber Organisation (ITTO), the communities in the Tsimane' Territory began to exploit the forest in a somewhat disorganised manner. The GCT, which functions exclusively on the basis of forest revenues, receives direct royalties from a number of forestry companies that continue to operate in the territory, as well as from smaller indigenous exploiters. Indigenous people log rare tree species, which they transport in small portions on their shoulders in order to sell the timber to Andean traders, who take the wood to La Paz from where it is then exported. The Local Bureau of Forest Supervision (UOB) is forced to “ignore” such illegal practices under the threat of various local power groups and undertakes face-saving activities to maintain its position in the field of forestry.²⁶

On the other side, the municipality endorses these practices in exchange for a share of the revenues from direct taxation, previously defined by a common agreement with the indigenous authorities. Support for the municipality is legitimised by the fact that it did not collect enough revenue through the formal system established by the 1996 forest legislation. As a result, institutionalisation of forest resource use took place exclusively on the basis of *tacit agreements* between local agents who gave a “socially lawful” appearance to formally illegal activities. An entirely informal system of forest resource management was thus created at the local level by the endorsement of certain norms originating from national and international forest use regimes.

5.5.4 The municipality of Rurrenabaque: Exploiting the symbolic value of natural resources

The municipality of Rurrenabaque is situated 265 km north of La Paz in the Beni department near the Beni River. Its name is derived from the indigenous Tacana²⁷ word *suseanabaque*, which means “river of ducks”. Its population dates back to pre-colonial times and the expansion of the town took place as of 1850 with the successive exploitation of *quinua* wood, rubber and Brazil nuts. The population rose from 9065 to 13,668 inhabitants between 1992 and 2001, 62% of whom live in urban areas (INE 2001).

According to the last census conducted in the Pilón Lajas Reserve by a Wildlife Conservation Society planning team in 2004, the indigenous population was estimated at 1331 people in 238 families within 25 communities. The “ethnic” distribution of the population was as follows: 65.4% Tsimane', 9.1% Mosetene, 14% Tacana, 10.1% others (WCS 2005).

According to most official sources, the municipal territory of Rurrenabaque covers 480,000 ha. However, a conflict over borders with the municipality of San Borja has been ongoing since the participation law entered into force (1994); therefore, the exact surface area is unclear today. This conflict also involves two villages situated in the buffer zone of the Reserve: there is a dispute as to which municipality these villages belong to. This has had an impact on the administrative and political division of the Pilón Lajas Reserve, as well as important consequences for the distribution of municipal budgets.²⁸ This shows that the municipal authorities aim above all to group together as many people as possible in order to receive more funds from the state, these funds being determined on the basis of the number of persons living within the boundaries of a municipality. A territory is therefore not perceived as an area of natural resources, but as a means to facilitate access to administrative and political funds.

Before the expansion of tourist activities, the main economic incentives offered by the town were narco-trafficking and forest exploitation. Most of the political factions were linked to *motosierrista*²⁹ lobbies (Pavez 1998). For the past 10 years, the municipality of Rurrenabaque has experienced an important expansion of the tourism sector due to a facilitation policy pursued by local authorities. In 2004, the flux of tourists to Rurrenabaque totalled 28,497 people, 59% of whom were foreigners.³⁰ Since then, the main tourism boom in the region has concentrated on Madidi Park; more recently the

other side of the river, Pílon Lajas, has also started to attract growing tourism interest. This recent advocacy of tourism on the part of the municipality of Rurrenabaque has driven the authorities, as well as the main economic agents in the area to increasingly express interest in biodiversity conservation. Nevertheless, profits from ecotourism have mainly found their way to the agents situated in the urban areas, or to hotel owners and tour operators. For the indigenous agents and communities living within the Reserve, tourism remains unprofitable or even causes conflicts. The tourism regulations elaborated by a consultant with the participation of the Tsimane' Mosetene Regional Council (CRTM), the Reserve authorities, representatives of all communities concerned, as well as municipal authorities, have recently been implemented and should be the main instrument for regulating contentious issues between the various agents involved, and may enable better distribution of revenues generated from tourism.

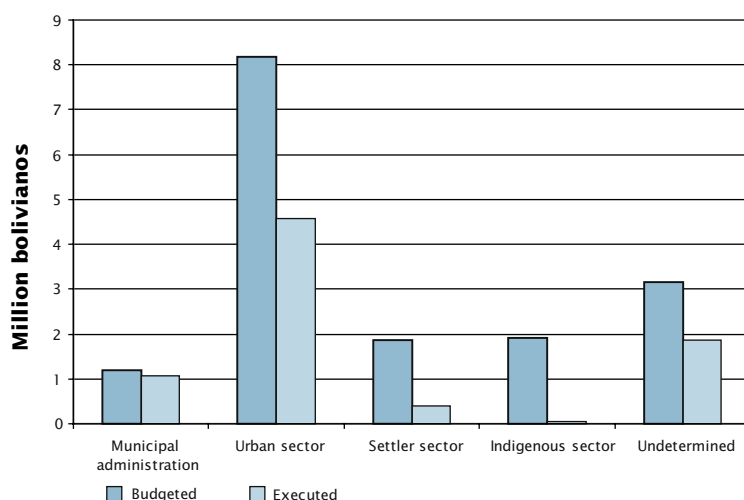
Since the creation of the municipal government in Rurrenabaque in the 18th century, there have been no efforts to include representatives of indigenous peoples (Tsimane' and Mosetene). The plurality of political parties within the municipal government is not an indicator of the democratisation of local arenas, but rather a strategy of differentiation of political party adherence within a political system based on clans and factions. Nevertheless, the last elections in 2005 were won by a representative of the Andean settlers, the president of FECAR (Federación de Colonizadores de Rurrenabaque), as well as by a woman, both of whom are representatives of the Tacana indigenous population coming from a community in the Pílon Lajas territory, and by a member of OCOR (Organización de comunidades originaria de Rurrenabaque). The inclusion of these indigenous (or non-*camba*) leaders represents a significant change in the leadership of local institutions, which thereby have become more ethnically differentiated. However, the absence of Tsimane' and Mosetene representatives confirms the persistence of an ethnic barrier between *cambas*, *colla* and “indigenous” on the one hand, as well as ethnic barriers within the group of “indigenous people”, which is composed of Tacana, Tsimane', Mosetene, Quechua and Aymara groups.

This lack of representation of the indigenous Tsimane' and Mosetene population groups can be partly understood by their low electoral weight, which is due to the fact that 65.7% of these population groups have no identity documents. Furthermore, 49% of the population over 5 years old are illiterate and 28.8% do not speak Spanish (WCS 2005). Apart from the obligation to undertake its own development activities (health, education, basic infra-

structure), one of the main tasks of the CRTM is to organise the regularisation of civil status. In a way, its role is to “replace” the municipalities as long as the integration of indigenous people is incomplete.

This weak integration of indigenous groups has important consequences on the communities’ development activities, mainly regarding basic infrastructure. Investment in the rural sector remained low; in 2004 it represented only 7% of the municipal budget. Figure 3 shows that municipal budgeting was approximately equal between the settler sector (along the buffer zone) and the indigenous sector (inside the protected area). However, a problem can be found regarding what was actually invested (i.e. executed): only 3% of what was planned for the indigenous sector was actually carried out, whereas the rate of budget execution in the settler sector was 21%. This shows how difficult it is for the indigenous representatives to follow and successfully apply the complex norms used in public interventions in Pílon Lajas and how weak the influence of the Tsimane’ is in the local political game. It equally points to the challenge that municipal authorities would have to meet to effectively manage the communities within the protected area. Their current disinterest is accentuated by the reluctance of the Reserve authorities³¹ to “produce development” in a protected area destined for twofold conservation (Dumoulin 2003): the “indigenous traditional” way of life on the one hand, and biodiversity on the other.

Fig. 3
Allocation of rural
municipal invest-
ment by sector in
Rurrenabaque in
2004 (settlement /
indigenous).
(Source: municipal
data)



In Bolivia, management committees constitute the political space where coordination and negotiation are supposed to take place between all stakeholders of the protected areas. For Pilón Lajas, key decision-makers of the municipality should meet with others involved in the management of the Reserve. Despite the importance of this institution, the various agents unanimously admit that whatever action results from decisions taken within the Management Committee is far from satisfactory. Even though the President of the Management Committee has also been President of the indigenous organisation CRTM, indigenous people's representatives have not been sufficiently present in the meetings to exert significant influence. Such absence is often used by certain individuals to show their disagreement with regard to the maintenance of the status of protected area. This form of pressure was used during the April 2005 Management Committee meeting by indigenous representatives who denounced the organisational procedures of the meeting. Indeed, the management of the Reserve holds most of the power to organise the meeting. The director of the Reserve, appointed by SERNAP, the National Service for Protected Areas, selects individual participants in the meeting and often uses the argument of lack of resources to justify the absence of indigenous representatives from isolated communities.

The interpretation of national norms on protected areas caused the director of the Reserve to establish a second committee called *coordinadora inter-institucional*. This body is now working in "productive activities" such as agriculture and sustainable grazing outside the Management Committee. The objective of the *coordinadora interinstitucional* is to promote development in the protected area. However, only "development and conservation organisations" were present at the meetings convened by this new committee in 2005, such as Bolivian NGOs and private enterprises. The *coordinadora interinstitucional* thus does not seem to take into account the Tsimane' population, as it is not represented, although the Tsimane' are the owners and principal political decision-makers of the Reserve. The clear division between these two committees illustrates the institutional segmentation generated by the two norms (conservation and development) used within local decision-making. This segmentation is rooted in ideology and points to the difficulties that local agents face in trying to reconsider institutional, political, socio-cultural, ideological and territorial spheres.

However, the concentration of NGO and Reserve conservation activities in Pilón Lajas has enabled the accomplishment of notable results, even though this policy remains a source of contention for local groups. In 1997, forestry

enterprises left Pílon Lajas thanks to funding from the NGO Conservation International and the lobbying of local actors such as VSF and some indigenous organisations. The forestry company El Pino was forced to pay a large fine for environmental damage, based on an environmental law. Since then, no new forestry companies have extracted wood from the protected area. Even though some other forest concessions were given to community-based settler organisations in the south of the zone, indigenous people have been formally forbidden to exploit wood resources. This situation, along with a lack of development alternatives for indigenous people, is considered unacceptable by the indigenous regional council CRTM, whose aim it is to promote indigenous territorial security as well as economic development. Much tension has arisen between the Reserve, which defends the principles of conservation, and the indigenous organisations, that wish to promote development within their own communities.

It is a fact that the integration of indigenous communities in the market economy has important consequences on their consumption habits. Exploiting forest resources seems to be the only alternative for indigenous communities that need some source of income to send their children to school and to have access to costly goods and services. As a consequence, an important mechanism of illegal timber exploitation was developed between (Quechua and Aymara) settlers and indigenous populations (Tsimane' and Mosetene), which is similar to what is happening in the case of the Tsimane' Territory in San Borja. Settlers buy cheap labour and wood resources from the indigenous people; this should give the latter access to money and certain goods. However, in most cases, the Tsimane' fail to meet their expenses, due to lack of management and evaluation skills for calculating real production costs. Conflicts often erupt between these two population groups, and end sometimes with threats or legal battles, such as recently experienced by a former Tsimane' leader who was implicated in the "illegal" exploitation of wood.

Institutionally, there are still no clear mechanisms to allow sustainable exploitation of forest resources by the local communities. After the renouncement of the competent forest authorities (the *superintendencia forestal*) – due to a lack of funds and capacity that were previously provided by conservation NGOs – the Reserve authorities attempted to develop more or less short-term solutions. They are now implicated in elaborating "community management plans". However, these are difficult to implement with population groups that lack effective management skills and adequate means of production, wood processing and transport. The implementation of sustainable solutions

is made even more difficult because of pressure from the Andean settlers, whose political power and mobilisation capacity have grown and now greatly reduce the indigenous people's scope for autonomous action. More than once, the Reserve authorities were completely discredited by the leaders of the local federation of settlers (FEPAY³²) for their attempted sequestration of illegally extracted wood, to the point that their legitimacy was seriously compromised in the eyes of the majority of the population residing in the critical zones of the protected areas.

The indigenous authorities of the CRTM have been severely criticised and manipulated by the settlers, to the point that during their last mandate (2001–2005), they were forced to concede a considerable part of the Pilón Lajas territory to various community forestry enterprises founded by settlers (see Figure 1, p 160). This area, situated in the mountainous part of the protected area, is linked to major ecological stakes, since most waterways that irrigate the protected area have their source there. This territory should not be subjected to forest exploitation according to scientific studies undertaken in the area (Frere 1997; WCS 2005). Nevertheless, the previous mayor of the Palo Blanco municipality, to which this zone belongs, overtly manifested his disinterest in nature conservation. These municipal authorities are linked to powerful *madereros* lobbies, the main economic agent of whom – the former mayor of the town – owns important concessions within the Reserve. As forest resources represent such enormous financial potential, they generate continued waves of migration, which can only be mitigated by creating more effective land use strategies. The resulting sporadic and spontaneous colonisation leads to numerous conflicts among the settlers themselves, who diversify their allegiances with the dismembered local federal structures.

In the case of the municipality of Rurrenabaque, we can see that the symbolic valorisation of forest resources resulting from the expansion of tourism activities has improved the understanding between the municipal elites and indigenous organisations. Both sides are aware that economic expansion of the municipality now depends on conservation of both socio-cultural diversity and biodiversity. The problem is that other municipalities involved in the management of natural resources in Pilón Lajas are not currently benefiting from tourism incomes and continue to rely on an extractive economy. These controversial practices are compromising the development of tourism activities and are pushing indigenous people themselves to take part in illegal exploitation of forest resources, with the approval of their indigenous leaders (Figure 4). Indeed, the irregular funding received from IBIS, a Danish



Fig. 4
A Tsimane' (standing) and Quechua (sitting) worker "make a deal" on timber products in Pilón Lajas. (Photo by Patrick Bottazzi)

NGO, and the low taxes obtained from tourism activities are still insufficient to guarantee the administrative functioning of the indigenous organisation. If there is no improvement in financial autonomy, the indigenous council of Pilón Lajas (CRTM) is very likely to take part in wood extraction.

5.6 Indigenous governance

The protected area status of Pilón Lajas, used as a specific means to achieve biodiversity conservation, has led to the removal of the large forestry companies. However, the problems of deforestation and forest degradation have not yet been solved. The absence of development alternatives to radical conservation methods has driven the Tsimane' and Mosetene people living in the buffer zone of the protected area to exert increasing pressure on timber resources despite legal restrictions. In the power game in the region, the protected area plays a border role at both the physical and institutional levels of the territory. Except for the Reserve authorities, local actors have few possibilities of being involved in decision-making regarding natural resource

management in the protected area. Above all, the status of the Reserve appears as a devolution of government sovereignty over a territory which seems to be put “to rest” while waiting for possible future use. Negotiations begun in 1998 between the oil companies REPSOL and PETROBRAS and the former Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development seem to confirm this.³³ It is interesting to note that faced with these developments, local authorities (municipalities, indigenous councils, civil society committees) came together in June 2005 to express their opposition to this kind of secret negotiations. This proves the capacity of different stakeholders in the region to achieve convergent mobilisation on conservation issues.

If the indigenous people in the region are to grasp the implications of current changes in indigenous political structures, it seems essential that they understand the processes involved in giving land titles to indigenous peoples, as well as the difficulties encountered in defining the competencies of each actor involved in the administration of territories. The link between citizenship and territory is strong enough today to even consider structural conformity between the two statuses. The unified nature of the titled territories and the resulting similar functioning of the two large entities (Tsimane' Territory and Pilon Lajas) has become the basis for a concentration of power and a bipolarisation of two distinct political entities (GCT and CRTM), both of which are struggling to clearly define their responsibilities and their means of local legitimacy. This new territorial situation implies the necessity of a construction of political relations between the village or “community” and its official representatives – the indigenous councils (GCT and CRTM).

The large geographical extent of the territory constitutes another obstacle to an open dialogue between the various constituencies of small-scale indigenous “nations” that are slowly developing. Indeed, transaction costs are inversely proportional to the capacity to communicate between communities and their representatives. For example, significant differences between the GCT (TT) and CRTM (Pilon Lajas) have become evident, due to the fact that the former has already received radio material and benefited from better infrastructure. However, irregular changes in leadership since the GCT's foundation have enabled the organisation to position its leaders very well in all kinds of negotiations related to the TT. All of the projects and negotiations for contracts signed with the forestry companies are led by a small number of individuals. Therefore, the revenues from these contracts are often either used for GCT administration, or they end up in the pockets of council members. In the case of Pilon Lajas, despite the presence of the

Reserve authorities, administrative skills relating to the territory prevented this type of abuse; it also created an obstacle to the institutional development of indigenous political structures. The council has only begun to gain strength since 2001, with support from external funds that has enabled it to become autonomous from the Reserve.³⁴

At the micro-local level, the construction of the “community” sphere took place primarily through the creation of the *reducción*, a name given to the concentration of indigenous people in centralised areas by the missionary regime in the 18th century. This led to a substitution of shamanic institutions by titles such as *corregidor* and *cacique* (Jaurequizar 1987; Lijerón Casanovas 1998; Daillant 2003). By including the authority of the *cacique*, the missionaries integrated a notion of socio-symbolic organisation that clearly referred to ethnic groups with Andean (e.g. Quechua and Aymara) rather than local origins. In the past decades, the establishment of a new representation of the territory (geometric and static) has led to a concept of territoriality that is also new to indigenous peoples, increasingly forcing them to become sedentary in order to benefit from external funding. The new political stake of legalising their territorial rights requires that these indigenous peoples rethink and reconstruct their “citizenship” project to achieve a participatory administration system and a system of natural resource management that corresponds to current national norms. Moreover, in a more general sense, they need to rethink their political affairs. Even though the statutes of indigenous organisations used to state that the *corregidor* must be elected annually by the members of the community, in most cases the decision-making power – and therefore the status of *corregidor* – was attributed to the first person to arrive in the area. At times, the latter would transfer this function to individuals who had arrived more recently; at other times, this function would temporarily rotate. These practices remained unpredictable, however, and they differed from one community to the next. Therefore, the practices relating to citizenship imposed by the change in territoriality status are still not well integrated at both the meso- and micro-political levels.

The difficulty that indigenous peoples experience in trying to understand the true nature of their own political issues increases when they are required to participate in different decision-making mechanisms, which are both parallel and sometimes contradictory. For matters relating to the Reserve, they are required to understand the urgency of elaborating the phases of five-year management plans for the protected area, and they have to send their delegates at specific dates which have been set beforehand by external consult-

ants. The same problem arises with issues relating to municipal planning, as well as with elections and monitoring by their political representatives (GCT and CRTM). The proliferation of political decision-making spheres – which we could call “institutional inflation” – results in a reluctance to accept the decisions that are made in these spheres. Contradictory public policies are therefore formulated in parallel, without any input from the affected population. These policies, which may derive from the municipality, the Reserve or the indigenous authorities, have a tendency to be based on an all-embracing understanding of the territory; they thus considerably simplify the complexities of the types of interactions which exist between the social micro-level sphere and the ecosystems that are directly linked with it. In order to achieve a more in-depth understanding of the public community sphere, it is therefore necessary to avoid multiplying competing political structures, but on the contrary, to strive for better cohesion as well as connection between the various decision-making levels.

5.7 Discussion and conclusion

Territorial historicity is a process by which multiple actors seek to put forward different claims to legitimacy with regard to a given physical space (Raffestin 1980). In the Amazonian lowlands, these legitimacies are drawn from various sources, such as formal or customary law, the history of successive migrations, and morals or values related to specific identities, all of which result in a sense of ethnicity. There is thus an “ethnicisation” of political spaces. This is both the cause and the result of a long process of institutional segmentation of space; the consequences of this segmentation can be observed in the superabundance of institutional mechanisms for territorial planning.

It is undeniable that the most prominent claim of indigenous organisations was once – and remains to this day – the recognition of the territorial and civil rights of the Tsimane', and more generally of a considerable part of the Bolivian population. This recognition equally implies a more clearly defined access to natural resources, with a corresponding legal context. Nevertheless, it clearly appears that the governance mechanisms in indigenous territories and protected areas need to refocus their public decision-making spheres. This renewal of focus should take place in particular at the level of the municipality, which is the only representative authority that is universally recognised; moreover, it is the only one that is uniformly socially legiti-

mate at the local level. The current positive tendency towards a progressive diversification and recognition of the socio-cultural origins of municipal representatives is leading to a more balanced and representative understanding of the municipality, which could in turn become an important interface for decision-making between groups that are still highly divided. Issues such as “indigenous identity”, “migration”, “conservation” and “development” could then be discussed within the same political sphere, instead of being simply the result of particularistic interests of the distinct institutional authorities, leading to absolute confusion among local people, who are concerned first and foremost with the decisions taken and the policies made. The present form of fractured organisation is well rooted in the socio-ethnic and physical characteristics of the territory, but it results in contradictory forms of appropriation of natural resources. This hinders the search for solutions aiming at greater ecological sustainability, social equity and sustainable development. The overabundance of political organisations and administrative procedures entails a financial cost that is nowadays paid directly through the overexploitation of natural resources. Within each of the settler, indigenous and mestizo population groups, there are distinctive competencies that would benefit all by being brought together through the creation of a more cohesive framework for effective, deliberative and open dialogue.

Abbreviations

ADN	(Acción Democrática Nacionalista): Political party in Bolivia
ASL	(Asociación sociales de lugares): Association of Forest Producers
CESA	(Centro de Servicios Agropecuarios): Bolivian agro-pastoral NGO
CIDDEBENI	(Centro de Investigación y Documentación para el Desarrollo del Beni): Bolivian NGO promoting scientific research for indigenous people
CPIB	(Central de los Pueblos Indígenas del Beni): Indigenous organisation in Beni Department
CRTM	(Consejo Indígena Tsimane' Mosetene): Tsimane' Mosetene Regional Council
CSCB	(Confederación Sindical de Colonisadores de Bolivia): Bolivian Colonists' Syndicate Confederation
CSUTCB	(Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia): Bolivian Workers' Syndicate Confederation
EBB	(Estación Biológica de Bolivia): Biological Station of Beni
FECAR	(Federación Especial de Colonisadores Agropecuarios de Rurrenabake): Rurrenabake Federation of Colonists
FEPAY	(Federación Especial de Productores Agropecuarios de Yucumo): Yucumo Federation of Agroecological Producers
FGSB	(Federación de Ganadero de San Borja): San Borja Federation of Livestock Breeders
FNMCB	(Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas de Bolivia "Bartolina Sisa"): Bolivian National Federation of Women Peasants "Bartolina Sisa"
GCT	(Gran Consejo): Grand Tsimane' Council
INC	(Instituto Nacional de Colonización): National Institute for Colonisation
INRA	(Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria): National Institute of Agrarian Reform
MAB	UNESCO's Man and Biosphere programme
MNR	(Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario): Political party in Bolivia
OCOR	(Organización de Comunidades Originarias de Rurrenabake): Indigenous organisation of Rurrenabake
OTB	(Organización Territorial de Base): Grassroots territorial organisation created with the 1994 participation law
PETROBRAS	Brazilian oil company
PODEMOS	Citizen organisation in Bolivia replacing the ADN party
REPSOL	Spanish oil company
RGAP	(Reglamento General de Áreas Protegidas): General Rules on Protected Areas
SERNAP	(Servicio Nacional de Áreas Protegidas): National Service for Protected Areas
TCO	(Tierra Comunitaria de Origen): Communal land of origin
TT	Tsimane' Territory
UFM	(Unidad Forestal Municipal): Municipal Forestry Unit
UOB	(Unidad Operativa Bosque): Local unit of the national forest agency (<i>superintendencia forestal</i>)
VSF	Vétérinaires sans Frontières (French NGO)
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society

Endnotes

Full citation for this article:

Bottazzi P. 2009. Indigenous governance, protected areas and decentralised forestry: A comparative analysis of two Tsimane' territories in the Bolivian lowlands. In: Geiser U, Rist S, editors. *Decentralisation Meets Local Complexity: Local Struggles, State Decentralisation and Access to Natural Resources in South Asia and Latin America*. Perspectives of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, University of Bern, Vol. 4. Bern: Geographica Bernensia, pp 155–189.

Acknowledgements:

The research for this paper was supported by the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South: Research Partnerships for Mitigating Syndromes of Global Change, co-funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

¹ Patrick Bottazzi is currently working at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, partly within the framework of the NCCR North-South programme. The main focus of his research is on common pool resources, land titling and institutions, with a special comparative interest in Amazonian societies.

E-mail: patrick.bottazzi@graduateinstitute.ch

² In this paper, "Bolivian Political and Environmental Reforms" (BPER) refers to the whole package of state reforms that define specific modalities for natural resource management. This concerns the following laws: Environmental Law No. 1333 of 27 March 1992; Popular Participation Law No. 1551 of 20 April 1994; Decentralisation Law No. 1654 of 28 July 1995; Forestry Law No. 1700 of 12 July 1996; INRA Law No. 1715 of 18 October 1996.

³ *Tierra Comunitaria de Origen* (TCO) is a collective land title created especially for indigenous groups in the 1996 INRA law.

⁴ Among these organisations are the municipality of San Ignacio, the San Ignacio Federation of "Juntas Vecinales", the Indigenous Cabildo de Trinidad and the Centrale de Cabildos Indígenales Mojenos (all local indigenous organisations).

⁵ At that time there was no formal legislation for indigenous territories.

⁶ 1. Supreme Decree (SD) No. 22609, dated 24 Sept. 1990: indigenous territory of Siriono; 2. SD No. 22610: Isiboro-Secure National Park (Mojeños, Yuracare and Tsimane'); 3. SD No. 23611: two Tsimane' indigenous territories: a) Territorio Indígena Tsimane' (TT) (392,220 ha); b) Territorio Indígena Multiétnico (TIM) (Mojeños, Tsimane', Yuracare and Movima).

⁷ Supreme Decree No. 23110 dated 9 April 1992.

⁸ On 4 April 1996, in the same document CIDOB's president, Marcial Fabrican Noe, requested that the land titling of the following indigenous territories be recognised by supreme court decrees: TIPNIS, TIM, Siriono, TT, Araona, Weenhayek, Chiquitano, Pilón Lajas, Yuqui. Pilón Lajas received its final title as a TCO on 27 April 1997.

⁹ On 3 March 1998, Luiz Marcus was designated President of the Reserve by Dr. Gabriel Baracatt Sabat, the director of the DGB (Dirección General de la Bioversidad under the Ministry for Sustainable Development and Planning).

¹⁰ Forestry Law No. 1700 dated 12 July 1996.

¹¹ Art. 47 section II of the General Rules on Protected Areas (Supreme Decree No. 24781 dated 31 July 1997).

¹² Supreme Decree No. 25925 dated 6 October 2000.

- ¹³ Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia, Central Sindical de Colonizadores de Bolivia, Confederación de Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano, Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas de Bolivia “Bartolina Sisa”.
- ¹⁴ The main point of the decree is found in Art. 2: “Los Consejos de Administración de Áreas Protegidas estarán conformados en un 50% por representantes locales de campesinos, indígenas y colonizadores y en el otro 50% por los gobiernos municipales cuya jurisdicción coincida con el Área protegida.” (“The administrative council of protected areas shall be constituted half by the legal representatives of farmers, indigenous people, and settlers, and the other half by the members of the municipal council whose circumscription overlaps with the protected area.”)
- ¹⁵ “Territory-based organisations” (OTBs) is a title given by the state to express its formal recognition of a community-based organisation. The title has existed since the 1994 Popular Participation Law.
- ¹⁶ Art. 149 of Supreme Decree No. 24781 dated 31 July 1997.
- ¹⁷ Between 1700 and 1791, the population of San Borja decreased from 1200 to 455 inhabitants (Vaca 2003:47).
- ¹⁸ Between 1992 and 2001, the population of San Borja increased from 24,251 to 34,363 inhabitants, 56% of whom were urban (INE 2001).
- ¹⁹ The Biological Station of Beni (EBB) was founded in 1982 with the support of the NGO The Nature Conservancy, benefiting from funds acquired thanks to the exchange of debts owed to the US for the conservation of the area. Its management was partly undertaken by the Bolivian Academy of Sciences until 2005. The station is currently managed by SERNAP, under the control of the GCT, whose president also chairs the meetings of the management committee. Only 20% of the EBB spills into the Indigenous Tsimane’ Territory (TT).
- ²⁰ The term *camba* is an indigenous Guaraní word that refers to the mestizos and Creole population in the eastern parts of Bolivia. The indigenous people who inhabit the Andean zones are called *colla*, referring to Collasuyo, part of the ancient Inca Empire.
- ²¹ The family names of a number of mayors since the foundation of San Borja as a municipality show a strong Lebanese influence; these names are found across the entire department of Beni: Majluf, Nahim, Abdón, Asbun, Ganem, Haiek, Daguer, Farach.
- ²² The former national representative of the ADN party, Tuto Quiroga, stood as a candidate for the presidential elections by founding his own party: since then, the partisans of the ADN have nearly all left to join PODEMOS. PODEMOS is not a political party but a citizen organisation. It was constituted during the last presidential election of 2005 to replace ADN, which was losing all credibility.
- ²³ According to the latest population census, out of 1568 interviewed individuals over 18 years old, 86% do not have proper civil registration. This census also showed that the illiteracy rate of the entire ‘Tsimane’ population is around 72% (CIDDEBENI 2003). According to Law No. 2026, the distribution of identity cards to indigenous people must be free of charge; however, the municipality and prefecture civil registration offices do not have the financial means to undertake this work and therefore have to charge a fee.
- ²⁴ According to the Law of Municipalities, the condition for founding a *sub-alcaldía* is to have a total population of 5000 inhabitants.
- ²⁵ This institution was also created in 1994 with the Popular Participation Law, with the aim of achieving better accountability between community-based organisations and local authorities.
- ²⁶ Some forestry companies in the area are still working with legal management plans.
- ²⁷ Indigenous population living in the north of Pilón Lajas.
- ²⁸ The division of Pilón Lajas by municipal constituency varies by about 8%, depending on the position of each municipality: Rurrenabaque (46.7% to 38.8%), San Borja (4.6% to 12.5%), Apolo (18.4%), Palos Blancos (30.3%).
- ²⁹ *Motosierrista* means “chainsaw man”.

³⁰ Source: Deputy Ministry of Tourism.

³¹ This refers to the Director of what is called the Biosphere Reserve and Indigenous Territory of Pilon Lajas.

³² The Federación de Productores Agroecologicos de Yucumo. This organisation recently changed its name; it used to be called Federación de Colonisadores de Yucumo. This term was considered “pejorative” by members after the arrival of “conservationist” NGOs in the region.

³³ In 1998, the oil company REPSOL signed an agreement to undertake its own environmental impact assessment in a zone that simultaneously covered the Pilon Lajas Reserve as well as the Madidi National Park. The study was suspended until the resolution of negotiations regarding the national petroleum law. On 30 October 2001, another contract was signed with the PETROBRAS company, allowing exploitation of petroleum resources over 1 million ha of land. 60% of this land is within protected area and indigenous territories. Of these, 146,207 ha are in Pilon Lajas.

³⁴ Due to the complexity of the issue of Tsimane’ leadership and lack of space to expound it in this paper, I mention only the essential points.

References

- Albó X, Quispe V. 2004. *Quiénes son indígenas en los gobiernos municipales*. La Paz, Bolivia: CIPCA [Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado], Plural.
- Albro R. 2005. The indigenous in the plural in Bolivian oppositional politics. *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 24:433–453.
- Benda-Beckmann F von. 2001. Legal pluralism and social justice in economic and political development. *IDS [Institute of Development Studies] Bulletin* 32:46–56.
- Borrini-Feyerabend G, Pimbert M, Farvar MT, Kothari A, Renard Y. 2004. *Sharing Power: Learning by Doing in Co-management of Natural Resources Throughout the World*. Tehran, Iran: Cenesta [Centre for Sustainable Development], IIED [International Institute for Environment and Development] and IUCN [International Union for Conservation of Nature]/CEESP [Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy]/CMWG [Collaborative Management Working Group].
- Bottazzi P. 2007. La décentralisation à la lumière de la gouvernance. In: Hufty M, Dormeier Freire A, Plagnat P, Neumann V, editors. *Jeux de gouvernance. Regards et réflexions sur un concept*. Paris, France: Karthala, IUED, pp 71–84.
- Cleaver F. 1999. Paradoxes of participation: Questioning participatory approaches to development. *Journal of International Development* 11:597–612.
- Contreras-Hermosilla A, Vargas Ríos MT. 2002. *Social, Environmental and Economic Dimensions of Forest Policy Reforms in Bolivia*. Washington, D.C.: CIFOR [Centre for International Forestry Research], Forest Trends.
- Cornwall A. 2002. Locating citizen participation. *IDS Bulletin* 33:49–56.
- Daillant I. 2003. *Sens dessus dessous. Organisation sociale et spatiale des Chimane d'Amazonie bolivienne*. Nanterre, France: Société d'ethnologie.
- De Jaurequizar AJ. 1987. Organización socio-política de las reducciones jesuíticas y su espiritualidad. In: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto, editor. *Simposio sobre las misiones jesuíticas en Bolivia*. La Paz, Bolivia: Universo, pp 113–117.
- De la Fuente M, editor. 2001. *Participación popular y desarrollo local. La situación de los municipios rurales de Cochabamba y Chuquisaca*. Cochabamba, Bolivia: PROMEC, CEPLAG [Centro de Planificación y Gestión].
- Di Méo G. 2001. *Géographie sociale et territoires*. Paris, France: Nathan.
- Dumoulin D. 2003. Local knowledge in the hands of transnational NGO networks: A Mexican viewpoint. *International Journal of Social Sciences* 178:593–605.
- Franqueville A. 2000. *La Bolivie: d'un pillage à l'autre*. Paris, France: IRD [Institut de recherche pour le développement], Presse universitaire du Mirail.
- Frere L. 1997. La problemática forestal en el Territorio Indígena: reserva de la biosfera de Pilón Lajas. In: Vétérinaires Sans Frontières, editors. *Memoria del simposio internacional sobre posibilidades de manejo forestal sostenible en América Tropical*. Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia: BOLFOR [Sustainable Forest Management Project], pp 161–165.
- Humbert Vargas R. 1998. Bolivie: la participation populaire, une source de conflits. *Problèmes d'Amérique Latine* 28:71–84.
- Hvalkof S, Plant R. 2001. *Land Titling and Indigenous Peoples*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank.
- Jacob JP. 1998a. L'enlèvement des réformes de l'administration locale en milieu rural africain. La difficile négociation de la décision de décentraliser par les Etats et les Intervenants externes. *Bulletin de l'APAD* 15:119–137.
- Jacob JP. 1998b. La décentralisation comme distance. Réflexions sur la mise en place des collectivités territoriales en milieu rural ouest-africain. *Politique africaine* 71:133–147.
- Kaimowitz D, Pacheco P, Johnson J, Pavez I, Vallejos C, Vélez R. 1999. *Autorités locales et forêts des Basses Terres de Bolivie*. Document du réseau 24b. London, United Kingdom: Réseau de foresterie pour le développement rural.
- Kaimowitz D, Vallejos C, Pacheco P, Lopez R. 1998. Municipal governments and forest management in Lowland Bolivia. *The Journal of Environment and Development* 7:45–59.
- Kearney M, Varese S, editors. 1995. *Latin America's Indigenous Peoples: Changing Identities and Forms of Resistance*. Oxford, UK: Westview Press.

- Langer ED, Muñoz E. 2003. *Contemporary Indigenous Movements in Latin America*. Wilming-
ton, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc.
- Lavaud JP. 1998. La Bolivie de la réforme. *Problèmes d'Amérique latine* 28:3–18.
- Lehm Z. 1994. The Chimane's Forest: A stage for social conflict (1986–1993). In: Pendzich
C, Thomas G, Wohigent T, editors. *The Role of Alternative Conflict Management in
Community Forestry*. Forests, Trees and People Programme, Working Paper No. 1.
Rome, Italy: FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization], [n.p.]. Available at [http://
www.fao.org/docrep/005/x2102e/X2102E03.htm#E2](http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/x2102e/X2102E03.htm#E2); accessed in February 2009.
- Lijerón Casanovas A. 1998. *Mojos Beni. Introducción a la historia Amazónica*. Trinidad, Boliv-
ia: CIDDEBENI [Centro de Investigación y Documentación para el Desarrollo del Beni].
- Long N. 2001. *Development Sociology: Actor Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- López LE, Regalsky P, editors. 2005. *Movimientos indígenas y estado en Bolivia*. La Paz,
Bolivia: Plural.
- Olivier de Sardan JP. 1998. Quelques réflexions autour de la décentralisation comme objet
de recherche. *Bulletin de l'APAD* 16:165–171.
- Oyugi WO. 2000. Decentralization for good governance and development: The unending
debate. Editorial introduction. *Regional Development Dialogue* 21:3–18.
- Pacheco P. 2002. Deforestation and forest degradation in Lowland Bolivia. In: Woods CH,
Porro R, editors. *Deforestation and Land Use in the Amazon*. Gainesville, FL: Univer-
sity of Florida Press, pp 66–84.
- Pacheco P. 2003. Municipalities and local participation in forest management in Bolivia. In:
Ferroukhi L, editor. *Municipal Forest Management in Latin America*. Jakarta, Indone-
sia: CIFOR [Center for International Forestry Research], pp 19–56.
- Palmer C, Engel S. 2007. For better or for worse? Local impacts of the decentralization of
Indonesia's forest sector. *World Development* 35:2131–2149.
- Pavez I. 1998. Rurrenabaque: motosierristas y dilemas para la conservación de los bosques.
In: Pacheco P, Kaimowitz D, editors. *Municipios y gestión forestal en el trópico
Boliviano*. La Paz, Bolivia: CIFOR, CEDLA [Centro de Estudios y Documentación
Latinoamericanos], BOLFOR, TIERRA.
- Perez Diez AA. 1983. *Etnografía de los Chimane del oriente boliviano*. Buenos Aires, Argen-
tina: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Buenos Aires.
- Raffestin C. 1980. *Pour une géographie du pouvoir*. Paris, France: LITEC.
- Ramírez Orozco S, García Linera A, Stefanoni P, editors. 2006. *No somos juguete de nadie ...
Análisis de la relación de movimientos sociales, recursos naturales, estado y descen-
tralización*. La Paz, Bolivia: Plural.
- Ribot JC. 1999. Decentralization, participation and accountability in Sahelian forestry: Legal
instruments of political-administrative control. *Africa* 69(1):23–65.
- Ribot JC. 2002. *African Decentralization: Local Actors, Powers and Accountability*. UNRISD
Programme Papers on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights No 8. Geneva,
Switzerland: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
- Schuerholz G. 1977. Estudio para el establecimiento de una reserva de Selva Tropical.
Informe final sobre el Proyecto. Vancouver: The World Conservation Union (IUCN) and
World Wild Life Fund International (WWF).
- Steinberg PF. 2001. *Environmental Leadership in Developing Countries: Transnational Rela-
tions and Biodiversity Policy in Costa Rica and Bolivia*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts
Institute of Technology.
- Tacconi L. 2007. Decentralization, forests and livelihoods: Theory and narrative. *Global
Environmental Change* 17:338–348.
- Taylor L, Wilson F. 2004. The messiness of everyday life: Exploring key themes in Latin
American citizenship studies introduction. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*
23:154–164.
- Urioste M. 2002. *Desarrollo rural con participación popular*. La Paz, Bolivia: Fundación
Tierra.
- Urioste M. 2003. La Reforma agraria abandonada: valles y altiplano. *Artículo primero* 14:31–51.

- Utting P. 1998. Potentialités et écueils d'une sauvegarde participative de l'environnement. In: Utting P, Jaubert R, editors. *Discours et réalités de politiques participatives de gestion de l'environnement. Le Cas du Sénégal*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNRISD, IUED, pp 1–19.
- Vaca EJ. 2003. *Historiografía del Beni y la ciudad de San Borja*. San Borja, Bolivia: Erlin Jiménez Vaca.
- Vanden HE. 2007. Social movements, hegemony, and new forms of resistance. *Latin American Perspectives* 34(2):17–30.
- WCS [Wildlife Conservation Society]. 2005. Actualización del plan de manejo PL 2005–2009. La Paz, Bolivia: Wildlife Conservation Society.
- Wunsch JS. 2001. Decentralization, local governance and “recentralization” in Africa. *Public Administration and Development* 21:277–288.

