

GOVERNMENTALITIES AND AUTHORIZED IMAGINATIONS

GOVERNMENTALITIES AND AUTHORIZED IMAGINATIONS:
A (NON-MODERN) STORY ABOUT INDIANS, NATURE AND DEVELOPMENT

By

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Abstract

In this dissertation I focus on some particularities of the present moment through an analysis of the governmental rationality that grounds the contemporary status of 'Indigenous culture' in development agendas. The role of 'Indigenous culture' in development is an entry point to analyse changes that involve the ontological foundations of modernity. I argue that changes in the role of 'Indigenous culture' in development agendas are connected to the emergence of a 'neoliberal governmental rationality.' This governmentality, in turn, is a result of changes in the modern ontology based on the dualism between nature and society.

I pursue these arguments by narrating a story of how changes in the ways of imagining Indians, nature and development have been taking place since the late 19th century in the Paraguayan Chaco. I tell this story by focussing on the successive agendas of development through which these changing imaginations were deployed among an Indigenous people of this area, the Yshiro people. In spite of changing imaginations and forms of governmentality, the Yshiro have been construed as quasi-objects which are suitable for the 'monologues' of the non-Indigenous peoples with whom they are in contact. However they are seldom truly engaged as fellow human beings with whom to engage in dialogues. This key condition for their subordination is reproduced even by their non-indigenous supporters.

These dynamics, I argue, are inherent to modern ways of producing knowledge. For this reason I avoid using a modern perspective in my analysis. In order to do this I use the concept of imagination which is intended to escape modern dichotomies such as those between material and ideational, and between living entities and non-living entities. In this sense this work is an exploration of the political and epistemological possibilities of writing ethnography from a non-modern standpoint.

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PREFACE

In front of me, on my desk, I have two documents that succinctly delineate the core of this inquiry. One of them is a piece written by the director of the *Departamento de Asuntos Indigenas* (Department of Indigenous Affairs).¹ This institution was the first Paraguayan state agency to be specifically in charge of Indigenous affairs. The document, published in 1966 in a book on the economic potential of the Chaco region of Paraguay, finished with a hopeful note about the results that could be expected from development.² The author asserted that by “speeding up this task [ie., development], only memories will be left of the fact that this region was once inhabited by Chamacoco Indians” (Borgognon 1966:38-39).³

The other document is the transcription of a tape I recorded and which has the label *Prodechaco Workshop February 5, 2000*. As I read through it, I vividly recall recording what participants said in this workshop as I sat on one of the benches in Puerto

¹All translations from Spanish, French or Italian sources are mine unless otherwise indicated.

²The region is part of the *Gran Chaco Americano*, a bio-geographical area which extends across the borders of Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. It is considered to be, after the Amazon, the second largest reservoir of bio-diversity in South America (see Map 1).

³Chamacoco is the name given to the Yshiro Indigenous people by Paraguay's European settlers and their descendants. The latter differentiate themselves from the Yshiro by calling themselves ‘Whites.’ The Yshiro also use this latter label to identify the settlers but, depending upon the contexts, they also divide this wide category into two sub-groups: *maro* (Paraguayans) and *dhip'kunaho* (White foreigners). The contemporary Yshiro are sub-divided into two groups, the Yshiro-Ebitoso and the Yshiro-Tomaraho. Throughout this dissertation I will use all these labels to identify the different actors of my narration. I must warn the reader that, as I have worked for a longer time with the Ebitoso, I am more familiar with their history and current situation. For this reason, in this dissertation I will focus mainly on the Ebitoso. As we will see later, the Ebitoso and Tomaraho history of relations with the Whites followed along different paths. However, by the mid 1980s these began to converge. Thus, when I analyze the early history of the contact, I will mostly keep the distinction between these sub-groups. Yet at times I will use the term Yshiro when referring to events or processes which affected both groups in similar ways. Conversely, when I analyze events taking place since the 1980s, I will distinguish between these groups to underline circumstances in which common events affected the groups differently.

Diana's school. The bench was in the front row facing a blackboard and besides a window through which I could see the corn fields that some Yshiro planted on the Brazilian side across the Paraguay river. It was starting the rainy season and I remember to have been relieved when I saw the *instructores/facilitadores* (instructors/facilitators) of the workshop arrive by plane before the rain started. If they had arrived later, they could not have landed because the Paraguayan military base in the neighbouring 'Paraguayan' town of Bahia Negra has a dirt landing strip that becomes useless for several days after a little rain. It had once been promised that a layer of asphalt would be laid on the landing strip but since the state-owned airline was privatized and its weekly flights cancelled because they were unprofitable, nobody thought about it any longer. The hopes of the Paraguayan population from the area are now placed on a different governmental promise: that an asphalted road will be constructed to connect Bahia Negra to the Transchaco Highway, thus bringing the always elusive 'development' closer. In the meantime, the people living in the area must be content with the boats that run twice a week connecting the *Departamento de Alto Paraguay*⁴ to the rest of the country via the port in Concepción City (approx. 500 km. south). It takes three days to make the nearly 800 km. to the capital city of Asunción, where the most important economic and political decisions affecting the country are made (see Map 2). My friends and acquaintances in Alto Paraguay find it amusing that it takes only twelve hours to travel from Asunción to Toronto, Canada, by plane. Paradoxes of development.

Back in the school room where I was recording the workshop, the issue being discussed was 'development' as well. During the previous nine months, the Yshiro leaders had been negotiating with the directors of *Programa de Desarrollo Duradero del Chaco Paraguayo* (Programme of Sustainable Development of the Paraguayan Chaco), or Prodechaco, about the possibility of receiving material support from the programme for their nascent pan-Yshiro organization.⁵ The directors responded by arguing that the organization had to acquire the necessary 'representational and technical skills' to elaborate culturally and environmentally sound 'development projects' before any funding could be granted to them. With the aim of developing those skills, Prodechaco's staff organized the *Taller de Capacitación* (Training Workshop) which I recorded.

In addition to the two non-indigenous instructors/facilitators from Prodechaco, Marcelo and Susana (pseudonyms) and myself, there were perhaps thirty Yshiro individuals (male and female), including the leaders representing the five Yshiro

⁴*Departamentos* are the second tier of government in Paraguay, below the central national government and above the municipalities. *Departamentos* have their own elected local governments and representatives in the National Parliament.

⁵Prodechaco is a development project jointly operated by the European Union (EU) and the Paraguayan Government. I will provide more details about this project later.

communities. During the first hour of the workshop, the leaders introduced themselves and I presented the results of a census which I carried out the previous August, 1999.⁶ After we talked about the census, the facilitators proposed we discuss what the leaders needed nowadays in order to do their job efficiently in the context of Prodechaco's aims, that is, the promotion of culturally and environmentally sound development projects. On the blackboard participants listed a series of 'qualities' they deemed necessary for this: to know how to write a project proposal ; how to write an official memo; how to negotiate with other organizations; and how to keep financial accounting. After discussing each of these, Marcelo asked:

(s)⁷ Have we finished talking about what qualities a leader needs nowadays? We have talked of things that come from another culture but what about the knowledge of the Yshiro culture? Isn't it important for a leader?

I turned around to face the people behind me. I wanted to see their reactions

⁶According to it, there are 1,600 individuals living in the five Yshiro communities in Alto Paraguay and around 350 Yshiro migrants living in Asunción. The communities are located at intervals along a 150 km-stretch of the Paraguay river's western shore. From North to South they are Puerto Diana (usually called Diana), Karcha Bahlut, Ynishta, Pitiantuta and Ylhirta. Ylhirta is located in the old Catholic mission neighbouring a town called Fuerte Olimpo, which is the capital of the *Departamento de Alto Paraguay*. The largest communities are Diana and Ynishta, with roughly 500 people each. The remaining communities have approximately 200 inhabitants each. However, the actual number of inhabitants at any given time fluctuates since people move from one community to another on a regular basis depending on the availability of work and seasonal resources, or for prolonged visits to their relatives. These five communities held legal property of 36,000 noncontiguous hectares of land (see Map 3).

⁷Throughout this work I will use lowercase letters to indicate the language in which a given utterance was made. Thus, 's' corresponds to Spanish, and 'y' corresponds to the Yshiro language. I acquired a working knowledge of the latter language mostly during my last stay in the Yshiro communities between 1999-2000. However, all the tape-recorded statements made in Yshiro language prior to and throughout this stay were first translated to Spanish with the assistance of Yshiro interpreters. I subsequently translated these into English.

The distinction is important because excepting a few cases, non-Yshiro do not understand the Yshiro language. Thus, unless I indicate otherwise, when I describe the use of Yshiro language in a meeting involving non-Yshiro people, it must be assumed that the latter did not understand what was said.

because I knew that the question was not going to be taken as straight forward as Marcelo might have thought. For the Yshiro, culture is a very contentious issue. There was silence in the room for a moment. Then Teresa Payá, a female Ebitoso leader in her mid thirties, stood up in the back of the room and said: “(s) It is important, but the new leaders . . . zero.” Marcelo assented with his head and added:

(s) Yes, it is very important, otherwise, how do you know who you are? How do you represent yourself? . . . It is OK to know another language, other things but also when somebody asks you, you must say *what* you are.⁸ Your culture must be the basis of your own development.

Candido Martinez, one of the most active and vocal Ebitoso leaders spoke to the room:

(y) I think we must give importance to the elders because only they can teach the leaders our ancient culture. I have heard from some of them that our history is divided into three stages. I do not know it very well, I just heard that in the first stage the Yshiro were many, there were millions and they had nothing to eat but algarroba (*Prosopis alba*) leaves. Then those ancient women met the *Anabsero* and had intercourse with them.⁹ This is the second stage, when the ritual party, the ‘culture,’ began. And the third stage is when the Gospel reached us. From then on, some began to have a religion, others continued to practice their culture and yet some others involved themselves in [party] politics. But as I say, I do not know very well our culture.

The voice of the Ebitoso elder Don Ramon Zeballos filled the room:

(y) I am Zeballos the grand-child of *polotak* [war leader] Bibi, and son of Doña Manuela. When I was ten years old, my grand-father told me this story. At the beginning there were many Indigenous peoples . . . [switch to Spanish] at the beginning there were no Spaniards but the natural people

⁸Marcelo’s remark in Spanish was “*Si alguien te pregunta, tienes que decir lo que eres*” (what you are) and not ‘*quien eres*’ (who you are). In this sense, he was referring not to the personal identity of the participants but to their identity as members of a category: ‘Indians.’ The category ‘Indian’ is assumed to be defined by cultural traits. This is implied in the following sentence, and will become more evident in Marcelo’s next transcribed intervention.

⁹The *Anabsero* are mythical non-human beings who played a central role in the process by which the Yshiro acquired several faculties including language, understanding and judgement. Their role in Yshiro myth-history will be discussed in more detail later.

had their own things. They had food from the forest. There was no rice, nor bread, nothing of that. All from the bush. They did not eat the Paraguayans' food, for the Paraguayans were not yet born. These are the times of Cyr [mythical human hero]. . .

Looking away from Don Zeballos, Babi Ozuna, one of the youngest leaders, commented in Spanish with a low but audible voice that a 'training workshop' was not the place for storytelling. This was not the first time I saw him getting impatient with the elders' style of talk. Once he had told me that 'they do not understand what is going on in a meeting and then they just go on talking and talking without any point.' Don Zeballos stared at him and continued:

(s) This is what I wanted to tell: there are many Paraguayans who say that from our 'culture' came sin and that we should leave it and embrace religion. But I say that it was Eve who ate the apple not the *cultureros*.¹⁰ We receive our culture from dreams and we respect our dreams, for they are our training workshops. That's why we still practice our culture.

Marciano Barboza, another Ebitoso leader, followed after a long silence:

(s) I would say that we better talk of four stages in our history. With this organization that we have created [the Pan-Yshiro organization I mentioned before] we are returning to our ancestors' ways of doing things. This is not something new, our ancestors were very well organized. Organization was the way of our ancestors. They cleared up a place in the village, the *harra*, and met there to discuss their issues and to plan what they would do.¹¹ Now we meet in a building but it is the same. We have abandoned those beautiful ways of our ancestors, those ways of working together and being united. We must recover that form of organization so that the Whites will respect us. What screwed up our organization was to enter into the Whites' civilization. Trying to be like them has provoked

¹⁰*Cultureros* is a neologism created by a group of Ebitoso from the Spanish root-word *cultura*. According to this group, the term means those who follow or practice their culture. In this case, culture has the restricted meaning of an initiation ritual called *Debylylta*. Then *cultureros* are those who practice this ritual. For reasons that will become clear in later chapters, this ritual has become a symbol that identifies a group of Yshiro-Ebitoso in contrast to others who do not practice it.

¹¹The *harra* was an open space in the centre of the Yshiro villages where people met for both ceremonial and other more prosaic matters pertaining to the whole residential group or for personal matters.

great damage to our communities. Now we are returning to our organization.

I remember to have been surprised when I saw Emilio Aquino stand up after Marciano's intervention. Emilio is a leader of the Tomaraho, the smaller of the two subgroups of the Yshiro. The five Tomaraho leaders from Pitiantuta, the community where most Tomaraho live, had not participated much in the discussions up to that moment. Emilio pointed to Teresa and other women who were in the room while he was speaking and said:

(y) What you are saying about the *harra* and the 'culture' is something very sacred and very dangerous that can never be spoken of in the presence of the women. You are revealing all the secrets but we [the Tomaraho] keep our rituals and try not to speak in the presence of women. Our initiation ritual's guides, Wilky and Letra, tell us that if one speaks of these issues in front of women they might get sick and die. This is a secret, only for men.

Everybody fell silent after Emilio spoke. Marcelo looked around with a perplexed look on his face and said:

(s) I do not understand very well the Yshiro language but I think I understood something. Culture is made of many things, the language, the typical food, your handicrafts, etc. I know that your organization [the Pan-Yshiro organization] does not address issues relating to religion. I understand that this organization is looking for everybody's development, and religion is a very personal issue. But culture is important, very important because it is what gives you a good ground for your identity. It is what makes you what you are and the development that you need depends on what you are.

Two thoughts come to my mind when I compare the transcription of the workshop with the document written by the director of *Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas* mentioned at the beginning. The first is how radically the role of 'Indigenous culture' has changed in contemporary official development projects since 1966. Having been involved with the Yshiro communities since 1991 I am aware, however, that this change has taken place mostly in the last ten years. Indeed, until the early 1990s, the Paraguayan state policy on Indigenous peoples more or less explicitly aimed to eliminate 'Indigenous cultures' through a process that would transform Indigenous peoples into modern peoples. That a decade later 'Indigenous culture' is being touted by an official development project as the basis for Indigenous peoples' development begs the following questions: What does this transformation of goals, from the elimination of 'Indigenous culture' to its promotion, mean? How did this transformation take place?

The second thought is related to the influence that these transformations have had in the ways the Yshiro understand 'Indigenous culture' and what impact this has on the ways in which they relate to each other and other non-Yshiro. As the exchanges recalled by the transcription show, 'Indigenous culture' has different meanings for different Yshiro. Moreover, these different meanings are the source of tensions and disputes. The complexity and instability of meanings attached to 'culture' raises a series of additional questions; for example: how do conceptions of indigenouness within development projects relate to the self-conceptions held by those to whom these projects are addressed? More generally, do local tensions and struggles over the meaning of 'indigenouness' impact the ways in which development is imagined within development and governmental institutions?

In addressing these questions, I intend to diagnose the particularities of the present moment through an analysis of the governmental rationality (or governmentality) in which the new status of 'Indigenous culture' in development agendas might make sense. By framing my inquiry in this way, I am rejecting simple narratives of progress and improvement. I must also stress that I am only taking the changing role of 'Indigenous culture' in development as an entry point, a symptom of larger changes that involve the very ontological foundations of modernity.

In this dissertation I will argue that these changes are connected to larger processes which have had as one of their effects the emergence of a 'neoliberal governmental rationality.' This governmentality, in turn, is an upshot of changes in the modern ontology based on the dualism between nature and society. I pursue these arguments by narrating a story of how changes in the ways of imagining Indians, nature and development have been taking place since the late 19th century. I will tell this story by focussing on the successive agendas of development through which these changing imaginations were deployed among the Yshiro people of the Paraguayan Chaco.

I will show that in spite of changing imaginations and forms of governmentality, the Yshiro's views of themselves, their relations to the Whites and the *yrimo* (cosmos/universe) have consistently been translated in ways that construe them as objects. In this way, many non-indigenous people have and continue to see them as objects suitable for their 'monologues' rather than as fellow human beings with whom to engage in dialogue. This key condition for their subordination is reproduced even by their non-indigenous supporters. These dynamics, I will argue, are inherent to modern ways of producing knowledge.

For this reason I avoid addressing the questions which frame this ethnography from a modern perspective that unavoidably would tend to reproduce the objectification of the Yshiro and other Indigenous peoples. In order to do this I use the concept of imagination which is intended to escape modern dichotomies such as those between material and ideational, and between living entities and non-living entities. In this sense my work is mainly an exploration of the political and epistemological possibilities of writing ethnography from a non-modern standpoint. I will elaborate upon this in the

Introduction below.

This story is based on over ten years of interaction and collaborative work with the Yshiro communities. During these years I did field-based research for roughly three years, including an eighteen-month period between January 1999 and July 2000 in which I conducted a multi-sited research program. During this period I focussed on the creation and deployment of Prodechaco. I followed its unfolding as it changed forms from written documents to actions, back to written documents and again to actions. In following this process, I conducted ethnographic research and moved along the connections linking different locations/actors through which the project 'circulated,' including workplaces and personnel of the European Union (EU) in Brussels; the Paraguayan governmental bodies in the capital city of Asunción and in the Chaco; Indigenous advocacy NGOs in Paraguay and Europe; experts and consulting firms in Europe and Paraguay; and the Yshiro communities in the Chaco.

In all cases, except when indicated, the names of individuals and organizations are disclosed with their authorization, and circumstances are described to the best of my knowledge. However, many of the people that I interviewed, especially employees and staff members of governmental institutions in the EU and Paraguay, requested that I take the necessary measures to assure their total anonymity. To achieve this, I have used pseudonyms, changed gender, or I have remained studiously vague regarding the context of certain events. Although my tone might be critical of some currently existing NGOs working in support of Indigenous peoples in Paraguay, I appreciate the value of their work and efforts. I offer my critique in a constructive spirit in the hope of opening a dialogue about issues that, so far, seem to have gone undiscussed. Thus, since it is not my intention to hurt their reputation or goals, I have also remained vague regarding the identity of these NGOs.

Considering requests for anonymity, I must thank in general those people in the European Commission (EC) who were so kind to receive me and who accepted to be interviewed in Brussels. I must also thank EC's external consultants and lobbyists from Brussels, Edinburgh, London, Paris, Seville and Bern who accepted to talk to me in spite of all the red tape around Prodechaco. My thanks to the 'friends' inside the Ministry of Agriculture of Paraguay.

The people working in Prodechaco were very honest and open to my questions and my 'nosing' around in their activities. My gratitude to Mike Holland and Miguel Ruiz Arce. The sudden death of Moreno Chiovoloni was very much regretted by me and the Yshiro leaders. He was a real ally within Prodechaco and was perhaps the only person willing to 'subvert' its goals even if that meant he could lose his job. He, his wife Yohanka Alfonso and their daughter Ciara took me in and made me feel a part of their family during my stays in Asunción.

Once, a person who works in an Indigenous advocacy organization in Paraguay told me that the 'field' shaped by these organizations was a bag of snakes who kept biting each other at each opportunity. I soon realized that this was truly the case, yet I

still remain in awe as to how well I was treated by them. To my knowledge I have not been 'bitten' yet, and hopefully only a few will do it after reading this work. Stephen Kidd was enormously generous with his archives on Prodechaco; Serafina Alvarez, Mirta Peryra, Rodro Villagra and Pilar Roig also opened the archives of their institutions and were very generous with their time and advice. Jorge Vera and Juan Leon lent their collaboration and time at critical moments. Verena Regehr was very kind to host me during a visit to central Chaco and introduced me to some of the problems faced there by Indigenous peoples.

I have an ever lasting debt of gratitude to my Yshiro friends. First and foremost Don Bruno Barras who, when I was a young undergraduate student from Argentina, invited me to work with his community and thus changed my life in ways I would have never expected. His wife Eloida Ozuna and his children especially Alejo, Freni and 'El Coti' have been my younger siblings. Perla Ortiz, Benito Romero and their *boshesho terror* (scary children); Modesto Martinez, Sonia Ozuna and their children, as well as Babi Ozuna and his girlfriends have been my family in Karcha Bahlut. Teresa and Gaspar Paya and their children took me into their family when I was in Diana. So much family . . . how can one thank family for being family?

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A final note of gratitude to Amanda White, partner, friend and colleague, whose editorial work with my poor English and sharp intellectual critiques have helped to make this a more acceptable work. Above anything else her untiring emotional support has been essential to carry on with this project. For all this I will be forever thankful.

INTRODUCTION: GOVERNMENTAL RATIONALITIES AND AUTHORIZED IMAGINATIONS

This work is concerned with diagnosing the differences of the present, or as some have labelled this kind of study, with 'writing a history of the present' (see Barry *et. al.* 1996:3-7).¹ Writing a history of the present as an exercise in social theory unavoidably means grappling with modernity, a key category which at times operates as a historical periodization, at other times as a description of specific institutional arrangements and values, and yet at other times as that which goes without saying: the ontological ground upon which knowledge becomes possible. My own use of the term will become clear as I proceed with this introduction, however let me say that my interest here is the performance of modernity through the activity of government. In a general sense, I conceive the activity of government as the conduct of 'human agency' and the conduct of 'natural processes' according to certain ends. The idea of governing humans is probably easy to understand but perhaps this is not the case with the idea of governing 'natural process.' By this I mean activities ranging from agriculture to the harnessing of nuclear power. Governing human and non-human (the domain of nature) involves purposes informed by statements about the state of the world (i.e., knowledge). Thus, in general, the activity of government involves the direction of self and others (human and non-human) according to changing and contested ideas of what is known about the world.

In order to grasp the performative character of modernity I will use the concept of governmentality or governmental rationality. This concept, coined by Foucault (1991a), refers to the way of thinking and organizing the task of government: who can govern, what or who is governed; what governing is; and how this task can be performed (see also Dean 1999:16-20). The concept of governmentality addresses the critical nexus between governmental practices and truth. As Dean (1999:18) points out, we govern ourselves and others according to what we take to be true about the world, yet the ways in which we govern ourselves and others ground different ways of producing truth, that is, different regimes of truth. The regime of truth of modernity is in part shaped by governmental apparatuses, including expert institutions, that co-operate to define certain ways of imagining reality as knowledge while others are defined as myth or mere belief (see Foucault 1973, 1980). This regime of truth operates within the framework of a particular ontology, the myth of modernity, to which I will return below.

My focus then will be on how this regime of truth produces objects of government and the institutions and values through which these are governed; and, in turn, how these institutions and values produce the regime of truth. In this way, I intend to use

¹ For the moment I will keep this terminology, although, for reasons that will become clear later, I prefer to call this work 'a story of the present.'

transformations in knowledge (e.g., what we take to be true statements about the world), objects of government (human and non-human collectivities), governmental bodies (the array of institutions, discourses and practices through which the activity of government is performed), and values expressed through development as indexes to the continuities and discontinuities that mark out the present moment.

In the last decade, the break between the 'present moment,' and the one that preceded it has increasingly been articulated in terms of globalization. Globalization has been imagined in a variety of ways, although, in general, it is always related to modernity. Thus, in a recent article, Arif Dirlik (n.d.:4) argues that,

If it is to escape banality, or more seriously, complicity in contemporary configurations of power, any critique of modernity must be keenly aware of its own historicity, as well as its relationship to these contemporary configurations of power. It must be aware, in other words, of its relationship to the past as well as to the present. This requires attention, most seriously, to the relationship between the discourses of modernization and globalization - and our own relationship to these discourses, especially the latter.

In order to be able to navigate through the convoluted relations between discourses of modernization and globalization, Dirlik (n.d.:3-4) suggests framing the discussion in terms of changing paradigms from modernization to globalization. For this, he argues, it is important to distinguish between globalization as a descriptive term which refers to historical processes ongoing 'since the origin of humanity' from 'its deployment as a self-consciously new way of viewing the world.' In this way, he asserts, we can account for a change in the world and for a change in the way we see the world, and the connections between both.

The last point links to my own about the need to focus on the critical nexus between governmental practices and truth (i.e., governmentality), for this is the nexus where changes in the world and changes in the way we see the world display their mutually constitutive nature. I will come back to this mutual implication later, now I will turn to a discussion of how analyses and critiques that narrate the present moment as globalization relate to the myth of modernity.²

Narrating The Present Moment

Following what I call a periodization perspective, globalization has been imagined as the outcome and latest phase of the historical unfolding of modernity, or, in other words, the outcome of modernization. From this perspective, the myth of modernity is a

²Note that I use the term critique in the general sense of analysis and critical commentary, thus it does not necessarily imply a negative evaluation of events or processes..

history (i.e., factual). This (hi)story assumes that modernity's institutions, values, epistemology and (especially) ontology are universals. Humanity has come to 'discover' or 'develop' modernity through a process (i.e., modernization) that began in Western Europe and later expanded to the rest of the world. Globalization, then, is conceptualized as the culmination of this process, although different versions of the periodization perspective narrate the consequences of this process differently.

Perhaps one of its most unsophisticated albeit very influential versions is expressed in the view that globalization (particularly economic) is an inevitable process, as was previously the case with modernization. This is the case because the process of globalization is seen as being inscribed in the *telos* of society. However, while on the one hand, globalization is represented as a process that follows its own dynamics which eventually will involve the whole world, on the other hand, "some of the most powerful agencies in the world are utterly intent on its production" (Massey 1999:36).³ A more subtle version of the periodization perspective is 'reflexive modernization theory' (see Giddens 1990, 1998; Beck 1992, 1999; Beck et al 1994). In this version, the variety of phenomena associated with globalization are seen as a consequence of the victory of modernization. In some formulations (e.g., Giddens's) modernity's successful expansion allows for previously colonized societies to use their newly acquired modern power to contest the West and Eurocentric narratives of modernity (Giddens 1990, 1994). In other formulations (e.g., Beck's), the consequences of the success of modernity (particularly the proliferation of risks) situates non-Western societies and Western societies in the same position regarding the basic challenges of 'reflexive modernity' (i.e., the contemporary stage of modernization) (Beck 1999:2). Yet given that each society is situated in a different place and has different cultural perceptions, this experience of modernity is plural. Hence, the discourses of multiple modernities, heterogeneity, hybridity, multiculturalism which accompany periodization perspectives.⁴ I will return to this later.

In spite of their claims that the present moment is marked by heterogeneity, periodization perspective's critiques envisage an underlying homogeneity in that modernity (turned reflexive for some) involves the whole globe. This underlying homogeneity warrants a vision of the present moment as one of unbounded flows which express themselves in either cultural terms (although differently, we are all modern), economic terms (capitalism is everywhere but plural), political terms (a cosmopolitan

³This can be seen as an index of the intricate connections between processes and ways of looking at them.

⁴I must indicate that there are some versions of the periodization perspective that describe globalization as a process of relentless and obvious homogeneization of the world. These versions are increasingly a minority among both detractors and supporters of globalization.

global democracy is taking shape), or in a mix of all of these. As Massey (1999:35) argues, and I will show in Chapter Five, this vision of globalization echoes, too well, the powerful neoliberal rhetoric of 'free trade,' and is coincident with the argument that modernization has one particular path. In effect, as commentaries or critiques, the stories of the present moment narrated from the periodization perspective remain solidly grounded in the modern myth that I will describe below. These critiques implicitly assert that they provide accurate representations of reality from which certain prescriptions, about how the activity of government should be performed, can be derived. The aim of these kinds of critiques is to make governmental practices more accurate and/or 'ethically sound' and democratic by making them match a given reality.⁵ I claim that, with more or less self-awareness, this way of performing critique reproduces the modern regime of truth.

In Chapter Five I will return to both versions of the periodization perspective when I discuss their role in what I call neoliberal governmentality. Now, it is important to point out that these 'stories of the present' retain many characteristics of the myth of modernity, central among them is a commitment to its universalism. The end of the universalist pretensions of the myth of modernity is what other scholars seek. They understand and perform critique as a radical task of deconstruction and destabilisation, and this is what globalization means for them. One of the goals of this task is to erode the dominant political, ethical and epistemological system of rule and subalternization which is associated with the modern regime of truth.⁶ Another parallel goal of this task is to open up spaces for the unfolding of other, perhaps less oppressive, regimes of truth. This approach, which I share, involves finding a way to perform critique without re-instating the myth of modernity and its associated governmental rationality.

From these scholars' situated or place-based perspective, modernity's institutions, values, epistemology and ontology are the particular products of a place. Place here is understood as "the experience of, and from, a particular location with some sense of boundaries, grounds, and links to everyday practices"(Escobar 2001:152). This experience is taken to be emergent and not a given. Place is conceived of as a process, as 'embodied practices that shape identities,' in part through resistance to changing 'strategies of power' (see Gupta and Ferguson 1997). This perspective on place-making stresses the point that the immediate experiences of place and identity are inevitably constituted by larger sets of spatial relations. Thus, place is not conceived as a bounded

⁵For this view applied to development see Nederveen Pieterse (1998, 2000) and Gardner and Lewis (1996).

⁶For this view applied to development see Escobar (1995, 1996); Apffel-Marglin and Marglin (1990,1996); Crush (1995); Parajuli (1996, 1998); Rahnema and Bawtree (1997); Esteva and Prakash (1998).

and self-contained entity rather place is seen as a knot made of a particular mix of threads (i.e., links and connections), "including local relations 'within' the place and those many connections which stretch way beyond it" (Massey 1999:41).

From this perspective, we could say with Rofel (1999:13) that modernity "is a story that [certain] people tell themselves about themselves in relation to others." This story, or myth, emerged as a particular mix of links and connections that were 'bounded' yet extended beyond Western Europe. However, part of the myth of modernity is that 'moderns' narrate themselves and their place as pure and self-contained, as if the mixes that make up 'modernity,' as a space-time coordinate, have no input from other places (see Latour 1993; Blaut 1993).

Moreover, although it has been the product of a particular place, modernity has claimed, asserted and imposed its status as universal through a process of expansion and colonization, involving a great deal of violence and coercion. This process is what we usually call modernization. Through the last couple of centuries modernization has been at the heart of the dominant governmentality. Indeed, if as Foucault (1991:95) pointed out, governmentality involves the right disposition of things, arranged in such a way as to lead to a convenient end, one could argue that modern governmentality's end has been modernity. Indeed, as we will see below, modern governmentality, as expressed through successive development agendas, has been intent on reproducing modernity everywhere (see Escobar 1995).

Some readers may object that precisely because of the brutal process of modernization, modernity has seeped so profoundly throughout the world that we find it everywhere, albeit hybridized and pluralized (see Arce and Long 2000). This implies that speaking of modernity in the singular is not appropriate any longer, and also that no matter what our efforts, we can only reproduce and further hybridize modernities. I find this kind of argument problematic on two accounts. From a perspective that considers every place as a *particular mix* of connections stretching beyond itself, the concept of hybridity is meaningless. Moreover, the ideas that everything is a hybrid and that pure phenomena do not exist, have become orthodoxy in social sciences and humanities. Yet many scholars operating from a periodization perspective see hybridity as a new state which is inextricably connected to the process of modernization. From this perspective, it makes sense to speak of the present moment as hybridity in order to contrast it with a previous one assumed to have been characterized by purity, at least in the sense that modernity as a time-space entity was not mixed with other time-space entities. From a place-based or situated perspective, this purity have never existed (see Latour 1993) since phenomena are everywhere, and at all times, mixes of other phenomena. Thus, to say that a given phenomena is a hybrid does not help to highlight any relevant difference with

other phenomena.⁷

Another problem I find in the idea of hybrid modernities is the subtle re-introduction of a dualist logic of analysis. Not always, but often enough, hybridity is conceived as the mix of two (and only two) asymmetrically related terms. With different labels, these terms are usually associated with notions of, on the one hand, the local, subordinated 'traditional' culture and, on the other hand, the global, dominant modern culture (see Dirlik 2001 for an example). This privileging of an asymmetrical dual relation to define hybridity, obscures the already 'hybrid' character of the terms involved in the relationship. Acknowledging this automatically implies that there are many more than two elements involved in the making of a hybrid. Why assume, then, that modernity is the most relevant element making up a given hybrid?⁸

Given these problems with the idea of hybridity and rather than conceiving modernity as an ethereal entity which suffuses everything, although in ways that are almost impossible to pin down, I prefer to conceive it, or define it, in a more strict and I think more useful manner. The reason I think it is necessary to elaborate a more strict definition of modernity can be expressed with a question addressed to those who talk of modernities, what is the common thread that justifies labelling different states-of-being by the root word modern? Is it not assumed in this labelling that all these states-of-being share in common their being positioned in a certain relation to something we call modernity? Then, the problem is to define what is this 'thing' we call modernity.

The Myth of Modernity

Showing the limitations of defining modernity on the basis of time periods or specific institutional arrangements, Wittrock (2000:37-39) has argued that a meaningful notion of modernity must take into account the relationship of various institutional projects to cultural and cognitive projects related to the most basic ideas of an ontological and cosmological nature. In other words, that certain institutional arrangements and values can be comprehended as modern depends on their being related to a specifically modern myth of origin or ontology which serves as a 'generalized reference point' (Wittrock 2000:38).

What is this ontology or myth of origin? Let us begin by saying that between the 16th and 17th centuries, in certain locations in Europe, a new way of conceiving truth and

⁷In this, I concur with Donna Haraway (1991:160-161) about the need to know the difference between differences that are playful and those that are 'poles of world historical systems of domination.'

⁸In this sense, I believe that the widespread discourse of 'hybrid modernities' instead of 'hybrid traditions' is linked to the presumption of the asymmetry between them.

knowledge began to emerge that differed from the previously dominant ones. According to Szerszynski (1996:107), this way of conceiving truth and knowledge was grounded on a disjunctive view of language which “posited a distinction between a descriptive language on the one hand and an extra-discursive reality to which that language referred on the other.” This view of language is akin and contemporaneous to Cartesian dualism founded on the distinction between mind and the world. In any case, in the terms of this disjuncture or dualism, truth came to be conceived as the coincidence between word and world “in the sense that the former is a completely adequate and transparent representation of the latter” (Reiss cited in Szerszynski 1996:108).

One of the elements of the modern myth, then, is Cartesian dualism in the widest sense, that is, as a system of ever expanding sets of opposing pairs patterned after dualisms such as society/nature, mind/world (or word/world, according to Szerszynski) and the like.⁹ However, as Dussel (1995, 1998) has forcefully argued, this particular form of dualism took shape along with the experience of Europeans having to manage their relations with the people of the New World, the Indians. In this way, Indians, the epitome of ‘the other,’ have been part of the modern ontology from its very constitution (see also Elliot 1970; Latour 1993). In addition, between the 16th and the 18th centuries, a notion of linear time became increasingly more central to this ontology in the form of an underlying dynamic, development. I surmise that in order to picture modernity we must look at the interactions between these three mutually constitutive imaginations of the modern myth of origin or ontology, that is, nature, Indians and development.¹⁰

Constitutive Imaginations

I choose to focus on nature instead of society among the two terms of Cartesian dualism because in the modern myth of origin the former precedes the latter. As the ‘other’ of society, nature has been conceived as out of (human) history, an autonomous domain operating as a source of truth, authenticity and morality; but also as an incomplete, inert, volition-less resource to be used or developed to its full potential according to the designs of ‘modern man’ (see Latour 1999:145-173 and 216-257;

⁹I recognize that this dualism is the product of successive layers laid prior and after Descartes’ *cogito*. However, as Plumwood (1993: 107-109) argues, it is with Descartes that a philosophy in which nature is rendered as ‘ineluctably alien’ and mindless is articulated. Thus, Cartesian philosophy incorporated a critical element that would make the dichotomy nature/society a dualism, that is, a relation between two terms systematically construed as asymmetrical (Plumwood 1993:49).

¹⁰I use the term Indians to refer to a very specific imagination that is not equivalent to ‘Indigenous peoples,’ which is a different albeit related imagination.

Merchant 1983; Phelan 1993:45; Plumwood 1993).

Several scholars, have made clear that these ways of imagining 'nature' allow the control not only of the non-human but also of humans (see Haraway 1991; MacCormack and Strathern 1980; Merchant 1983; Yanagisako and Delaney 1995). For example, Plumwood (1993:4) points out that:

[R]acism, colonialism and sexism have drawn their conceptual strength from casting sexual, racial and ethnic differences as closer to the animal and the body [i.e., nature] construed as a sphere of inferiority, as a lesser form of humanity lacking the full measure of rationality or culture.

Yet as Anna Tsing (1995:114) has argued, naturalizing power relations requires empowering nature by making it intelligible. In other words, nature must signify something accessible to humans, something that can be fruitfully carried over into power relations. Now, making something intelligible means to put it in relation to something else. Thus, if nature can lend conceptual strength to power relations it is by virtue of its connections with other imaginations such as development and Indians.

By the 18th century, among "the writing elite of Western Europe and its footholds on other continents" (Bauman 1993:128), the relation between nature and society had started to be framed in a temporal matrix. Nature was the ground, the starting point of humankind's voyage towards some sort of 'paradise' located somewhere in the future. Progress was marked by the progressive dominion of humankind over nature. The more nature was mastered, the farther away humanity moved in the line of progress.¹¹ Yet it was in light of their experiences with those humans indigenous to other places (Indians), who had been falling under European domination since the 16th century, that the European writing elites could imagine themselves and their society as the result of a historical progression (see Elliott 1970; Dusell 1995; 1998; Fabian 1983). In other words, 'othering' nature through its domination has gone hand in hand with dominating human 'others;' conversely, dominating human 'others' through their naturalization has gone hand in hand with dominating nature. Both processes, in turn, have been shaped by, and have shaped development, "the active principle according to which new and higher stages of human society might emerge out of old and more simple ones: the driving motive in human history" (Ferguson 1997:153; see also Rist 1997:25-46).

¹¹The ascendancy of the Cartesian conception of humans as 'masters and possessors of nature' has not been free from recurrent contestation. For example the Romantics' reaction to urbanization and industrialization saw the displacement from nature to society as a 'fall' rather than as a progression. This reaction had a peak in the late 18th and early 19th centuries but by the mid 19th century was pushed to the margins by an increasingly more confident proclamation of Europe's mastery over nature (Arnold 1996:14-26).

Development and Modern Governmentality

The relations held by Indians, nature and development (as mutually constitutive imaginations) have contributed to shape the modern ontology. Since the 18th century, this ontology has grounded a logical structure of ever expanding dualisms according to which:

	society	relates to	nature
as	moderns	to	Indians
as	subject	to	object
as	self	to	other
as	ruler	to	ruled
as	present	to	past ¹²

The vertical axis of this logical structure would indicate that nature's characteristics and the existing relations with its opposing term, society, are replicated in all the other opposing pairs of the series. However, this does not take place without ambivalence. Plumwood (1993:4-5) has pointed out that at least since the Enlightenment, the treatment of nature as a realm whose domination by humanity is 'natural' has been opposed and condemned for certain humans and normalised for others such as women and the colonized, who remained closer to nature.¹³ The 'active principle' of development (represented in the scheme by the relation between past and present) has been critical in mediating the passage of nature's properties to 'other' humans and vice versa. It is through the mediation of the imagination development that 'others' can be seen as closer to nature and also it is the mediation of this imagination that allows the domination of colonized human 'others' to become 'natural.' In effect, as long as the temporal dynamics of progress have located Indians closer to nature, Western modern 'man' has been justified in treating them as objects to be used according to 'his' Promethean designs. Even to the extent that a common humanity with the Indians has been recognized, these Promethean designs have been justified by the avowed aim of converting the Indians into the closest possible replica of modern man, that is, by development.

The relations sustained between Indians, nature and development have formed the fairly constant hub of a modern ontology that operates as a generalized reference point

¹²The inspiration for this scheme comes from Fabian (1991:195).

¹³As Palsson (1996:70) argues, from this dominant perspective "only *some* segments of humanity properly belong to nature . . . 'We,' it is assumed, left 'the state of nature' long ago." The 'we' is, of course, the proverbial Western European, white, heterosexual, bourgeois male.

for, among others, the activity of government. In other words, they constitute the point of reference for a modern governmentality which is characterized by the central role development plays in the understanding of the relation nature/society, Indians/moderns, and other associated sets of dualisms. Several environmental historians have shown how nature, the colonized 'others' (i.e., Indians), and linear time (i.e., development) were woven together as modern governmental rationality was taking shape. These works underline the ways in which European elites and colonists' treatment of Indigenous peoples and the environment were deeply interconnected; and how these elites and colonists investigated the 'laws of nature' partially in order to find the basis upon which, in the future, they could build more 'natural' social arrangements (see Cronon 1983; Young 1985; Grove 1995; Drayton 2000).

Attending to these connections one could say that modern governmentality has been shaped and has shaped imaginations about nature and human 'others' and how these might be governed according to 'natural laws,' including the active principle of development. In effect, as I will show in later chapters, modern governmental practices have been thoroughly implicated in producing imaginations such as Indians, nature and development. Yet to the extent that these imaginations have been constitutive of the ontological foundations on which these modern governmental practices rested, one can conclude that, as I pointed out above, modern governmentality has been performing its own ontological grounds. That is, it has been performing the myth of modernity. I must stress that performance always implies transformation. Thus, the 'logic' of the relations between the constitutive imaginations of the myth of modernity cannot account for how they get performed, rather a focus on the historically contingent processes of their performance are necessary.

I indicated above that the way in which governmentality performs its own ontological grounds is by producing a regime of truth. That is, an array of discourses, practices, and institutions that authorize certain forms of knowledge as being true and different from mere beliefs. In the modern regime of truth for a statement about reality to be considered knowledge, it must somehow address what Szerszynski (1996:106-107) calls the 'modern problematic,' that is, how one might obtain knowledge in a context in which word and world are distinct. This way of setting up the 'problem' carries with it its own solution, thus, knowledge can only be conceived as a relation of (degrees of) equivalence between word and world (or representation and reality).¹⁴ By assuming the

¹⁴ It is true, as Nederveen Pieterse (2000:179) argues, that this way of understanding knowledge is being contested even within the 'hard sciences' and that constructivism is becoming the received wisdom in social sciences. Yet constructivism is not the dominant way of understanding knowledge that permeates governmental practices. Moreover, as Latour (1993) has argued, social constructivism is the opposite of positivistic materialism, and no matter how much dialectics can be added to the relation or on which

dualism between representation and reality (word and world), the production of knowledge within this regime of truth continually deploys and redeploys Cartesian dualism along with the power asymmetries inherent in producing 'other/objects' to be explained.¹⁵ Thus, even when certain critiques might be intended to contest the equivalence between reality and a given dominant representation of it, the regime of truth continues unhindered. This kind of contestation therefore tends to perpetuate the fundamentals of this regime of truth.

In short then, I conceive of modernity as the relations that several institutions and values sustain with mythical narratives which have as their central plot the interactions between a set of (assumed) ontological dualisms paradigmatically represented by the nature/society and the Indians (other)/moderns (self) divides. The interactions between the terms of this ontological dualism are mediated by a temporal dynamic which is linear. Conceiving knowledge and truth within the frame of ontological dualism is central to modern institutions and values. Indeed, conceiving of knowledge and truth as a relation between word and world (representation and reality) is perhaps one of the modern myth's most constant and stable products. This 'regime' of truth and knowledge reproduces itself and its underlying ontology through governmental practices, among them critique. This leads me back to my discussion of the different perspectives from which the present moment is narrated.

Expert's Critique as Governmental Practice

As I pointed out before, in order to narrate the present moment avoiding banality or complicity in contemporary configurations of power, to use Dirlik's words, we must keep in focus the nexus between governmental practices and what we take to be truth, that is governmentality. With this focus, the entanglement between processes and the way

side of the relation the emphasis is put, the point remains that these perspectives stay solidly anchored in ontological dualism.

¹⁵ In effect, Cartesian dualism establishes a cleft between the knower (subject/self/representation) and the would-be-known (object/other/reality) which in practice can only be bridged through the negation of the irredeemable otherness of the second term of the dualism. Paradoxically, this negation is expressed through the implicit reassertion of the radical difference between the knower and the known effected when the knowing subject is sequestered from the consequences of the knowledge enunciated. That is, in the modern regime of truth, the implication of the knower in that which he/she claims to know is either unaddressed or denied because only by being uninvolved with the known can the knower know it objectively as other. See Plumwood (1993:41-68) for a thorough analysis of dualism as a logic of colonization and subordination.

in which we see processes can be brought to the forefront. Development, as a governmental practice and discourse, is a very fruitful terrain to investigate modern governmentality and the entanglement of processes and ways of seeing them. One reason is because development is (or has been until very recently) rather explicit with regard to its aim of (re)creating modernity and its institutions elsewhere, under the guise of civilizing mission, colonial rule or development proper (Escobar 1995:156; see also Ferguson 1990; Rist 1996). Another reason is that since the 19th century, this has been done with increasing input from expert knowledge, the epitome of true knowledge in the modern regime of truth. Thus, in development we can see how modern governmentality has taken shape and changed along with the expertise that has contributed to producing its objects of government.¹⁶

James Ferguson (1997), for example, has shown the intimate connections that exist between anthropology and 'its evil twin,' development. These connections imply co-emergence and parallel transformations. As I will show in Part I by focussing on the case of Paraguay, anthropology (professional or amateur) has been a discipline specialized in producing the objects of government for the civilizing mission, colonial rule, and development. But the enterprise of development provided the conditions that made possible the emergence of such a specialized field. As Pels (1997:165) argues, anthropology, as many other specialized fields, can be conceptualized as "an academic offshoot of a set of universalist technologies of domination." However, the relation of anthropology with development is not simply instrumental and linear and, thus, it exemplifies the murky relation that expert knowledge and critique in general sustain with modern governmentality.

It is undeniable that anthropology, as other disciplines, has been instrumental to colonial domination but, particularly since the late 1960s, it has also contributed to a thorough critique of colonialism and development, and even of its own implication in these and other forms of dominations (see Asad 1973; Hymes 1974; Fabian 1983; Clifford and Marcus 1986). Yet what results did these expert's critiques have?

In Part II, I will argue that, along with social movements and governmental institutions, expert's critiques contributed to making globalization in both of the senses discussed above. That is, on the one hand, they contributed to make the present moment one in which modernity's universalist pretensions are challenged both as a system of rule and as a system of knowledge and representation (Massey 1999:31); and on the other hand, they contributed to make the present moment one in which modernity's universalist

¹⁶For general examples of the role of expert knowledge in governmental practices see contributors to Burchell et al. (1991) and Barry et al. (1996). For examples of expert knowledge in the context of development see contributors to Apfel-Marglin and Marglin (1990; 1996); Cooper and Packard (1997); Escobar (1995); Ferguson (1990); and Sachs (1992).

pretensions are promoted by the dominant governmentality under the banners of heterogeneity, hybridity and difference. In other words, these critiques, their associated social movements, and governmental responses to them, contributed to create the conditions that made thinkable not only contemporary critiques of modernity but also the currently dominant form of governmentality through which modernity is performed, that is, neoliberal governmentality.

That the target of critique now involves the very universalist pretensions of modernity, and not only the form that these universalist pretensions adopt, creates unprecedented opportunities for a thorough transformation of the very ontology which is performed by the dominant neoliberal governmentality. However, the challenge to modernity's universalist pretensions poses its own challenges. In Part III, for example, I will show how the Yshiro people struggle with this form of governmentality as it is deployed through a development project. I will argue that the ways in which some Yshiro carry on with these struggles contain the potential to subvert the modern regime of truth. This is because through their struggles they perform an ontology that differs from the modern one. Yet this subversive potential is contained by the use of coercion mobilized by appealing to notions of the real and truth defined within the modern regime of truth. How can one join forces with social movements that are (indirectly) struggling against the modern regime when one is situated within expert institutions that tend to reproduce the very regime of truth that curtails them?

As might be evident at this point of my discussion, my concern with scholarly critiques of the present moment is precisely the role they are playing in the reproduction, transformation, or erosion of the modern regime of truth. That is, I am concerned with the possibilities of articulating with and, thus, strengthening a process of radical transformation of the dominant ways of producing truth and their articulations with the ways in which the conduct of self and others is enacted.

I believe that many of us in academia face a central challenge which is finding ways to tell a story of the present in a politically meaningful way. That is, to tell it in a way that avoids reproducing the modern system of rule and the regime of power/knowledge that many people around the world are directly or indirectly trying to undermine. I will argue in this dissertation that modern ways of understanding and producing knowledge and truth often serve as the back door through which modern governmentality reproduces dominance and subalternization in spite of the best efforts of critiques to dismantle them. In no small part this is because some of the values we hold dearest acquire a truth-quality through modern ways of producing knowledge. With or without our intention we tend to resort to notions of a reality out there to uphold our notions of what is true and good and in this very act the modern regime of truth is reproduced.

As we will see in more detail in Part II, the modern regime of truth creates a separation between values and facts. This separation permits unacknowledged moral statements to pass as facts. All of this in turn, operates as the necessary (although not

sufficient) condition to claim universality, which in turn precludes dissent and open-endedness. Thus, often our values stand in the way of our opening to different relations with 'others' (human and non-humans), other than the ones patterned after Cartesian dualism. Thus, if one wants to avoid complicity with the contemporary configurations of power produced by modern governmentality (in any of its forms), one must avoid producing stories of the present that implicitly seek to be authorized within the modern regime of truth. It is for this reason that I have found the search for alternatives to the modern ontology to be a necessary step towards telling a politically meaningful story of the present.

Donna Haraway (1991, 1997); Bruno Latour (1993, 1999); and Walter Mignolo (2000) among others, have pointed out that rejecting the ontological dualism of modernity is a politically crucial move for the contemporary times. That these critiques of modernity come from science studies and post-colonial/subaltern studies, reflects the unravelling of the modern myth and its constitutive imaginations. Indeed, the subject/object dualism (so cherished by science) and the principle of development (so entangled with European colonialism) are unpacked in these critiques. Yet as the constitutive imaginations of modernity unravel, new imaginations emerge bringing along new opportunities and threats for politics. This is why the shift from one set of imaginations that ground practices and discourses of development to another is at the centre of my inquiry. I see in this shift the hint of an opening for a way to tell stories of the present that I find more promising, in several respects.

This way of telling stories of the present explicitly assumes a moral stance; maintains a sharp critique which seeks to include its own conditions of production; and does not foreclose heterogeneity and open-endedness as the myth of modernity does. In this context, I do not understand critique as a commentary about a reality out there, rather I conceptualize it as storytelling from an explicitly political and moral standing.

An Alternative Ontology

In my search for a non-modern ontology, I have found inspiration from some Yshiro intellectuals who are attempting to bring together actions and values in the hope that, if these attempts resonate with wider groups of people, a new way of being might emerge.¹⁷ These intellectuals, not mainly or necessarily trained in modern educational

¹⁷ By Yshiro intellectuals I refer to a heterogenous group of people composed mostly of elders and leaders. These elders and leaders are mostly male, although there are a few females among them. Also, the majority of the intellectuals with whom I have had a closer relationship are Ebitoso. My relation with Tomaraho intellectuals was interrupted for several years when they moved to their new lands in Pitiantuta in 1995. Only in 1999-2000 I was able to again have prolonged conversations with them.

institutions, ponder and question in a relatively more systematic way than most other Yshiro about the meaning and consequences of the contemporary socio-natural arrangements that are dominant in the Chaco region. Through the years, and attempting to find my place and purpose in the world, I became involved in these intellectuals' attempts to produce a new way of being. With some of them I have shared so much time and conversations that I would have a hard time to distinguish who articulated first the ideas that I and they hold today. But this does not really matter. I note this not for the purpose of investing my 'storytelling' with special authority. Rather, the issue is relevant because I do not stand in a neutral position with regards to these intellectuals' goals.¹⁸ Rather, I have become thoroughly involved in these attempts, although not for exactly the same reasons as my Yshiro friends and acquaintances. In this sense, the position from which I will narrate this story about Indians, nature and development, emerges in dialogue with these Yshiro intellectuals.

Yet I must stress that I do not intend to explain their views of the world as traditional ethnography would do it; instead, I intend to analyse the present moment informed by the ways in which these views have transformed my own understanding of the world. In order to clarify what I mean by this I must first discuss what these views involve.

Candido, one of the leaders who spoke in the meeting I recalled in the preface, mentioned that Yshiro myth-history has three stages. The idea that Yshiro myth-history has three stages is widely shared by the majority of Yshiro individuals with whom I have had an opportunity to talk. However, how different groups and individuals relate (to) this myth-history varies in significant ways. The diversity of perspectives does not escape many Yshiro's self-awareness, as was implied in Candido's remark that, since the arrival of the missionaries, 'some began to have a religion, others continue to practice their culture and yet some others involve themselves in [party] politics.' That the arrival of the missionaries marks the beginning of internal differences is grounded in the idea that, until that point, the Yshiro did have a relatively homogeneous and widely shared version of their myth-history. This version is said to be more closely maintained by the Tomaraho and by some male and female Ebitoso elders and a few mature males who went through initiation rituals in the 1950s. For expediency, I will call this version of myth-history the

¹⁸I cannot claim a special authority predicated upon my relations with some Yshiro people for many other Yshiro people would probably disagree or completely dis-authorize my 'story.' This does not mean that I disregard other sources of authority that escape my own will, such as my being part of networks connecting academia, states and markets with the exclusion of other knowledges. However, as must be now clear, I am trying to tell a story that remains open-ended and susceptible to be transformed by critiques.

elder's'.¹⁹

Several reasons warrant my use of the elders' myth-history as a reference point from which I will tell my story of the present. First, in the last ten years 'traditions' have increasingly become a gathering point for discussions about the present situation of the Yshiro communities and their prospects. In this context, the views held by or attributed to the elders, and past generations of Yshiro in general, have special weight. Second, from the point of view of most Yshiro, their own divergent positions historically emerged from a previously 'common version' of their myth-history like this one. Third, as I mentioned before, besides being central in the making of the place from which some Yshiro intellectuals see the world and themselves, the elders' myth-history also plays a central role in my own sense of place as this has been affected by an ongoing dialogue with these Yshiro. Finally, for the analytical task I have set out, this perspective provides an entry point into an ontology which operates according to different principles than those of the modern ontology. This difference, I surmise, might contain the promise of another, perhaps less oppressive, regime of truth.

A few of the most knowledgeable elders equate the myth-historical 'stages' mentioned by Candido to a sequence of generations (see also Cordeu 1990:153-160). Thus, Yshiro *puruhle*, the first stage, corresponds to the generations of the great-grandparents and grandparents of ego; Yshiro *porowo*, the second stage, corresponds to the generation of the parents of ego; Yshiro *azle* and *eisheraho*, the third stage, correspond to the generations of ego and the children of ego respectively. This generational temporality transposed to myth-history locates the Yshiro *puruhle* in times beyond memory and only fully accessible through dreams; the Yshiro *porowo* in past times that are accessible through memory, and the Yshiro *azle* and *eisheraho* in contemporary times and their grounding of forthcoming times respectively. However, the connections between stages and the practices associated with them relativize their character as mere temporal sequences. As will become evident, for many Yshiro the three stages are also dimensions of what constitutes reality.

¹⁹At a closer look this 'version' of myth-history is not as homogeneous as the use of the singular conveys. Indeed, even among elders there are differences and debates about the meanings of stories and rituals as well as about the colonization of the area by the Whites. In spite of these differences and debates there are also many commonalities. In my discussion, I will mostly remain at this level of commonalities but I will indicate where important divergences exist among the elders. Although there are several published works about myth-history, I rely on the Yshiro's own understandings of it as they were expressed to me through stories, comments and conversations. For a compilation of published works, see Wilbert and Simoneau (1987).

The Yshiro Puruhle

Many times, the elders who were telling me a story of the Yshiro *puruhle* would make a puzzling commentary: “One says dead but it is not dead, there is no death yet. One says the tiger but it is not the tiger, there is no tiger yet.” These apparently paradoxical statements were meant to underline two characteristics of this stage/dimension: first, that the starting point of myth-history is a state of indistinction; and second, that given this primordial indistinction, the events taking place in the *puruhle* stage can only be narrated by referring to entities that became distinguishable through the events being narrated. Thus, through diverse narrative means, the stories corresponding to the Yshiro *puruhle* describe how the distinguishable entities that inhabit the *yrmo* (cosmos/universe) emerged from an originally fluid and indistinguishable situation. Using the terminology borrowed from science studies, I will refer to these entities as ‘actants.’ I will discuss this concept in more detail below. For now I just want to indicate that the term actant is very appropriate to name the entities that inhabit the *yrmo* because in Yshiro myth-history no entity appears as inert or without volition (see Cordeu and Braunstein 1974).

In general terms, we can conceive the generative principle of the *yrmo* as the dynamics taking place on a continuum between two poles: indistinction and distinction or ‘Being.’ Actants come into being through their relations to other actants. That is, they are co-emergent. Because the continuum between indistinction and distinction is tilted towards the former, actants can sustain their being or distinctiveness only in a permanent struggle against their tendency to fall back into indistinction. The same idea can be conveyed by saying that the tendency is for relations between actants to fluctuate and, thus, to sustain the distinctiveness of a given state implies a permanent struggle. In this struggle the management of *wozosh* is critical. *Wozosh* (also known as *mehné* among the Tomaraho) is a kind of potency immanent to the generative principle of the *yrmo* which can be visualized as the tilt in the continuum I mentioned. Thus, *wozosh* tends to manifest itself as a force leading to death and indistinction. For this reason it must be treated very carefully.²⁰

The *puruhle* narratives describe the events that brought into existence distinctions that are necessary for life (see Cordeu 1991c). But they also describe how careless actions brought into being death and disease (see Wilbert and Simoneau 1987: 131-147). Thus, the idea conveyed is that the consequences of actions are always dangerous and

²⁰Cordeu (1990:123-140) has provided a more detailed treatment of this term, although some of my interlocutors pointed out aspects of the concept that he did not address. For example, the ‘positive’ aspect of *wozosh* when it is handled appropriately. Yet, many other Yshiro interlocutors only recognized the most immediate meanings of this term: poison and putrefaction.

ambivalent. Humans can escape the ‘negative tilt’ of *wozosh* and transform it into a life-sustaining force by using their *eiwo* (the capacity to make distinctions and to judge).

The basic fluidity and indistinction of the cosmos is usually emphasized in Yshiro *puruhle* narratives by the introductory comment *oa pehrtit je elehert pe* (at its beginning it was not like now) or *ehzkit* (since then) (see Cordeu 1990:155-156). These introductions underline a change of state rather than an absolute beginning. Most people, if including the Christian God at all, situate its ‘creative’ actions within a scenario already there. Portrayals of a deity creating anything *ex nihil* are rare and, although they exist, they usually are mere commentaries such as ‘at the beginning God created this or that’ (see Cordeu 1997a:205-208).²¹

The stories that compose this first ‘stage’ of myth-history do not have a preestablished sequence. As an elder told me once, when stories from the *puruhle* are used, storytelling resembles the work of making necklaces with beads and seeds. The beads and seeds come in different sizes and colours that the artisan arranges along a string according to her/his own intent. Thus, the sequence in which stories within this stage are arranged depends upon the intentions of the storyteller, and the context in which the story is being told. This characteristic allows for a high degree of flexibility regarding the incorporation of new stories which address the beginning of some feature of the cosmos. This is particularly visible in the case of stories from the Bible. For example, with the exception of the few individuals mentioned in footnote 21, who since childhood have been systematically educated in some of the Christian faiths, most people locate Christian ‘origin’ stories alongside other stories of the Yshiro *puruhle*.

The flexibility of the *puruhle* narratives allows the narrator to arrange stories in order to convey specific messages. Through these messages one can intervene in the unfolding of ongoing events according to particular contexts and intentions. Several Yshiro point out that *puruhle* narratives can be used for transmitting morals, for healing purposes, to attract good luck, to produce sexual arousal and so on. It is known that stories have *wozosh* and that, depending on the circumstances of the telling, this can express itself as a lively or deadly force (see Cordeu 1988:80-81). Very few people can clearly articulate why stories have this power. Most people, when asked, said that this is ‘what people say.’ Others deny that stories have any power at all. Those who know, typically male or female elders with various degrees of expertise as *konsaha* (shaman), explain that when the events by which certain entities came into being are narrated, the *wozosh* of those circumstances is re-actualized. The connection between the original

²¹It is important to notice that there are a few individuals that make a stark distinction between Yshiro ‘superstitions’ and Christian ‘knowledge’ and therefore narrate the origins totally in agreement with the storyline taught to them by priests or pastors. These individuals are usually young, under 25, and have gone to school and attended bible study groups on a regular basis.

events and the event of their telling is predicated upon language being itself a distinction-making event and thus charged with *wozosh* (see Susnik 1957a:12). We will return to this characteristic of language soon.

In addition to storytelling, ecstatic journeys and dreaming are also procedures used by the *konsaho* (pl. *konsaha*) to manage *wozosh*. By these means they enter into contact with the realm of the Yshiro *puruhle*, the very source of *wozosh*, and try to draw its potencies into a given ongoing effort.

For many Yshiro the three 'stages' of myth-history constitute contemporaneous dimensions of the *yrmo* precisely because through contemporary ritual action (which includes storytelling) and *konsaho*'s interventions, *wozosh* can be taken care of at its source (the *puruhle* dimension) and in this way, the very permanence of the *yrmo* can be sustained. In all this, *eiwo*, the human capacity to distinguish the positive from the negative, is a key instrument. This capacity came into being in the *porowo* stage.

The Yshiro Porowo

The flexibility of the Yshiro *puruhle* narratives stands in stark contrast to the inflexibility of the Yshiro *porowo* narratives. This does not mean that there are no different versions of the stories that compose these narratives; rather, it means that the differences between versions are symptomatically attributed to mistakes, misunderstandings or feeble knowledge of the narrator. In other words, there is a clear agreement that there is only one correct way of telling the stories, although there are disagreements over which one is correct. The inflexibility attributed to these narratives is due to the fact that they lay down the ethical and moral foundations of society and, by extension, the cosmos. As it might be expected, this is a fertile terrain for controversy and dispute. Indeed, as is recognized by the Yshiro themselves, the coming of Christian missionaries with their gospel added extra elements (e.g., questions about their veracity) to the controversies over which ways of telling the stories are correct. Ritual performances and visible behaviours (ranging from food taboos to marriage practices) were closely linked to the Yshiro *porowo* narratives. Thus, the missionaries' attacks on these performances and visible behaviours profoundly affected the transmission of the Yshiro *porowo* narratives from one generation to another. But we are moving forward too fast, let us first see what 'events' the Yshiro *porowo* stories depict.

The core of the Yshiro *porowo* narratives is contained in the *Esnwherta au'oso* (lit. the word of Esnwherta). This is a story which describes the encounter between the Yshiro and the *Anabsero* beings and how the former acquired social orderings (e.g., clans, age ranks and gender); moral precepts to regulate their conduct; and *eiwo*.²² One

²²For a discussion of the meaning of the term *Anabsero* see Cordeu (1991a:100-103). It is relevant to notice that the *Anabsero* are associated with animal species that inhabit the

schematic version of these events is as follows:

A group of women was gathering roots. The *Anabsero* beings came out from the hole they made. They instructed the women to clear a space in the bush, the *tobich* (lit. the place of the dead) where they would meet regularly. The men observed the unusual behaviour of the women and followed them, but as they were afraid of the *Anabsero*, they kept hiding. The women, in turn, lied to the *Anabsero* sustaining that there were no men among them. However, a woman brought her baby boy to one of the meetings and the *Anabsero* discovered him. The *Anabsero* expelled the women from the *tobich* and ordered them to send their males instead. Although the men were completely frightened, one of them, Cyr, convinced the rest to go ahead and contact the *Anabsero*. The men began to meet with the *Anabsero* in the *tobich*. The Yshiro and the *Anabsero* worked in pairs as *agalo* (partners, but also lit. 'they eat together'), one ignorant and the other knowledgeable about everything. The *Anabsero* blew into the fingers of the Yshiro and thus *eiwo* entered them. In that way the men were able to distinguish which food was for them and which one was for the *Anabsero*, thereby setting the foundations for proper exchanges. Together with *eiwo*, other 'gifts' were given such as the knowledge to make tools, textiles, ritual paraphernalia, and the like.

During this period Esnwherta, the *lata* (mother) of the *Anabsero*, ordered the incorporation of young men into the ongoing relationships between the Yshiro and the *Anabsero*.²³ One of the young males being initiated (the son of Cyr) did not share his catch with his *agalo* and the *Anabsero* (sgl. *Anabsero*) Wakaka killed him. Cyr asked Esnwherta for revenge and she revealed to him the secret of how to kill Wakaka. Knowing the secret, the Yshiro killed Wakaka and all but one *Anabsero*. The survivor, Nemur, escaped by blowing into a *karcha bahlut* (big snail-shell) from which the Paraguay river emerged. Before disappearing on the other side across the river, Nemur damned the Yshiro: now they would have to replace the *Anabsero* in their ritual performances otherwise humanity would be exterminated by plagues and other catastrophes. Thus, men had to replace the *Anabsero* to survive and new generations of males had to be instructed to replace older generations of men in this task. Esnwherta assigned to the Yshiro the taboos, models of conduct and the names of the clans that had corresponded to the slain *Anabsero*.

muddy bottom of the rivers or lagoons, and the mud that remains under the dry surface of the soil during the dry season. Precisely because it is difficult to distinguish anything in it, this underworld constitutes a manifestation of the Yshiro *puruhle* state and, thus, signals a connection between the *porowo* and the *puruhle* dimensions.

²³ Although for brevity the terms *bahlut* and *lata* are described as mother or father in relation to *abo* (children) a more detailed description renders the relation as one between an emanation (*abo*) and its source (*bahlut/lata*) (see Cordeu 1990:167-169).

However, the women knew that the men were just personifying the *Anabsero* and made fun of them. Then, Esnwherta ordered the men to kill all the women. Only one survived and this one instructed the men how each one had to have intercourse with her and afterwards how they had to cut her into pieces from where *temchahrra* (lit. new women) would grow. The instructions were followed and since then women have been kept ignorant of what happens within the *tobich*. In this way, the male secret society of the *tobich* was born. Death was the penalty inflicted upon the man who did not respect the secrecy surrounding activities in the *tobich* and the woman who lent an ear to the indiscrete.²⁴

The intricate connections between the *Esnwherta au'oso* and the ways the ancient Yshiro came to conceive and live their life are practically innumerable (for details on some of these connections see Susnik 1957b, and Cordeu 1991a, 1992a, 1992b). The task of replacing the *Anabsero* implied that all social relations were entangled with the process of managing *wozosh*, a process informed by the moral distinctions introduced by the *Esnwherta au'oso*. In effect, the older generations of men played, in relation to the younger generations, the same role that the *Anabsero* had played in relation to the Yshiro in general. Pubescent males were initiated by their elders through *debylylta*, a ritual that actualized the events narrated by the *Esnwherta au'oso*. The secrets of the *tobich* were revealed to the *weterak* (sgl. young initiated male) who, endowed with new dimensions of *eiwo*, was made into an Yshir (lit. adult male person). In the same process both gender distinctions and their associated proper conduct were stressed, and the *weterak* was introduced into a system of age ranks that established a series of obligations that he would have towards the older males as well as the rest of society.²⁵ Through ritual (including *debylylta*), storytelling and the conduct prescribed by the *Esnwherta au'oso*, the management of *wozosh* extended beyond the human domain to include all the *yrmo*. In this context, *debylylta* (the initiation ritual) was not exclusively meant to 'make' a Yshir, rather to make an Yshir was part of a permanent process of re-making the *yrmo* in a way

²⁴Different versions of the *Esnwherta au'oso* and other related narratives can be found in, Alarcon y Cañedo and Pittini (1924:23-24), Baldus (1927), Susnik (1957b: 7-34 and 1995:187-194), Cordeu (1991a:91-94) and Wilbert and Simoneau (1987:274-380). In this version I have only described the main events of the *Esnwherta au'oso* in a way that does not actually disclose the secrets guarded by the *tobich'oso* (lit. men of the *tobich*). Let me indicate that narrating these events to a young male being initiated may take a couple of days.

²⁵I must clarify that while certain parts of the initiation ritual that went on within the *tobich* were exclusively performed by males, other parts that took place in the *harra*, a circular space opened in the middle of the village, involved the active participation of women.

that the positive aspects of *wozosh* were maximized and the negative forestalled. This is because to make an Yshiro meant to endow a being with a richer *eiwo*, a capacity which contributes to bring being (distinction) out of indistinction.

Several elders with whom I had a chance to discuss the meanings of the term *eiwo* pointed out that it refers to the human capacities, shared in different degrees with other beings, of discerning the meaning of situations, of value making, of thoughtful naming, of envisioning what is now and what might be later, and of learning (see also Cordeu 1991a:125-126). All these capacities involve judgment and, thus, morality. The elders insisted that *eiwo* can be seen through the effect of particular actions. Of a multiplicity of human actions, correct 'talk' (storytelling, conversation and dialogue) was often mentioned as the most obvious example of the operations of *eiwo* because not knowing how to properly discern what to say, when, where and to whom usually has immediate negative effects (see also Cordeu 1990:141).

Through their contact with the *Anabsero* and *Esnwherta*, the Yshiro acquired the capacity to discern those relations that expressed the positive aspects of *wozosh*. This capacity is clearly associated with language, since it is through language that myth-history is made intelligible and the values implicit in the *Esnwherta au'oso* can be transmitted. In this way humans can, generation after generation, make distinctions between the positive and the negative out of what initially presents itself as an indistinguishable state. *Eiwo*, thus, must not be seen as an acquired capacity that allows humans to discern what was already distinct; rather, *eiwo* collaborates to bring distinction reality into Being. The 'narrative fact' that *eiwo* and language emerged in this 'stage' points to the liaison between the *puruhle* and the *porowo* dimensions: these capacities are key to the distinction-making processes that, through storytelling, ritual performances and conduct, bring Being out of the indistinction of the *puruhle* dimension.

As we will see later, by attacking the visible aspects of the *porowo* dimension (ritual and storytelling), missionaries struck a serious (but not definitive) blow to the ability of future generations of Yshiro to work through the connections between these dimensions in the way their ancestors had done before. Most stories about the arrival of the missionaries, and its significance for the Ebitoso, highlight their intrusion into an ongoing initiation ritual. The fact that the elders were unwilling or unable to punish this breach, as the *Esnwherta au'oso* prescribed, epitomizes the new conditions in which the Yshiro had to live once the Whites took control of the former's territories.

Azle and Eisheraho: Contemporaneity and Renewal

According to Cordeu (1990:158-165), Yshiro 'mythology' establishes the temporal horizon where contemporaneity begins in the final events of the *Esnwherta au'oso*, that is, with the killing of the early women and the renewal of humanity. However, according to contemporary Yshiro, these events are clearly part of the *porowo* times. Nowadays, the threshold where contemporaneity begins is taken to be the arrival of

Christian missionaries and the spread of the gospel. In this sense it is significant that Candido mentioned this event which took place in the 1950s (see Preface) and not the arrival of the Whites in general (which took place more than half a century before the arrival of the missionaries), as a turning point of Yshiro myth-history. Before this, the Whites coerced the Yshiro into a subordinated position and exploited them in several ways, yet until the missionaries arrived, the Whites did not make concerted, sustained, and systematic efforts to suppress or, at least, transform the social orderings and morality that Yshiro had learnt in the *porowo* stage.

Some Yshiro intellectuals see the fragmentation of perspectives that now reign in their communities - over myth-history and the moralities that inform actions - as the most dangerous situation the Yshiro communities have to face. Indeed, as expressed in Marciano's idea that a fourth stage might be starting with the new pan-Yshiro organization (see page 5), the challenge is to 'produce' or 'perform' the Yshiro people in a way which would transform the current state of the *yrmo*. Through a process that we will discuss in the coming chapters, a growing consensus has emerged among several of these intellectuals around the idea that this performance of the Yshiro people involves establishing different forms of relations among themselves. As we will see later, this idea is intrinsically connected to the ontology underlining the elder's myth-history.

Before I turn to a discussion of terms used throughout this work, let me discuss two characteristics of the *puruhle* and *porowo* dimensions/narratives and their mutual connections that inspire my search for a non-modern way to tell a story of the present. The first characteristic is that the *puruhle* narratives are genealogies, that is they depict the chain of interconnected 'progenitors' that gave existence to any given phenomena. If these narratives depict an ontology, this is a basic and permanent state of flux that operates as the backbone of reality. This is critical because it leaves room for a multiplicity of genealogies that can change according to intention, context and need. This is important also because genealogies remain open-ended and can accommodate changes brought about by new relations with other genealogies. The second characteristic is the way in which the *puruhle* and *porowo* dimensions are connected. This connection tells us that, in this ontology, genealogies do not precede the practice of narrating them (which implies judging and valuing) but are shaped within these practices. This means that, in contrast to the modern regime of truth, one does not need to be worried about making moral claims as one narrates a genealogy because this does not entail excluding other moral judgements. On the contrary, as we will see, in the modern regime of truth moral claims are ultimately justified by an autonomous reality and, thus, the possibility of two fundamentally different moral judgements to be true is precluded, one will eventually prevail over the other. In contrast, in the Yshiro 'regime of truth' moral claims are based on fluctuating genealogies and thus they are open to be changed by their encounter with other moral claims embedded in other genealogies or, more generally, critiques.

Actants/Imaginations

One of the challenges I encountered in telling this story was to find a language that would allow me to achieve two related goals: On the one hand to circumvent a terminology historically charged with meanings derived from modern ontology and, on the other, to engage in a dialogue with the Yshiro ontology just described without resorting to concepts extremely alien to the reader. I also needed a language that would highlight what the Yshiro ontology assumes as a given: that reality does not precede practices but is rather shaped within these practices. With this language I could convey the idea that this ethnography does not pretend to be a representation of a 'reality out there' but rather it is part and parcel of what it narrates.

To some extent, I found such language in science studies and their use of the term 'actants.' Originally, the term actant was used in semiotics in reference to entities whose defining characteristics within a text were given by their function. Actants then "operate on the level of function, rather than content" (Greimas cf. Hawkes 1977:89); they are constituted only in and through their mutual relations and not by any intrinsic property. Ruthlessly applied by science studies, as Law puts it (1999:3), the term actant has allowed analysts to move beyond a series of dichotomies which I also seek to avoid here. One of these is the dichotomy living entities/non-living entities and its related idea of agency as an intrinsic attribute of the first entities. Another is the dichotomy material/ideational and the associated concept of representation, in which the 'transcendental meaning' (Derrida 1976:27-72) is taken to be intrinsic to the first term while the second can only re-present it more or less accurately.

By calling the entities discussed throughout my dissertation actants, I seek to avoid misunderstandings based on the dichotomies mentioned above. For example, it would be totally misplaced to ask whether, when I talk of 'Indians' (or any other actant), I am referring to the 'thing' Indians or to the concept that represents it, because I am operating from an ontological ground which does not recognize this dichotomy. I will return to this point soon, but first I want to highlight that within this perspective the attributes of agency and meaning, taken to be intrinsic properties of only some entities (i.e., living entities and the material world) are actually properties of heterogeneous networks of actants (see Latour 1993, 1999). In this sense, all the elements involved in a narration/event are taken to be symmetrical in principle, none of them is endowed with privileges in terms of agency or causality: "[A]mong all these acting entities no hierarchy is introduced: they have the same privileges and often play identical roles" (Callon *et al* cited in Gomart and Hennion 1999:245, fn.7).

Given that there is no original cause or agent, questions about origins have no point for this perspective. Indeed, searching for origins would mean an endless displacement through networks of interconnected actants. However, this does not mean that genealogies are not important, to the contrary, tracing genealogies is critical to distinguish one actant (or state of being) from another, or, what is the same, to perform

them from the indistinction of symmetry (see Lee and Stenner 1999:92-98). There is no need to engage in a long argument to realize the extent to which this perspective corresponds with the idea conveyed by Yshiro myth-history that telling the story of the entities that populate the *yrmo* contributes to perform/produce them.

In my story of the present, I conceive of Indians, nature and development as actants that, in the received wisdom of Western academia, are usually treated either as ideas and concepts representing some 'real' entities; or, conversely, as real entities which might be more or less accurately represented through ideas or concepts. As I made clear in my discussion earlier in this introduction, I also use the term 'imaginings' to refer to these actants. According to the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, the most common meaning of the word 'imagination' is: "the mental faculty of forming images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses." I use the term imagination to stress the idea that actants do not preexist the process of imagining them (i.e., of forming images of them), rather they become 'present to the senses' or come into existence in this process.

However, in my use, imagination must not be understood in terms of external objects or reality. Actually, in my use, the real is an imagination that, through struggles and negotiations (i.e., the process of imagining) has become relatively more (corpo)real than other imaginings.²⁶ Thus, for example, I do not speak about the 'imagination of Indians,' which equates imagination to the representation of the 'thing' Indians; instead, I speak of the 'imagination-Indians,' which assumes that between the imagination and the 'thing' Indians, there is no difference. This idea will become more clear by contrasting the concept of imagination with that of representation.

The concept of representation assumes an ontological divide between an extra-discursive reality (the world) and its discursive or symbolic representation (the word). The world retains the 'transcendental meaning,' which can only be more or less accurately represented by the word. When a representation is deemed to be accurate, what is being affirmed is that the gap between these two disparate things (world and word) has been bridged by an equivalence. In other words, the 'real' thing and its representation are deemed closely equivalent. An imagination can be seen as the way in which a representation appears when there is no assumption of an ontological divide between reality and its representation.

Thus, what from this perspective is called an accurate representation (a representation closely equivalent to an external reality) I will call an 'authorized imagination,' that is, an imagination which has become relatively more (corpo)real than others. In effect, while a representation is deemed to be more or less accurate in representing an independent reality, an actant/imagination only can become more or less

²⁶In order to avoid repeating the cumbersome single quotes, let me state up-front that this is the meaning that I give to the words 'real' or 'reality' that I will use several times in this dissertation.

real. The degree of (corpo)reality that an imagination may acquire depends on the stability of the 'circulating reference' which constitutes it.

Latour (1999:69-70) has coined the term 'circulating reference' to account for an attribute of the chain of relations that, so to speak, occupies the space where modern ontology perceives a gap between two pure and clearly distinct entities: the world and the word (or, reality and representation). According to Latour, meaning is not the product of a relation of reference; the latter being understood as the equivalence between world and word. Rather, reference is the collective attribute of a chain of several actants that produce meaning through a circulation (hence circulating reference) that flows by short jumps and small transformations from one link (i.e., actant) of the chain to another.

At this point it is convenient to stress that, in my use, actants, imaginations, mediators and circulations are synonymous to one another. I will use these synonyms when I refer to actants in order to highlight the different functions they play in my narrative. For example, in certain moments I will treat an imagination such as Indians as a circulation flowing through a chain of heterogenous actants (anthropologists, museums, universities, missionaries, business interests, states and financial institutions, just to mention a few). In another context, I will treat this imagination as an apparently self-contained actant/mediator forming part of the chain through which the imagination-modernity circulates. In other words, throughout my analysis I may refer to the same actant by calling it, circulation, imagination or mediator. Shifting from one term to another will be an indication for the reader that I am changing focus from one function of the actant to another function.

Shifting from one function to another, entails opening and closing 'black-boxes,' which are themselves operations by which imaginations acquire or lose (corpo)reality. Black-boxing (or closing a black-box) is an operation whereby a set of complex relations, more or less forcefully, come to be simplified into a few well defined parameters (Callon 1981). For example, the imagination-Indians in late 19th century Paraguay circulated through a chain of heterogenous actants like the ones I mentioned above (including anthropologists; museums, etc.). This imagination was more or less unproblematic and simple(fied) as long as the conventions, resulting from contestations and negotiations among those heterogenous actants which held the imagination-Indians together, stayed more or less stable. The stability of the conventions, in turn, allowed black-boxing (occluding) the presence of the network and the operations necessary for the circulation/imagination-Indians to exist. Thus, Indians appeared as an independent entity which existed by itself and not by virtue of the relations that sustained it; that is, Indians were made into an authorized imagination. Briefly then, an authorized imagination is an actant whose complex links to other actants have been occluded and, thus, appears as an independent and self-contained entity, that is, as reality out there.

An imagination does not achieve the status of 'authorized imagination' once and for all. As soon as the circulation that gives life to an imagination become less stable, the black-box is disassembled (or opened) revealing again the complexity of the networks

and operations involved in authorizing (i.e., making corporeal) an imagination. When this occurs, those networks and operations involved in authorizing an imagination become less usable in instrumental ways. In other words, they cannot any longer be treated as an independent, self-contained entity. Thus, continued successful performances are needed to produce and sustain authorized imaginations, this is because the stability of the circulations which give life to them is always frail and reversible in the face of intended or unintended contestations.

As I tell my story in this ethnography, the details of how imaginations are authorized will become more clear. In the meantime, the explanations provided should suffice to stress the notion that reality and ways of imagining reality are inextricably implicated with each other. Having been clearly stated, this should guard me from being misinterpreted as committing either of the twin 'distortions' of Cartesian dualism: the naive assumption that there is an extra-discursive, independent reality; and the nihilist pretension that for humans (at least) there is no other reality than the effects of language games.²⁷

As I pointed out, considering all elements of a universe as actants that relate to actants renders everything symmetrical. However, this must be understood as a methodological principle. It is not that there are no divisions, distinctions, differences and hierarchies, it is that these are considered as effects or outcomes of performances, not as ontological givens (see Law 1999:3).²⁸ Yet if entire universes are conceived as networks of relations between entities that are themselves networks of relations we find the problem that, theoretically at least, networks are without limits (Strathern 1996:23). How, then, do potentially endless networks come to have limits and distinctions within them? What delineates the boundaries of an actant? How do we identify them?

Following Derrida, Strathern uses 'cutting' as a metaphor "for the way one phenomenon stops the flow of others" within networks (Strathern 1996:22). In one of the examples she uses, Strathern shows how a potentially ever-expanding network of scientists which was related to an invention was cut by another network, the one constituting ownership. Thus, at the same time that this interference creates a boundary, dividing who do and who do not belong to the network constituting the invention, it also delineates the boundaries converting a heterogeneous network/actant into an 'invention,'

²⁷The idea that reality is the effect of language games will have less relevance in my subsequent discussion because it is not the dominant understanding of reality in governmental circles. Nevertheless, that I do not focus centrally on it must not be taken as a signal that I am in agreement with this view.

²⁸I must clarify that 'performance' here does not always imply a willful intention. Although this is sometimes the case, my idea of performance also includes those surprising and unexpected effects of relations that give 'birth' to unforeseen entities.

that is, a network in manipulable form (Strathern 1996:23-25). In short, networks interfering with networks do not only extend each other through their mutual connection. Rather, they can also establish stoppages or turning points for each other, thus creating the 'boundaries' that make an actant distinguishable from another. This brings me back to my definition of modernity.

The subsequent discussion will be organized by reference to actants/imaginings that emerge at the point of convergence between different networks/universes that, for simplicity's sake, I will call 'the world' and 'the *yrmo*.' The world and the *yrmo* then are different universes that, although not separated, will be contrasted. As I mentioned, it is only through a focus on their mutual points of contact that we may speak of different networks. Thus, only through my analysis of the points of contact between these universes will their mutual boundaries emerge. By defining modernity as the relations of certain institutions, practices and values with the modern myth described above, I set the pattern of analysis that I will use to follow these points of contact. The pattern is to relate the relation between governmental practices and that which we take to be the truth to a third element, ontology, the unstated but implicit understanding of how reality is constituted. In this way I will be able to follow this pattern and see what shape it takes in relation to the modern ontology, what shape it takes in relation to the Yshiro ontology, and also the shape it takes at the point where the threads stretching from these ontologies meet, thus, producing connections, stoppages or turning points. By following the changing patterns between governmental practices, truth and ontologies, I hope to show: how these different patterns make up different experiences of 'being in the world'; what are the mutual relations between these experiences; and how some of them become dominant or suppress the others.²⁹

Overview of the Work and Re-statement of Intent

Before I begin to tell my 'story of the present,' let me sum up some of the ideas presented in this introduction and restate the goals set up in the preface in this light. I have argued that governmentality can be seen as a relation between the practice of government and that which is taken to be truth. In turn, this relation is shaped by critique as a task of experts. As long as critique is performed within the modern regime of truth, it informs governmental practices that reproduce such a regime and its underlying ontology. Yet I also pointed out that as it reproduces itself, modernity changes itself creating

²⁹Related to Heidegger's use of the term, I refer to the experience of being-in-the-world strictly in order to indicate the ways in which people narrate to themselves and to others their condition of being human, and how they embody those narrations. Of course, although they can be very idiosyncratic, these narrations do not emerge in a vacuum but emerge in social milieus.

opportunities for transformations that might produce new governmental rationalities, perhaps less oppressive than the dominant one. In any case, I surmised that in order to embrace the opportunities and avoid some of the perils of these transformations we need to base critiques on non-modern ontologies. For this task I have found inspiration on Yshiro myth-history, which combined with ideas borrowed from semiotics and science studies, will allow me to tell my story of the present from a non-modern standpoint.

I have structured this work after the Yshiro tripartite conception of myth-history. Thus, in addition to this Introduction, there are three parts, each with a brief introductory text, and a conclusion.

In the first two chapters that make Part I: *Puruhle*/Genealogies, I present a historical overview which spans a hundred years. It mainly focuses on how, and with what consequences, a governmentality grounded in the dominant modern ontology was deployed in the Paraguayan Chaco until the 1970s. The historical overview however extends to the early 1990s in order to give the reader a general idea of how changing agendas of development have contributed to produce different social actors who will be central to my subsequent discussion.

In the following three chapters of Part II: *Porowo*/Moralities, I go back in history and narrow my focus to discuss in more detail how, since the late 1960s, the deployment through state-driven development of the governmentality described in the first part began to fuel several points of resistance across various geographies (including the Yshiro communities). These points of resistance took the form of transnational human rights and environmental movements, among others. I will argue that these struggles were central to the emergence of a transnational network of development, human rights and environmentalism. This network challenged the governmentality deployed through state-driven development and, unwittingly, contributed to shape the new dominant neoliberal governmentality.

The critical history developed throughout the first and second parts of my dissertation set the stage for the last four chapters of Part III: *Azle*/Translations, where I pursue a case-based analysis of neoliberal governmental rationality. I focus on how this governmentality is being deployed through Prodechaco, the development project I mentioned in the preface. I also discuss how, and with what results, the Yshiro people are struggling with it. I show that within the constraints which their subordinated position has allowed them, the Yshiro have managed to manipulate the designs of this governmental rationality for their own purposes. Yet in showing how they have done this, I also shed light on the dynamics that sustain the continued subordination of most Yshiro to other national and transnational forces. I argue that the translation of the Yshiro's own views of themselves and their 'being-in-the-world' into modern categories is one of the ways in which this subordination is reproduced.

As Yshiro intellectuals have taught me, stories have purposes; mine has four which have been inspired by a number of scholars whose works have interesting points of overlap. The first purpose is connected to the works of Elizabeth Povinelli (1993, 2001)

and it involves narrating how the imaginations Indians, nature and development have changed in the last hundred years in Paraguay. Povinelli (1993) has skilfully highlighted the productive and dialectical engagement between, on the one hand, Australian Aborigines' notions of themselves and the land and, on the other hand, state's discourses about Aborigines and the land. She has shown how the contemporary terrains in which Aborigines struggle for land and other rights have been produced in that dialectical encounter. This kind of analysis is largely missing in the literature on Paraguay, and ethnographic analyses covering long processes of transformation in the field of inter-ethnic politics are simply non-existent. In this sense Povinelli's work has been key in directing me towards the fuzzy line where the *yrmo* and the world meet as a key location where contemporary inter-ethnic politics emerges. But, in addition to bringing this kind of analysis to the Paraguayan case, I intend to carry it forward into the nitty gritty processes by which development agendas have been changed by the dialectical engagement taking place in the field of inter-ethnic politics, and in turn to explore how new agendas of development change this field as they are being deployed. Here is where the analysis of inter-ethnic politics in Paraguay connects with Arturo Escobar's work on the transformation of development agendas.

Escobar's (1995, 1996) analysis of development as a form of governmentality inspired me to take changes in the role of Indigenous peoples in development agendas as the initial point of entry into my own research. However, by concentrating not only on changes in development discourses and practices in a larger scale (as Escobar did) but also by focussing part of my analysis on a concrete development project, I add nuance and richness to the understanding of how development agendas (and nature and Indigenous peoples' role in them) change over time, and across different geographies. Yet, I also intend to extend this analysis beyond the circumscribed space of development discourses and practices, for my second purpose is to show how these transformations in development connect to the emergence of neoliberal governmentality. By showing this connection, I also seek to address what is specific in this governmentality, what technologies of control it produces, and how people relate to it.

The third purpose of this dissertation is to build on a little developed aspect of Michel Foucault's (1991a,b) work on governmentality, that is the interrelations between changes in modern governmentality and changes in modern ontology. Although there was an implicit connection between Foucault's work on governmentality and his early work on the modern 'regime of truth' (mainly the *The Order of Things*), scholars that have followed on Foucault's steps to study governmentality (e.g., Burchell et al 1991; Barry et al 1996) have shown very little interest in further developing this line of inquiry. By developing this Foucauldian line of inquiry I hope to illustrate why I say that in reproducing and transforming itself through governmentality, modernity has also created new possibilities for the emergence of other governmentalities, some more promising than others.

Finally, the fourth purpose is to exercise a form of critique based on an ontology

that takes indistinction, fluidity and open-endedness as the back-bone of reality. My hope is that by producing knowledge on this basis I might contribute to transforming the dominant regime of truth and its associated governmentality. The works of Bruno Latour (1993, 1999) and Donna Haraway (1991, 1997) have been enormously influential in the overall design of how my project tackles this fourth purpose. Latour's critical work on the foundations of modern dichotomies (paradigmatically expressed in the nature/society divide) and his efforts to sharpen a form of analysis of 'scientific facts' that bypasses these dichotomies have cleared much of the way which I have travelled in writing this work. Yet, I take this kind of analysis into a new terrain, the terrain of 'political or common sense facts' or imaginations; a terrain in which, in contrast to science, facts never quite coagulate into largely undisputed authorized imaginations. Furthermore, I combine this kind of analysis with Donna Haraway's ideas which shift us from thinking of individuals (human or non-humans) as isolated from the 'world' to thinking of them as nodes on a network/world. In this way, I have been able to conceive of imaginations/actants as actively producing themselves as they manipulate the networks of which they are a part. But Haraway's work has also been critical in helping me to conceive my own situatedness as that of a 'talking node' which recognizes his connections to other nodes as his own condition of possibility. By adding to these ideas the insight from Yshiro myth-history, that storytelling is central in making the networks in which we are entangled, I hope to open up an alternative way to situate the enunciating subject within social sciences' narratives.

Given that the last purpose permeates my whole endeavour, I want to say some final words regarding critique as a (non-modern) story of the present. As Yshiro myth-history eloquently shows, storytelling is a distinction-making operation that contributes to produce/perform more or less (corpo)real actants and realities, including their own storyteller and his/her narration. This recursiveness is part of what I try to convey by using the three times/dimensions of the Yshiro myth-history (*puruhle*, *porowo* and *azle*) as a template to organize this ethnography.

Through the first part, *Puruhle*/Genealogies, I show how new imaginations emerged from older ones as these interacted with each other, often in conflicting ways. In this way, I trace the genealogies of the diverse imaginations grounding the moralities which I discuss in the chapters corresponding to the second part, *Porowo*/Moralities. In these chapters, I highlight how the imaginations that I analyse, as well as my own analysis, derive from moral perspectives, and that these perspectives (and my own positioning) are the result of the processes described in *Puruhle*/Genealogies. But I also show that the genealogies traced in *Puruhle*/Genealogies result from my moral perspective. The recursiveness of the storyline sets the ground for understanding the dissertation and specially the discussion of the chapters in part three, *Azle*/Translations, as a critique/story of the present that is itself part of the ongoing struggles analysed/narrated.

Although the ideas of some Yshiro intellectuals have been very influential in my thinking and writing of this work, I must warn the reader against taking this ethnography

as an exercise of ventriloquy. It is not my central aim either to represent Yshiro subjectivities or to describe how the world might look from their perspective. If Yshiro voices at moments appear tamed, particularly in the first part, it is because I do not pretend to claim that this is the story of 'the Yshiro' or even some of them. The story I am about to tell must be understood as a *puruhle* narrative in which bits and bites of information are arranged (as 'beads and seeds in a necklace') into a storyline that has a purpose. How this purpose has taken shape will become clear as I tell my story but in the meanwhile I must stress that this is a story told from my own perspective and purpose as these have been affected by my interaction with some, and only some, Yshiro intellectuals. Indeed, when early on in my writing a female colleague made me notice that, given my longer interactions with male intellectuals, this was a very male oriented story, I fretted for a time trying to cover 'all the basis', so to speak. Then, I realized that in this way I was betraying the very intent of this work. In effect, the partiality of the story does not invalidate it, on the contrary its value resides in that it thoroughly assumes partiality, and uses it as an opportunity to potentially open up to readers the dialogue that I have had with some Yshiro intellectuals and which has been so inspiring for me. In this sense, this work is intended to be both, an example of how to take some steps (perhaps clumsy) toward unlearning the modern myth, and an exploration of the possibilities offered by embracing the situatedness of the 'knowing subject' as a fruitful epistemological and ethical ground for politics.

PART I

PURUHLE/GENEALOGIES

oa pehrtit je elehert pe (at its beginning it was not like now) – Phrase marking the beginning of a *puruhle* narrative.

Classifying the Indians of South America within a natural order is one of the most challenging problems of ethnography . . .
– Introductory epigraph to one of Guido Boggiani's ethnographic works (Boggiani 1900)

A few Yshiro elders recall that metallic objects came into existence through the encounter between the Yshiro *puruhle* and bearded *anabso* (others/foreigners) who had dogs and wore metallic clothes. Perhaps the story refers to the expeditions the Spanish sent during the early days of the conquest in search of a way to reach Peru from the Atlantic coast. However, it is hard to say since this recollection is just a fleeting memory. In any case, the Yshiro do not recall any other direct contacts with 'bearded foreigners' until many of the latter began to settle in the former's territories in the final decades of the 19th century.

I begin with this memory because, being a memory on the brink of forgetfulness, it sets the tone for a *puruhle* narrative, where genealogies, rather than origins, matter the most. Consequently, it is fitting to begin with a genealogy that reaches as far back as memory can go, although without assuming that this is the point of origin. While this memory provides us a temporal frame, the fuzziness that characterizes Yshiro *puruhle* narratives, implies that I take just a cursory look into the historical processes that immediately preceded the return of, and permanent occupation of the Yshiro territory by the descendants of the 'bearded foreigners.'

As more expeditious routes were soon established between Peru and the Atlantic, Spanish exploration of the Chaco declined quickly after the 1530s. From then on, and until the end of the 19th century, 'White' settlements remained at the borders of the Chaco (Stunnenberg 1993:14-25). As we saw in the Introduction, in the hiatus between that early encounter and the more recent ones, the bearded men became 'modern' through a process intimately linked to the conquest of the 'New World' (see Blaut 1993; Dussel

1995; Albanese 1996; Mignolo 2000).

A more immediate antecedent to the colonization of the Chaco was the creation in the early 19th century of independent republics by the descendants of the 16th century explorers who claimed to be rulers of the land. By the second half of the 19th century these republics were still struggling to define their political structures and geographical boundaries. The republic of Paraguay, for example, had vehemently defended its autonomy against the governments of Buenos Aires who intended to annex it to what later would become Argentina.

While the Criollos (descendants of Spanish born in the colonies) obtained independence from the Spanish crown during the first two decades of the 19th century, most of the republics that they formed were besieged by internal turmoil until the end of the century. Paraguay was an exception to this. In this republic, Spanish rule was terminated without extended military campaigns. The government that represented the Spanish crown was quickly replaced by the autocratic government of Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia (1814 - 1840), which was followed by the autocratic government of the Lopez family (1841- 1870) (see Williams 1979). This prolonged period of stability meant that by the 1860s, Paraguay had become a powerful state. In effect, under the Lopez rule, the country had embarked on a remarkable process of state-led endogenous development of several key industries, ranging from the production of textiles to metal instruments for agriculture and the military, and means of communication such as steam boats and railways. Paraguay's strengths, self-sufficiency and restricted trade were perceived as a threat by the neighboring governments and as an affront to the hegemonic, British-backed ideas of *laissez faire* government that, at the time, dominated among those neighbours (Weaver 2000:25-54).

In 1865, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay allied and went to war against Paraguay. By the end of the war in 1870, Paraguay's economy was in ruins and its population decimated (see Whigham and Potthast 1999). A puppet government responding to the allies took over the running of the country after the war. This government was composed of Paraguayan exiles who had fought on the victors' side and who brought with them the liberal theories of political rule dominant at the times. These ideas would guide the governmental policy regarding the 'integration of the Chaco.'¹ What did these conceptions of rule entail?

As indicated in the Introduction, in the dominant modern ontology nature has been perceived both as a foundational category, the source of authenticity, truth and morality, but also as an inert resource to be used at the discretion of 'man.' According to the last perception, almost any kind of human intervention upon nature is legitimate in the pursuit

¹Given its difficult geographical conditions (e.g., very few visible sources of water for the foreigners) and the active resistance of its Indigenous inhabitants to White settlement, the Chaco remained outside Criollo control until the late 19th century.

of progress. In contrast, from the perspective of the liberal theories of rule that the Paraguayan governing circles wanted to apply in their country at the turn of the 19th century, interventions upon society were seen as more problematic. This is because liberalism had very specific responses to what, following Foucault (1991a), I refer to as the modern problematic of government. This involves a particularly modern way of conceiving society and its government.

Society as a foundational imagination of the modern ontology stands in relation to 'nature' as subject to object. However, society does not always play the role of the subject. In relations of rule, society often plays the role of object.² Indeed, since perhaps Machiavelli's *The Prince*, society (or the principality, the kingdom, the nation, etc.) stands as an object of government for, and in a relation of exteriority to, the subject who governs it (the prince, the king, the state). Conceiving of relations of rule from this perspective set the ground for a 'problematic of government,' a form of interrogating relations of rule in terms of the conditions which must exist in order to render them legitimate. In this case the question is, under what conditions can a governing subject legitimately rule over an autonomous object of government.³ Liberalism, as other modern political theories and philosophies, can be seen as a particular response to this problematic of government.

Early liberal thinking initially postulated that the domain of economic transactions or market was a spontaneous order which delivered the 'public good' through autonomous mechanisms that were invisible not only to individuals involved in those transactions but also to the sovereign. Liberalism emerged as a doctrine of 'limitation and wise restraint' by the state based on the assertion that the sovereign has limited capacity to know and intervene beneficially in the self-ordered and autonomous domain of the market (see Gordon 1991:14-22; Burchell 1996:22-25). Thus, the state should *laissez-faire*. Later, this view was extended as to include not only the market but civil society as well. However, there was another thread of liberal thinking that, drawing on the Physiocratic tradition, saw governmental interventions as appropriate as long as they followed the 'natural' dispositions of the object of government (Drayton 2000:70). Of course, in this version of liberal thought it is implicit that 'natural' dynamics can be known by the governing subject (for the connections between Physiocratic and liberal ideas see Herlitz 1997).

²I am aware that 'society,' as it came to be known from the 18th century onward, did not exist before (see Donzelot 1979). However, I use the word 'society' as a short cut to refer to that which stood as 'the other' in relation to the sovereign.

³Note that this problematic of government is intrinsically associated to the previously discussed 'modern problematic' of how one might obtain knowledge in a context in which word and world are separated by an ontological cleft (see page 19).

In Paraguay, as elsewhere, state's policies swung between different degrees of restraint and intervention. Which attitude prevailed depended on who controlled nodal points of decision-making in different moments and what they were trying to accomplish.⁴ Interestingly, this swinging between restraint and intervention in society was not replicated when the objects of intervention were Indigenous societies. In this case, the attitude resembled more closely to the one adopted when the object of intervention was nature: almost any intervention was considered legitimate as long as the aim was progress. I argue that this attitude resulted from the imagination-Indians having been closely associated with the imagination-nature. Thus, Indians had the status of quasi-objects which were open to be moulded by the Promethean designs of 'modern man.' As nature and Indians occupied the object pole in Cartesian dualism, they were excluded from the problematic of government. That is, the rule of 'modern man' over Indians and nature was not systematically questioned in terms of what made it legitimate, at least not until the late 1960s.⁵ Given that the issue of the legitimacy of ruling over Indians and nature was not part of the governmental preoccupations as society was, I will call this form of rule 'restricted governance.'

In the following two chapters I will fast forward complex events that span more than a hundred years to show how a series of actants/imaginings and scenarios, which will recur in my subsequent discussions, came into being. Much like a *puruhle* narrative, this story will have many imprecisions and leave many questions unanswered. Yet it will make visible a previous state from which we can identify a change which, in turn, will serve as the starting point for my discussion of the emergence of neoliberal governmentality.

In Chapter One, I focus on the merging of the *yrimo* (the Yshiro universe) and the world (the settlers' universe). I will focus on how certain points of convergence,

⁴It must be understood that in practice when the governing elites spoke of 'society' as a domain from which the state should restraint itself from intervening, they were referring to their peers. That is, society as the opposite of nature was represented by elite bourgeois males, the enunciating self. Thus, the status of 'society' was denied to Indians, as it was to women, poor people, and often to other bourgeois males who sustained different ideas than those in the government. In practice, then *laissez-faire* applied to a select group of people who governed the country.

⁵Dussel (1995:63-65) has argued that, regarding the Indians, the question about the legitimacy of Spanish rule over them was paradigmatically represented by the controversy between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in the 16th century. One could argue that once the debate was settled in favor of Sepúlveda's view that it was natural and just to fight and conquer the Indians, the question of the legitimacy of ruling over them lost centrality in governmental circles.

operating in tandem with each other and involving conflict as well as cooperation, were seized by the newcomers as opportunities to subordinate the Yshiro. The analysis will highlight how Europeans' authorized imaginations and the Yshiro's authorized imaginations contested each other, and how the results of this mutual contestation spawned new authorized imaginations that were black-boxed through violence. In Chapter Two, I focus on the emergence of state-driven development and how by creating new points of convergence, it modified the quality of interconnections between the *yrmo* and the world. In portraying the specificity of state-driven development in Paraguay, I will show how networks of patronage were extended into the Yshiro communities, and how this shaped the terrain of contemporary inter-ethnic politics.

Briefly, in this part I will describe how the designs of 'restricted governance' were put into practice through the successive agendas of *laissez-faire* progress and state-driven development. I will discuss how the Yshiro's own imaginations of themselves, their relations to the newcomers and the *yrmo*, informed their initial responses to these designs and how the mutual interactions between these diverse imaginations engendered new actants/imaginations that, as we will see in the second part, have become central to neoliberal governmentality and my critique of it.

CHAPTER ONE: *LAISSEZ-FAIRE* PROGRESS

Yshiro stories about the coming of the Whites focus on events related to the sharing of food (see Blaser and Keiwe 2002). This focus makes sense if one considers that, according to the recollections of the Yshiro elders, the regulation of the sharing of food was the most visible way in which social life embodied the *Esnwherta au'oso*. Indeed, food sharing, based on the complementarity of taboos corresponding to different age ranks, genders and clans, located a person's place in the web of social relations. A person of a certain age and clan would refrain from consuming particular parts of certain animals that corresponded to a person of another age, clan or gender. The strict observation of food taboos was one of the ways in which the negative element of *wozosh* was managed.

Although by all accounts they were extremely detailed and extensive, it is important to keep in mind that food taboos were only one of the most visible expressions of the social labour the Yshiro *porowo* invested in the management of *wozosh*. According to many contemporary Yshiro, the social arrangements originated after the encounter with the *Anabsero* were characterized by the severe vigilance, some would call it tyranny, of the elders over males and females of younger generations. Keiwe, an elder over eighty years old who passed away in 1996 told me once,

The Yshiro *porowo* have many *agalio* (advise/rules) for their youth, they don't want them to eat this or that, they don't want them to fuck old people, they don't want them to talk nonsense, they don't want them to walk at night, they don't want them to go alone into the bush . . . those elders were very strict. If the youth do not follow their advice they warn them once, twice, three times, then they kill them (Field notes, interview with Keiwe, 14/06/95).

Asked why the ancient elders were so strict, most contemporary elders answer that if they did not kill the offender disgrace would fall not only over him/her but over the entire residential group.

While the strict vigilance by the elders assured the proper management of *wozosh*, it also created tensions between generations. Food restrictions were progressively lifted as an individual aged, yet there is indirect evidence (in stories as well as in the ways in which contemporary Yshiro narrate how their ancestors lived), that some younger people experienced the restrictions imposed on them by the elders as unjust. These tensions, under critical circumstances such as the scarcity of food, produced schisms (see Blaser and Keiwe in press). Indeed, a quarrel between elders and younger people over the consumption of food is one of the reasons given to explain why the Tomaraho and the

Ebitoso splintered from each other and became enemies (Cordeu 1989a:72). This underlying inter-generational tension came to play an important role in how the Yshiro related to the newcomers. This is especially the case with the Ebitoso, who actively sought to establish relations with the Whites. The Tomaraho, in contrast, avoided contact with the settlers until the 1940s. The reasons for these different attitudes are complex but are in part connected with the relations that existed between the Ebitoso and the Tomaraho by the time the Whites began to settle in the area.

Since the early 19th century, the Mbya-Caduveo people from the (now) Brazilian side of the Paraguay river obtained horses and fire arms from the Portuguese. With these technologies on their side they began to raid the Indigenous groups in the Chaco taking captives that would serve as servants to them and the Portuguese. The Ebitoso fought against the Mbya-Caduveo with mixed results and eventually a working arrangement emerged between them. The arrangement was that the Ebitoso would raid other groups and exchange with the Mbya-Caduveo the captives they obtained for the trade items they wanted. The Tomaraho were one of the groups that became a target of the Ebitoso's raids and they thus retreated into the Chaco moving away from the Paraguay river, which was where the Whites eventually started to settle in the 1880s.

Many Ebitoso' stories tell of betrayals and ambushes while trading with the Mbya-Caduveo, and thus show that the agreement between these two groups was not always honored by the parties. Yet they also show that while their relationship was at times antagonistic and at other times cooperative, there always existed renewed attempts to establish some sort of reciprocity. The effects of the 'agreement' between the Ebitoso and the Mbya-Caduveo were an increase in the importance of the Ebitoso *polotak* (war leaders), and an incipient stratification of the Ebitoso society as the *polotak* started to retain some of the Tomaraho captives to work for them (for the relations between Ebitoso and Mbya-Caduveo see Cordeu 1993, 1994a). The experience and the effects of the Ebitoso relations with the Mbya-Caduveo are important because, together with the inter-generational tensions ingrained in the Yshiro's social arrangements, they informed the ways in which the Ebitoso related to the Whites when they began to settle in their territories.¹

¹Indeed, the Ebitoso's relation with the Mbya-Caduveo came to complicate their inter-generational tensions in several ways. For example, it added an extra element to this inter-generational tension by increasing the influence of *polotak* who were younger than elders. It also added to the tension by the incorporation into the Ebitoso society of captives whose lower status cut across the system of age ranks. Apparently by the time the Whites began to settle the area, the Ebitoso were still struggling with these exacerbated tensions (see Cordeu 1989c).

Imagining the Paraguayan Chaco and the Chaco's Indians

Although the Chaco region had been explored by the Spanish and Criollos since the 16th century, neither of them succeeded in establishing strongholds within this area until the late 19th century. In the early 1880s, the Argentinian state launched military campaigns to 'incorporate' the portion of the Chaco which it claimed as national territory but that was still under Indigenous peoples' control. In contrast, neither Paraguay nor Bolivia were in condition to attempt similar military campaigns on their claimed portions of the Chaco. In effect, both countries ended the last decades of the 19th century recovering from their defeats in international wars.²

The geo-strategic and economic situations in which these countries found themselves after these wars shaped their perceptions (and policies) about the Chaco.³ Bolivian governments saw in the Chaco a way to the Atlantic via the Paraguay river, whereas Paraguayan governments saw in the Chaco land-holdings that could be sold in order to pay war-debts and to rebuild the nation from ruin. The expansion of free trade policies, backed by British imperialism, and a growing international demand for raw materials also inspired these governmental perspectives and fuelled a rapid process of expansion of their extractive economies into so called 'marginal areas' (Weaver 2000; Bartolome 1998). Thus, although they claimed rights over a territory that was clearly controlled by Indigenous peoples, both states perceived the Chaco as the key for national progress.

Paraguay ended the war against Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay (1865 - 1870) in a state of extreme vulnerability (see Abente 1989). The loss of population as a consequences of the war, conjoined with racist ideas dominant among the governing elites of the time, compelled the Paraguayan government to promote European immigration and colonization of the country as a means to achieving 'progress' (see Weaver 2000:68; Schelling 2000:11). However, dominant paradigms of *laissez-faire* government meant that 'progress' was expected to occur on the basis of the state providing lands at low prices and without any further governmental intervention. As a result, the leading agents of 'progress' in the Paraguayan Chaco were a few foreign companies (from Argentina, the United Kingdom, Germany and the US) and independent entrepreneurs variously related to them, who in a short period of time owned almost all the land in the area (Pastore 1972:237-244; Abente 1989; Borrini 1997:19-40).

²In its war with Chile in 1883, Bolivia lost its connection to the Pacific ocean and became a landlocked country.

³As my focus here is the annexation of the Yshiro territory by Paraguay I will not enter into details about the Argentinian and Bolivian processes of annexation of the region, unless the argument so requires.

These foreign companies and entrepreneurs, mostly interested in the timber and tannin that could be extracted from the Chaco forest, set up their factories and logging camps along the Western margin of the Paraguay river (see Romero 1977; Kleinpenning 1992: 251-281; Borrini 1997:31-54. See Map 4).⁴ As they quickly started to expand further north, they came to meet another 'spearhead' of 'progress' coming from Bolivia. In effect, Bolivian governments also established contracts with private explorers and entrepreneurs who proposed plans to build a road and a railway that would connect the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz de La Sierra with the Paraguay River (see Bravo 1879; Suarez Arana 1919). The meeting point was in Ebitoso territory, around the area of *nekauta* (see Map 5). In this area, entrepreneurs coming from Bolivia founded the settlement of Puerto Pacheco around 1885 (Suarez Arana 1919). In 1888, the Paraguayan government took over the settlement, renamed it Bahia Negra and installed a small garrison (see Ayala 1929: 84-85; Ibarra 1930) that retained control over the area until the dispute between Paraguay and Bolivia over the Chaco was settled in the mid 1930s.

Although both Paraguay and Bolivia asserted competing rights to possess the same area of the Chaco, it seems that entrepreneurs and explorers, the majority of whom were Europeans (from Spain, Italy, England and Germany), did not engage in these controversies but rather tended to accommodate with whomever controlled the settlement of Puerto Pacheco/Bahia Negra. Among these entrepreneurs was Guido Boggiani, a young Italian who had made a name for himself among the intellectual and artistic circles of his country. Because of his triple role as entrepreneur, artist and ethnographer, Boggiani constitutes a very good entry point from which to understand the complex and ambivalent ways in which the Chaco and the Indians were imagined by the early non-indigenous settlers.

Modernist Tropes and Changing Imaginations

According to his biographer, Puccini (1999:225-272), Boggiani travelled to 'faraway places' in search of inspiration, knowledge and profits. In 1887, he arrived to Argentina and later moved to Paraguay where he found 'exotic natural surroundings' which served as inspiration for his paintings. These natural surroundings also provided him with an opportunity to make profit trading wild animal' hides. Soon, Boggiani made acquaintance with other European entrepreneurs who had begun to take advantage of the other 'opportunities' offered by the Chaco (Leigheb 1986; see Majavacca and Perez Acosta 1930: 63-65). In 1892, Boggiani established logging camps in Ynishta and Karcha Bahlut, which he named Puerto Esperanza and Puerto 14 de Mayo respectively. The first

⁴Before synthetic substitutes were produced, tannin was extracted from certain woods which were abundant in the Chaco. This product was used to convert animal hides into leathers.

was thirty and the second fifteen km. distant from Bahia Negra (at the time Puerto Pacheco).

While living with the 'Chamacoco Indians' (Yshiro) that worked in his logging camps, Boggiani developed an interest in ethnography. During a visit to Italy in 1894, Boggiani held a series of conferences about the Chamacoco and their land at the Italian Geographical Society and the Anthropological Association of Firenze. In these conferences, he described the Chaco in ambivalent terms. For example he began his presentation saying that,

Mystery surrounds these flat, extended lands covered with a marvellous mantle of greenery . . . The bad luck that has befallen those audacious travellers who . . . found their death at the hands of the Indians or who were overwhelmed by hardships . . . has left these immense forests in the most primitive state, comparable only to the most remote of prehistoric times . . . Numerous tribes of savages inhabit the Chaco's immense forests, and they are another obstacle added to the natural difficulties that a green desert poses to exploration, making this region resistant to civilization . . . While Argentina, by deed of love or by deed of force, has been subjecting the savage hordes to the new system of life, Paraguay and Bolivia, due to idleness, lack of means or because they have other more important businesses at hand, have remained indifferent or inoperative in this region (Boggiani 1894: 9-12).

These harsh images were countered by Boggiani's other descriptions of the Chaco as a place of 'silence, grandiose solitude, freedom without limits and endless peace' and the Chamacoco as people who developed great affection for him and who readily joined his logging camp to work for him (Boggiani 1894:27-31).

Boggiani's contradictory portrayals of the Chaco and its inhabitants reveal two sets of tensions. The first tension is related to modernist aesthetic conventions, underlining the modern subject's "contradictory engagement with [nature], [as something] as much pestilential as paradisiacal" (Arnold 2000:8). The temporal dynamic of modernization was perceived by some Europeans as a progress toward a golden age and by others as the progressive distancing from paradise (see Arnold 1996:10). More often, as in the case of Boggiani, Whites deployed these contrasting tropes on modernization side by side without feeling any sense of contradiction. Yet aside from aesthetic conventions, where romanticism had a space of expression, at the end of the 19th century the dominant trope in governmental circles was the one depicting progress as a positive process. However, and this is the second set of tensions underlying Boggiani's contradictory images, the role that Indians would have in this process was still not clear. I will examine this in more detail.

Boggiani's contradictory images reflect the very process by which the Chaco and its inhabitants were starting to become 'known' in the modern sense of the word. That is,

they reflect an ongoing process in which either 'by deed of force or by deed of love,' nature and Indians were being made to surrender their 'otherness' to become malleable material for 'modern man.' In effect, for Boggiani, the Chaco represented a natural order 'comparable to the most remote of prehistoric times' from which modern man had succeeded in lifting himself up (Boggiani 1894:10). This untamed natural order of the Chaco was depicted as a green desert, full of dangers.⁵ Yet as Europeans were taking control of the Chaco, the threatening 'otherness' of its nature and inhabitants was being tamed and assigned its proper place within the 'story of modernity.' In this sense, it is telling that the epigraph that introduced one of Boggiani's works, and that I quoted in the introduction to this part, describes ethnography's task as the classification of the Indians of South America within the natural order. As dominant evolutionist ideas had it, part of the 'manly' effort required to 'inseminate' (civilize) the 'virgin lands' of the Chaco was precisely to classify this natural order and master the laws that ruled it.⁶

Then, as effective control over the territories occupied by Indigenous peoples was secured, European entrepreneurs began to perceive Paraguay as 'that very garden of South America' (Naylor 2000). Images of the Chaco as a green desert began to also be displaced by others in which the Chaco was depicted as the "salvation for the forty million Europeans that [were] called to contribute to its progress with intelligence, capital and work" (Cominges, cited in Velasco del Real 1892:177). Concomitantly, with this change of perception about the Chaco, Indians began to be imagined differently. According to the Spanish entrepreneur Juan de Cominges, Indians were often misunderstood and misrepresented; they were not an obstacle to progress but "the indispensable and economical assistance needed to set the basis of civilization" (Cominges, cited in Velasco del Real 1892:177). Obviously, Cominges' view of the Indians does not reflect a change from a 'misrepresentation' to an accurate representation but, rather, a difference in the economy of production of the imagination-Indians. The imagination that construed Indians as obstacles to 'civilization' was suited to a process of military expansion (similar to the one promoted by the Argentinian state, see Lois 1998) but not for the process that was taking place in Paraguay. It is precisely these tensions between these different ways of imagining Indians that underlie Boggiani's contradictory images. Yet the power of these specific imaginations depended on how they were black-boxed.

⁵The imagining of the Chaco as a green desert attests to the Eurocentric conception that a space without modern culture and moralities, the measuring-stick of full humanity, is purely natural and not really inhabited (see Wright 1997).

⁶The masculinist tropes in relation to the conquest of the 'virgin lands' of the Chaco are ubiquitous throughout the records of the early settlers and explorers and obviously respond to the modern view that associates nature with femininity and passivity (see Merchant 1983).

Black-boxing 'Natural Love'

The perception of Indians as malleable material, which could be used in the pursuit of progress, helped to conciliate potentially contradictory ways in which Europeans imagined Indians. For example, entrepreneurs imagined Indians as the 'indispensable and economical assistance' for their capitalist enterprises in the Chaco; whereas European missionaries imagined Indians as a 'material' susceptible to be uplifted closer to God.⁷ It is not surprising, then, that when in the 1920s, the Catholic Church attempted to establish a mission to 'serve' the Yshiro, this undertaking was likened to a capitalist enterprise's exploitation of natural resources:

Adjacent to the tannin industries, implanted by capitalist entrepreneurs . . . to exploit the . . . virgin forest, emerges at last an *enterprise of souls* ready to save so many ignorant savages from the Devil's claws, and bring them to faith, civilization and Christendom (Alarcón y Cañedo and Pittini 1924:85-86. Emphasis in original).⁸

In these imaginations, Indians were nature-like entities characterized by a lack of volition and as such, their actions could not be more than the expression of their nature. Of course, there was no doubt that this 'nature' was knowable for the Europeans. For example, in a letter from a priest, Father Turricia, to his superiors, Boggiani is quoted as saying in a conference that "the Chamacoco, as all Indians, have a great defect, they are absolutely ignorant of everything that lies beyond the circumscribed circle of their primitive customs," and a few lines later, "the Indian recognizes the superiority of the civilized man; but he is able to distinguish between one kind of [White] man from another and does not submit to just anyone because of the [Whites'] higher civilization . . . the Indian recognizes and respects the authority of those who, as he knows, given their position have the right to command"(cited in Heyn 1996:88). It is in this context that we can understand why, in telling of the events that followed his settlement of a logging camp, Boggiani said that, "*naturally* the Chamacoco, who had already developed much affection for me, followed suit . . . taking care of the clear cutting work" (Boggiani 1894:28, emphasis added). Taken together, these statements make it evident that

⁷In 1889, the Anglican South American Missionary Society began operations in the southern part of the Paraguayan Chaco without reaching the Yshiro area (Grubb [1925]1993). The Catholic Church, because of financial problems, could not start operations until 1917, but from then on it established several missions along the Pilcomayo and the Paraguay Rivers (Stunnenberg 1993:66-67; Fritz 1994; Heyn 1996).

⁸The mission was a failure and not until the 1950s were the Yshiro targeted again for systematic evangelization.

Boggiani combined the Indians' assumed ignorance with their tacit knowledge in a way that implicitly asserted a 'natural' inclination of the Indians to follow the White man.

Attributing the Indians the capacity to distinguish 'one kind of [White] man from another,' also underscored an implicit racist hierarchy. This hierarchy included, without explicitly mentioning them, the Paraguayans, who were necessary participants in the process of annexation of the Chaco. In fact, it is striking how all the chronicles of this early period of settlement only fleetingly mention Paraguayans as protagonists in the events described. This makes sense because, as Cominges' expressions above show, in the European entrepreneurs' visions of the Chaco, Indians, not Paraguayans, were the indispensable 'material' needed for building civilization. Europeans not only disregarded Paraguayans as protagonists in the process of 'building civilization' in the Chaco, but they also saw them as obstacles obstructing the road toward this goal. As Indians proved reluctant to be either 'economical assistants' or to be rescued from the 'devils' claws,' these results were blamed on the example set by 'lower Paraguayan people,' who allegedly not only distracted Indians from their education but also corrupted them (Boggiani 1900:114-118; Sosa Gaona 1996:41-42).

Blaming the Paraguayans for the difficulties that besieged the perfect relation that Europeans had envisioned with the Indians was part of the black-boxing of Indians as nature-like entities. That is, if Indians were naturally disposed to be raw material in the hands of the Europeans, and the Europeans were doing their work (i.e., civilizing), what could possibly explain the difficulties faced in this task? Blaming the Paraguayans avoided a profound questioning of the ways in which entrepreneurs, missionaries, ethnographers and the like imagined Indians and their own relations to them. To better understand this, I must discuss in more detail the results that the 'civilizing project' was producing.

The Distorting Mirror of Killer Love

We have seen that as non-indigenous peoples began to take control of the Chaco, previous dominant imaginations of it, and its inhabitants, as obstacles to progress began to be superseded by others in which Indians and nature alike constituted building blocks in the hands of the European architects of civilization. Europeans imagined the Yshiro as Indians who naturally loved the Whites and who recognized their superiority. Supposedly, the Yshiro expressed these feelings by joining the Europeans in their endeavours. In turn, Europeans imagined themselves as reciprocating those feelings by contributing to the Yshiro's uplifting toward civilization (see Boggiani [1896]1975:71; Alarcon y Cañedo and Pittini 1924: 85-87). In this interplay of imaginations of the other and the self, the Yshiro's love and natural submissiveness to the Europeans were just the mirror images of the European superiority. So undoubtable were these imaginations that Boggiani expressed in a conference presentation that he never concerned himself for his possessions or his life, in spite of the fact that these were "entirely at the Indians'

discretion" (cited in Heyn 1996:90). In 1901, some Yshiro made use of this discretion and killed Boggiani.

It would take too long to discuss all the musings that since this time period and well into the late 20th century have been published to explain the possible causes that led some Yshiro to kill Boggiani (see Leigheb 1986:141-162; Cordeu 1991a:87:fn129). Surprisingly not a single one of these discussions has considered Boggiani's role as a *patron* (boss/employer) to explain the possible reason for his murder. In fact, since his death, a myth of the 'noble Boggiani,' portrayed as an artist and ethnographer who loved Indians, grew in Paraguayan intellectual circles (see Diaz-Perez 1977). This omission has left unexplored the early relations between *patrones* and the Yshiro even though these appear as the perfect entry point to explore how the *yrmo* of the Yshiro and the world of the Europeans became interconnected. In effect, the Yshiro's attitudes toward *patrones* like Boggiani directly contested European imaginations and, as such, they constitute a point where it is possible to glimpse at how the Ebitoso perceived and accommodated to the Whites' expansion over the Chaco.

Ebitoso Imaginations of Coexistence

In 1993, Don Bruno Barras, then a fifty-three years old Ebitoso leader of the community of Karcha Bahlut, was telling me about the importance of the place where his group of followers had recently settled. The place was where the *Anabser* (sl. *Anabsero*) Nemur had blown into the big snail-shell (*karcha bahlut*) from which the Paraguay river originated (see page 29), and where the original *tobich* had been located. It was also the place where Boggiani had set one of his first logging camps and where the Ebitoso first met the Whites. At my request Don Bruno told me about this encounter:

(s) [The Ebitoso] came to Karcha Bahlut and found these White men living there. The Ebitoso attacked them. However, one of the Whites made it to Puerto Pacheco [the Bolivian name of Bahia Negra] and warned the garrison. The soldiers from Pacheco followed the Ebitoso and began to shoot to scare them. But they were not scared, rather they decided to attack because they thought that otherwise the soldiers would follow them to their settlement and would take over their territory. They prepared their arrows. In the afternoon the calvary came and surrounded them. The Ebitoso killed some soldiers and the soldiers wounded several Ebitoso. The Ebitoso took one of the dead soldiers and following the advice of the elders split him apart and put the body in a barbecue. When the soldiers found the body they said, 'we better stop following these people, they are cannibals and they are probably going to eat us.' From that time on there were no longer persecutions. When things cooled off, some elders met the commander of the garrison, and they agreed not to fight and to befriend each other. They made a pact and the commander gave them food. [. . .]

That's how the relation with the White men began. The Yshiro would work and the Whites would share their food.[. . .] The elders were who first came near the White men. Then the younger people stayed working with them while the elders went back to the 'bush.' This is a story told to me by my grandmother Yilipe (Fieldnotes, 15/07/93).

Don Bruno could not tell whether the events he narrated took place before or after Boggiani settled his logging camp in Karcha Bahlut. Nevertheless, in Don Bruno's account, it is readily perceptible that Ebitoso and European's understandings of their mutual engagement were quite distinct. In this story there is no trace of the love or recognition of the White men's superiority that Indians were supposed to have had. Rather, they portray strangers that, from relatively symmetrical positions, were building a relationship, sometimes antagonistic but also involving reciprocity. Indeed, the Ebitoso initially dealt with the Whites in very similar ways to how they had dealt with the Mbya-Caduveo. That is, they fought them until they could set up some sort of working arrangement for coexistence. This is important because it illuminates Yshiro intellectuals' rejection of portrayals of the ancient Yshiro as simply resisting and their being defeated during the Whites' drive to integrate the Chaco into the nation-state. On the contrary, many of the intellectuals with whom I spoke about this issue, stress the point that the ancient Yshiro were cheated into, rather than militarily subjugated into, the subordinated position that nowadays they see themselves as occupying in contemporary Paraguayan society. As Don Bruno argued in the same conversation I quoted above:

Our people helped the Whites in their works, but in their thoughts there was never the suspicion that the Whites would take all the land for themselves and leave us with nothing. They [the ancient Yshiro] did not know that words on a paper were the only ones with value.

It is important to underline that the Yshiro's persistence in talking of working *with* and not working *for* the Whites, points to their perception of work as a social task which implies reciprocal duties (see Susnik 1995:83 - 85). Thus, from the stories told by the elders, one can infer that working with the Whites was, for many Ebitoso, an appealing way to obtain goods which were quickly incorporated into their daily life.⁹ However, this does not mean that the Ebitoso graciously incorporated working with the Whites as just another subsistence activity. On the contrary, the terms of this form of engagement with the Whites were matters of contention and conflict. But before I focus on contention and conflict it is convenient that I briefly discuss how working with the Whites impacted the inter-generational tensions already existing among the Ebitoso.

⁹For details on the impact of work on this and other aspects of the Ebitoso society of the period see Susnik (1995:52 - 111).

The prescriptions regarding food consumption contained in the *Esnwherta au'oso* had no provisions for the Whites' food, thus its consumption was, in principle, unregulated. This opened up a space of uncertainty regarding the reciprocal duties and rights related to sharing the Whites' food. As in Don Bruno's story, many other recollections of the early times of the contact speak of how the younger people among the Ebitoso preferred to stay closer to the Whites rather than going back to the 'bush.' These stories usually stress how for male and female youth, working with the Whites created a space of freedom from the heavy impositions of the elders. Other stories and recollections tell about how the elders tried to regulate the consumption of the Whites' food without success. Thus, gradually, working with the Whites became a part of the everyday tasks for subsistence. Yet as I hinted above, working with the Whites was not free from conflicts.

From most stories about the early contacts with the Whites, one can conclude that the Ebitoso saw them as strangers with whom they could coexist, not always harmoniously but, at least, on an equal footing. Other stories also indicate that the Ebitoso had their own ideas of what to do when these expectations were not being met. Don Vaso, one of the older Ebitoso elders, who possesses a remarkably clear memory, told me in an interview in August 1999, that in his childhood he heard his elders narrating how they had killed a *patron*. Seeing my expression of surprise, he continued in a matter of fact way:

(s) The Yshiro killed many *patrones*. Yes, they killed them because the *patrones* were stingy. At night they [Yshiro] would go where the *patron* was sleeping and with an old musket, pum!! Down like a bird . . . Once there was this *patron*, the Yshiro gave him many wood logs. The *patron* gave them a little piece of material. Just a little piece for each one. One of the Yshiro came and said, 'you have to give me more.' 'No, that's enough,' said the *patron*. That Yshiro man refused to accept anything at all. He was angry. That very same night they killed the *patron*. (Tape recorded interview, 15/09/1999).

Don Vaso is one of the few very old elders who describe himself as a convinced Christian and he told me this story in the context of a conversation in which he was giving me examples of the previous Ebitoso behaving as *avá* (savages in Guaraní language, the other official language of Paraguay). He finished with his examples telling me with a big smile: "We [the Ebitoso] do not do that any longer. We learned in the Bible that it is not good to kill your fellow human beings, we are civilized now." Yet if one attends to other sources, and even other stories told by Don Vaso, it is clear that the Ebitoso learned to refrain from using violence against the *patrones* through other means than the Bible alone. Indeed, the Ebitoso's use of violence to assert their own imaginations of how the relations between themselves and the Whites should work was something that the Whites did not tolerate for long. According to their own imaginations, violence was legitimate only in their hands.

Violence, Epistemological Guarantees and the Subordination of the Ebitoso

As we have seen, the entrepreneurs and missionaries found several points of coincidence in the way in which they imagined the Chaco and the Indians (see Grubb [1925] 1993:206-210; Belaieff 1946: 371). To the extent that the Paraguayan state promoted and supported the actions and visions of entrepreneurs and missionaries, the latter's imaginations of the Chaco and the Indians provided one of the elements for a hegemonic coincidence that shaped in conceptual and practical terms the terrain within which Whites/Indians relations should unfold.¹⁰ In effect, one aspect of this hegemonic coincidence was the imagining of Indians as the building blocks of the civilization that Europeans would construct in the Chaco.¹¹ Another related aspect of this hegemonic coincidence is what, following Dussel (1995:66), one may call 'necessary pedagogic violence.' As we will see, the first and most important lesson this pedagogy taught was that the Ebitoso's use of violence in their dealings with the Whites had no place in the new order of things.

The operation of pedagogic violence is clear in the aftermath of Boggiani's death. As his friends in Asunción began to worry about him, they sent an expedition in his search. The diary kept by the expedition's leader, Jose Cancio, is rather explicit about how the Ebitoso were 'taught' that they could not use violence in their relations with the Whites. In the diary, one can read descriptions of women and children running and crying as soon as they saw the armed White men coming, of 'tough' warriors shivering in panic when questioned by the leader of the expedition, and of the use of torture to make people confess to the crime (see Comitato Pro-Boggiani 1903).¹²

¹⁰I refer to this coincidence as hegemonic because to a large extent it led the direction of governmental actions regarding Indigenous peoples. In this sense I am underlining one of Gramsci's (1971:55-57) uses of the word, that is hegemony as **leadership** (*direzione*). This coincidence was hegemonic because it gave a common direction, a point of articulation for the multiple imaginations sustained by the settlers. Points of articulation between dominant groups are, in colonial situations such as the one I am discussing, imposed upon the ruled by violent means (see Guha 1997), as I indicate below for the Chaco.

¹¹Thorndahl (1997:76-84) calls this hegemonic coincidence an 'evolutionist contract' to underline the point that in spite of superficial disagreements among the agents that 'integrated' the Chaco to the Paraguayan nation-state, they all agreed in seeing the Indians as in need of guidance from their more highly evolved society.

¹²For Cancio, the leader of the expedition, the Ebitoso's fears were proof enough that everybody he came across was at least an accomplice of the crime. Ultimately, he

Many elders (Ebitoso and Tomaraho) remember or have heard about similar expeditions organized or condoned by the Paraguayan authorities to punish the Yshiro for having attacked *patrones* or for having defended themselves from the abuses of some settlers. For example, the elder I introduced before, Don Vaso, told me at another opportunity how, in the late 1920s or early 1930s, his grandfather had suffered the consequences of resisting the theft of his only cow by a Paraguayan settler:

He [his grandfather] had a cow called Bonita. He put me and all his stuff on her to go from one place to another looking for *changa* [casual labour]. Then, this Paraguayan came and tried to take the cow with him. My grandfather told him to leave our cow and go away.[. . .] They fought and my grandfather cut him with his machete. The Paraguayan went away. Then my grandfather took, our stuff, the cow, me and my grandmother and we all went hiding into the bush. We stay there several weeks hiding from the soldiers. [. . .] An uncle told my grandfather that the commander said we could go back to the logging camps if he [grandfather] gave the cow to the Paraguayan who had tried to take her away [. . .] At the end my grandfather gave Bonita away but had to keep avoiding that thief [the Paraguayan] and his friends because he knew they would take revenge and the commander would do nothing about it (Tape recorded interview, 17/09/1999).

I have heard and recorded many of these stories in which the Paraguayan authorities are depicted as doing nothing to defend the Yshiro from abuses perpetrated by the settlers while giving *carte blanche* or even supporting the settlers' repressive measures against the Yshiro when they took matters into their own hands. Through these sort of experiences the Yshiro learnt that violent means could not be used to enforce the *patrones'* reciprocity. For example, the conditions in which the Ebitoso were already living by the 1920s provide evidence that their attempts to authorize their own imagination of *patrones* as partners with whom they could share bonds of reciprocity were unsuccessful. I will return to this soon, but now I want to turn to the other side of the equation, that is, how the Europeans understood the Yshiro's attempts at asserting their own imaginations.

Europeans understood these actions as the negative spin-off effects of giving Indians a 'superior' way of life. For example, the missionary Barbrooke Grubb explained that in the process of helping the Indians to achieve a superior stage, many of them were left in a worse situation than before as exemplified by their indiscipline and moral

coerced a Yshir man to confess to the crime and took him to Asunción where he was arrested. After more than a year claiming his innocence, the man was freed (Leigheb 1986:158-159).

dissolution. However, he surmised that “without doubt, no reasonable man would ever assert that keeping those people in ignorance and slavery is better than to allow them to attempt to reach a superior and more dignified life, just because in the transition some irregularities and disorders occur” (Grubb [1925] 1993:187). In Grubb’s statement, it is clear that Indigenous peoples’ attempts to assert and enact their own imaginations of themselves were seen by Europeans as ‘irregularities and disorders.’ This is so because Indigenous peoples’ conduct reflected back a distorted image of what Europeans believed to be the truth about themselves and the Indians. As I said before, the Europeans assumed that the Indians’ submission to them was a reflection of their superiority; every time an Indian’s conduct did not coincide with this imagination, the European’s imaginations were contested. Seeing Indians’ responses to colonization as ‘irregularities and disorders’ already justified the European’s (violent) pedagogic actions that would correct them. In short, then, pedagogic violence constituted the ‘brutal epistemological guarantee’ (Lange 1998:135) that the imagination-Indians (as well as the whole network of heterogeneous actants which sustained it) would remain unchallenged. It is in this sense that I see the imagination-Indians and pedagogic violence as two aspects of the hegemonic coincidence. The Europeans would have not been able to more or less sustain their imagination-Indians without pedagogic violence, yet pedagogic violence would have not been possible without the imagination-Indians helping to unify the diverse interests and imaginations of the Europeans.¹³

In addition to pedagogic violence, ‘piece meal’ and relatively random violence operated in tandem with other forms of engagement that were shaping the complex interconnections being established between the world and the *yrmo*. For example, as the tannin companies attracted Paraguayan workers from the eastern part of Paraguay, groups of discontented, unemployed or disenfranchised Whites began to loot the area. The authorities seldom punished these marauders’ attacks and robberies in Yshiro settlements. Yet when other Whites were the victims, the authorities’ reprisals often extended to Indigenous peoples (see Olmedo 1946:21-24). In these circumstances, the vicinities of logging camps as well as the more permanent White settlements became places which not only provided opportunities to obtain food and other goods, but also offered some protection from the marauders and the punitive expeditions of the authorities.

Although the tannin companies owned their own lands, they also bought wood from individual entrepreneurs who, like Boggiani, obtained concessions to open logging camps on ‘government’s lands’ (see Borrini 1997:30-54). Most of these logging camps were in Yshiro territory, and it was through them rather than through direct work in the tannin factories, that the Ebitoso, and later the Tomaraho, became integrated into the emerging economic system (see Romero 1913:50-51; Baldus 1927).

¹³This point echoes Taussig’s (1992) idea that hegemony and coercion sustain a mutually reinforcing relation.

The logging camps (*obrajes* in Spanish) were relatively stable settlements where wood from the surrounding areas was processed. Some of the first logging camps that were settled on the margin of the Paraguay river eventually became ports for the shipment of wood and also small towns where Paraguayan overseers and European *patrones* had their families. These incipient towns became centres of economic activity, exchange, and trade and, from the perspective of the Ebitoso, places to find work. Thus, entire families of the Ebitoso began to move from one logging camp to another depending on the opportunities they found for work.

During the first decades of the contact, it seems that working conditions for males were arranged by the *polotak* (war leaders), but soon emerging *cabezantes* (headmen) of small groups of workers, who were more familiar with the White's language and ways of doing things became the main brokers. The *polotak* also arranged the working conditions for females. Initially the women who worked with Whites were mostly Yshiro-Tomarahó captives who provided domestic and sexual services to Whites.¹⁴ Soon these women saw that they could avoid the control of their 'adoptive parents/captors' by remaining with their employers. Also, as the Ebitoso began to restrict their movements according to the work opportunities they found in the logging camps and Paraguayan settlements, women began to develop their own, more constant connections with Paraguayan *patronas* (female *patrones*) who hired them for domestic chores.

The cohabitation with Whites, in logging camps and permanent settlements, and the progressive abandonment of food prescriptions stimulated the spread of diseases that decimated the Ebitoso groups (see Baldus 1927:10). As the *konsaho* (shamans) were unable to cope with these diseases, dependence on medicines from the Whites further reinforced the Yshiro's tendency to settle near White settlements.

As I mentioned before, there is evidence that by the 1920s some Ebitoso had already 'learnt' that they could not use violence against the Whites. For example, when the ethnographer Herbert Baldus visited Bahia Negra in 1923, he saw how a drunk Paraguayan man brutally hit an Ebitoso man while the latter only tried to avoid his attacker's blows without even attempting to reciprocate. Baldus observed that in spite of the bad treatment and the conditions of exploitation, the Ebitoso's movements within their territory had become dependent on the availability of work in logging camps (see Baldus 1927: 30-31). Thus, one can argue that although the new order of things was not accepted by the Ebitoso without a critical eye, they found themselves with few alternatives to escape this situation of increasing dependency. 'Bush' subsistence was still an option but very restricted by the fact that staying faraway from White settlements

¹⁴It must be noted that the Tomarahó captives were usually adopted into the family and clan of the captors. While they usually had to do the more heavy chores, as they grew up the power differences between themselves and their adoptive siblings became increasingly less pronounced.

meant to render oneself open to random attacks by White settlers or to enter into unknown territory controlled by other Indigenous groups like the Tomaraho or the Ayoreode. In these conditions, open violence was displaced, although it never disappeared, by more subtle forms of coercion effected through the Whites' control of the means of subsistence.

As these processes were taking place, new settlers arrived to the Chaco. In 1926, groups of Mennonites coming from Canada obtained important concessions from the Paraguayan government and began to settle lands that the tannin companies had already clear-cut in the Central Chaco (see Map 6). As it did not directly affect the Yshiro, I will not dwell on the details of this settlement (for information on this see Hank 1978, 1979, 1980; Plett 1979; Redekop 1980; Ratzlaff 1993; Borrini 1997:55-105). I mention this event because it precipitated other events that did have long-lasting effects for all those who inhabited the Chaco.

Indians, Nation and *Indigenismo*

Both Bolivia and Paraguay had been using private companies and private schemes of settlement, such as the Mennonite's, as their surrogate for the integration of the territories they claimed in the Chaco. With the arrival of the Mennonites in the Central Chaco, and rumours of oil deposits having been found, tensions mounted, troops were brought to the area, fortifications and roads were constructed, and finally war broke out in 1932. The Chaco war, which produced numerous casualties and deaths, spanned three years (1932-1935) and had several effects. Among these effects, two had great importance for Indigenous peoples. One is the way in which the war, and the Paraguayan victory, brought together imaginations of Indians, 'Paraguayanness,' the Chaco, and nationalist sentiments. The other related effect is the consolidation of what I am going to call the '*indigenista* field' in Paraguay.¹⁵

At the turn of the 20th century, Paraguayan intellectuals had begun to reconsider the role of the Guaraní 'Indians' in the formation of the 'Paraguayan people.' This reconsideration flourished in the idea that the Paraguayan people were descendants of a

¹⁵Without ignoring that there are other uses of the term in the literature (see Diaz-Polanco 1997:24; Ramos 1998:6-7), mine is intended to remain as close as possible to the meaning most people give to it in Paraguay. There, *indigenista* is the label given to **non-indigenous** individuals, organizations or institutions (governmental or not) concerned with Indigenous peoples' issues. Now, considering some of the particular conditions in which inter-ethnic politics take place in this country, which will become clear as this ethnography unfolds, a distinction between inter-ethnic politics and *indigenismo* is useful. *Indigenismo* can be conceptualized as a specific aspect or field of inter-ethnic politics in Paraguay, in which different non-indigenous individuals, organizations and institutions struggle for the authority to shape policies pertaining to Indigenous peoples.

Guarani Indian mother and a Spanish father (see Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995: 282-298; Robbins 1999: 112-115; Horst 1998: 64). The value of the Guarani heritage was further intermingled with nationalist sentiments when, during the Chaco war, Guarani-speaking groups from the Chaco (Guarayu and Guarani-ñandeva) joined the advancing Paraguayan army (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:256-257). These ideas, coupled with the hard won victory over Bolivia, were pitched by nationalist rhetoric against the foreign companies which had actual control over the resources in the Chaco. Eventually nationalist movements that embraced this rhetoric, reclaimed the control of the Chaco for the Paraguayan nation-state.

Although after the war, in 1936, a Nationalist Revolution took over the government (see Lewis 1980: 22-25), the nationalist rhetoric did not turn into action. That is, the new government did not take measures to radically change the overwhelming control that foreign companies had over the Chaco's resources. Nevertheless, this rhetoric introduced a new trope about the future of the Chaco which was not in line with the visions of the earlier European entrepreneurs. The trope was the idea that the blood shed by Paraguayans in the war made the Chaco more Paraguayan than ever. Consistent with this idea, nationalist rhetoric claimed that Paraguayans were the only ones with a right to decide the future of the Chaco. Of course, at issue was also the right to decide the future of the Indians. Thus, since then, different interested parties have taken the poor treatment of the Indians as a justification for claiming rights to decide what must be done with the Chaco.¹⁶

The war put Paraguay's army officers in contact with Indigenous peoples. Paramount among these was Juan Belaieff, a Russian emigree. Commissioned during the pre-war years (1928) to explore and prepare defences in the area of Bahia Negra, Belaieff proposed to form a cavalry regiment with the Chamacoco, and asserted that given Paraguay's special relations to Indians, it was the only nation that could use their 'value' as military resources (Belaieff 1928). At the end of the war Belaieff was given the direction of the new *Patronato Nacional de Indígenas* (Indigenous Peoples' National Trust), which was the first attempt to create a state institution in charge of furthering the well-being of Indians (see AIP 1945:4; Prieto and Bragayrac 1995:29-30), those people whose "integration into active life [i.e., as citizens and producers] [could] only bring

¹⁶For an early version of these disputes see Olmedo (1946) and Lopez Fretes (1946). These works are very interesting as they seem to contest each other point by point. On the one hand, Olmedo intends to defend the civilizing role played by the tannin companies in Alto Paraguay. Lopez Fretes, in contrast, stresses the relentless exploitation that both Indigenous and Paraguayan peoples suffered at the hands of the foreign personnel and owners of the tannin companies. For an informed reader, it is clear that, in these arguments, Indigenous peoples are just pawns in struggles which were not really about their well being.

benefits to the American Republics” (Belaieff 1941:2).

In Belaieff, there was a convergence of several imaginations. First, he was concerned with ideas of nation building. Second, he imagined Indians as being simultaneously the roots of Paraguayan nationhood, the resources to be developed, and the children needing love, protection and guidance. Third, he understood the duties toward the Indians within an emerging discourse on ‘man’s rights’ (see Belaieff 1941:1-3). These imaginations were again part of a larger movement reaching beyond Paraguay. Indeed, these were the imaginations that fostered the organization of *Congreso Indigenista Interamericano* and the creation of the *Instituto Indigenista Inter-Americano*, in 1940 at Pazuaro, Mexico. In Paraguay, a group of philanthropists who were ‘friends and defenders of the Indians’ enthusiastically embraced the goals of this institution. In 1942, when the state failed to economically sustain the *Patronato Nacional de Indigenas*, a group of these ‘friends and defenders of the Indians,’ including Belaieff, created *Asociación Indigenista del Paraguay* (AIP). The association’s aim was to integrate the ‘national Indians’ into ‘civilized life’ and to convert them to Christianity (see AIP 1945; Horst 1998: 70 - 71).

Although AIP was constituted as a philanthropic non-governmental association, their members’ liaisons or direct participation in the government gave it the position, alongside the religious missions, of a privileged interlocutor in the shaping of state policy related to Indigenous peoples. With the creation of AIP, the process leading to the formation of a specialized field which has the Indians as its ‘object’ of expertise reached a climax. In effect, as AIP incorporated scientific research among its activities, its claim to have a say in policy relating to Indigenous peoples was based on its scientific expertise (see AIP 1945:6). On the basis of their higher moral grounds, experience or scientific authority, and as *laissez-faire* progress began to be displaced by state intervention, religious and secular *indigenistas* claimed, and were granted by the state, special jurisdictions over ‘development’ policies pertaining to Indians (see AIP 1945:32-50; Bejarano 1976; Horst 1998). ‘Love for the Indians’ would often cause tensions and disagreements among these *indigenistas* but never to the point of breaking the hegemonic coincidence that Indians had to be civilized and that the use of coercion was, in last instance, legitimate in this pursuit.

Before I move on to the conclusions, let me introduce a brief note about the Tomaraho. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Tomaraho avoided contact with the Whites until around the 1940s. Contacts and exchanges with the Whites were sporadic, sometimes involving violence. However, in contrast to the Ebitoso, generational differences do not seem to have greatly influenced the way in which the Tomaraho responded to the Whites’ presence. Apparently, inter-generational tensions among the Tomaraho were less pronounced than among the Ebitoso. This makes sense if we consider that the Mbya-Caduveo did not affect the Tomaraho in the same way as they affected the Ebitoso. Indeed, according to Tomaraho stories, it was the elders and not *polotak* who managed the contact with the Whites. According to these stories, the

Tomaraho generally stayed deep into the bush and away from the Paraguay river where they would come sporadically and barter with the Whites, sometimes cutting trees for them and staying around the logging camps for short periods of time. Often, the Tomaraho were attacked by settlers and soldiers who came across them unexpectedly. These kinds of attacks increased significantly during the Chaco war (for Tomaraho stories of the contact see Cordeu 1999:337-352).

Some Tomaraho elders told me that it was during the Chaco war that they became acquainted with Paraguayans who allowed them to pass behind their lines in order to avoid being trapped between enemy lines. Apparently, some of these Paraguayans had been overseers in *la Compañia* (Carlos Casado Co., one of the tannin producing factories) because after the war these men convinced the Tomaraho to settle in San Carlos one of its logging camps. These *patrones* (actually overseers of *la Compañia*) promised to give the Tomaraho protection from abuses and work as tree-cutters. By this time, the Tomaraho had lost so many people that they formed one single residential group.

The logging camp where the Tomaraho settled was in the interior of the Chaco, away from the Paraguay river. The Tomaraho men cut wood and the women provided sexual and domestic services to the Paraguayan overseers and workers. The Tomaraho remained in this camp for almost fifty years until 1986. During this time, they had little or no contact with missionaries or other *indigenistas*. The Paraguayan overseers and workers allowed the Tomaraho to perform *debylylta* (the initiation ritual) and did not try to transform them beyond having them be obedient and productive workers. Thus, although the living conditions in the camp were such that their numbers kept decreasing year after year, the Tomaraho were able to transmit their ritual knowledge and associated values to the younger generations without much interference. As we will see in the next chapter, this was not the case with the Ebitoso.

Coda and Prelude

At least four generations of Yshiro were born and raised under the conditions that emerged with *laissez-faire* progress. During that time, the *yrmo* and the world became interconnected through several points of convergence.¹⁷ The specificity of the practical circumstances in which this process of interconnection occurred often collided with the tendency of both Europeans and Yshiro to act according to their own conventional wisdom. Points of convergence emerged from the particular logics of each universe.

¹⁷ Kaplan and Kelly (1994) have called these points of convergence, 'points of transgression': spaces in which a system of power tries to extend its grip. According to these authors, the points where a structure is more intermixed with materials alien to it are the zones of thickest transgression since it is in these spaces where struggles over extension, contraction and transformation of forms of power are decided.

Because of this, these points constituted areas of contention where the actants imagined from within one universe appeared to be continually behaving in anomalous ways when seen from within the other universe. At the beginning, both Yshiro and settlers tried to contain these anomalies through operations of black-boxing that included violence. However, soon the Whites were able to monopolize violence and frame the interconnection of universes in asymmetrical ways.

A series of conditions, which operated in tandem, characterized the process by which the Ebitoso became subordinate. Central among these conditions was the hegemonic coincidence which, on the one hand, made it acceptable for the Whites to use 'pedagogical violence' to correct the 'anomalous' behaviours of the Indians (i.e., behaviours that contradicted the Whites' imaginations) and, on the other hand, made unacceptable under any circumstance for the Yshiro to use violence against the Whites. The hegemonic coincidence was basically a coincidence regarding what to do with the Indians based in the particular ways in which Europeans imagined them and themselves. Yet this hegemonic coincidence was aided by the existence of tensions specific to the *yrmo*, which acted simultaneously and in concert with the Whites' pedagogic violence to frame the interconnection between universes in asymmetrical ways. For example, in their search to escape the control exercised by elders and *polotak*, the younger generations of Ebitoso and the Tomaraho captives were willing to join the Whites in their endeavours. However, the impossibility of asserting their own imaginations of how this relation should work meant that, in the long run, those younger generations ended up being subordinated to the settlers.¹⁸

Although, as we will see, these relations had as an effect the proliferation of new actants/imaginations and the reconfiguration of the *yrmo* in several ways, until the 1950s the Ebitoso were still in a situation in which they could more or less reproduce the *yrmo* through ritual practices and other conduct promoted by the *Esnwherta au'oso*. For example, during a conversation in January 2000, Don Tito Perez, an Ebitoso elder, described how the system of relations which emerged during the first decades of the Whites settling the Yshiro territories, generated their own sets of expectations and regularities, including the availability of resources and the freedom to perform *debylylta* (the initiation ritual). These expectations and regularities started to be disturbed by the

¹⁸I am aware that I have provided just a general overview of these process without going into further details. In part this is because given the paucity of records it is practically impossible to describe this particular historical processes in greater detail. However, I must note that in Chapter Nine I focus on a similar situation in which Yshiro and White struggle to authorize their own imaginations. As I participated in the events which I analyze there, I do go into the details of these struggles. In this sense, I expect that by extrapolation Chapter Nine will shed light back on how the processes that I am describing here unfolded.

late 1950s:

(s) Before we did not stay long in any place. It is only now, since we have got the legal ownership of some land, that we stay put. I have seen the times of my grandparents. They moved from here to there, from there to here . . . always looking for *changa* [casual labour] . . . those *patrones*, they respected our culture [rituals]. When the time comes, the *patrones* stop all the work, they give food, clothes, tobacco, *caña* [alcohol] and let the people five days free for the Yshiro to have their 'party.' There are no *patrones* like this any longer. Before the *patrones* were responsive, they gave work and food, even those military men, they gave work so that the poor people have something to eat. But then the *patrones*' children just took the money and never returned to give us work . . . (tape-recorded interview with Don Tito Perez, 23/01/2000).

The tannin industry began to decline in the 1940s but its effects became more clear in the late 1950s (see Romero 1977; Kleipenning 1992:251-281) as Alto Paraguay slowly turned into a marginal area of the Chaco.¹⁹ Logging camps closed and the lands were sold. The new Paraguayan owners of those lands which were closer to the Paraguay river began to use them for livestock breeding (Stunnenberg 1993: 46-50). As this activity requires little labour, most Ebitoso were left to depend on their own, individually-based, personal relations with the Whites to secure the market goods that had become very important to their subsistence. At the same time the various imaginations that we discussed in this chapter were slowly engendering new ones that would bring about a reconfiguration of the ways the *yrimo* and the world interconnected. As we have seen, the idea that progress would be obtained from a *laissez-faire* policy was coming to an end. Moreover, the development of the Chaco and 'its Indians' began to be seen as depending on a more direct intervention by the state with the input of expertise. From our vantage point, we can say that anthropology and its 'evil twin,' development (Ferguson 1997) already co-existed, albeit in their 'larval' form, in the figure of Boggiani, one of the earliest 'agents of progress' and ethnographers of the Chaco. In the following chapter we will see how these larval forms fully matured in the Paraguayan context.

¹⁹In 1992 the population of Alto Paraguay was 12,000, a figure well below the 17,000 inhabitants that in 1924 were counted around the tannin factories alone (see Kleipenning 1992:276; DGEEC 1997:158).

CHAPTER TWO: STATE-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

By the late 1930s, the idea that progress in Paraguay would be achieved by entrepreneurs harnessing the bounties of the virgin lands began to be displaced by one in which the state appeared as the privileged agent of progress. These ideas were connected to a change in the European and US models of government to which Paraguayan elites looked for inspiration. After the Great Depression, state interventionism became increasingly accepted under different guises in most 'Western countries' (see Escobar 1995:38). It could be said that in those countries, liberal concerns with autonomy were displaced by social democratic or welfare liberalism concerns with equality, full employment and inclusion.

Social democratic concerns added complexity to the liberal problematic of government because, according to the idea of representative democracy, rule is legitimate when the gap between ruler and the rule is minimal. In the early liberal tradition, society was clearly an 'other' in relation to the sovereign and maintaining this distinction was key to the respect of the autonomy of society. In contrast, the logic of representative democracy made society the subject *par excellence*, the ultimate repository of sovereignty, whose will and agency were enacted by delegation in the government of the state (see Hindess 1996:66-68).

The combination of liberal and democratic concerns created very complex conditions for rule to be legitimate. In effect, on the one hand, it required that the activity of rule should intrude as little as possible into the autonomy of the object of government and, on the other hand, that the gap between the governing subject and the object of government became ever narrower. This produced the logical problem of how to incorporate what was outside the represented body-politic without intervening in it. I will return to this problem in Chapter Five, but let me indicate here that this logical problem was not just a question of 'ideology,' that is, a question that had no concrete impact on the activities of government. To the extent that governments had to legitimize themselves by reference to these notions of rule, their activities were somewhat impacted by them. For example, even totalitarian regimes came to justify themselves in terms of the autonomy of their objects of government and the degree to which they as governments were the most accomplished representation of the 'people.' For example, the people could be an ever expanding sector of the population or a more or less circumscribed group within it (e.g., the Arians in Nazi Germany or the proletariat in Stalinist USSR). The autonomy of the object of government, in turn, could be something to be achieved in the future after a thorough intervention of the state, or something that has to be respected 'now and here.' In any case, the issues of autonomy and self-rule (implied by the democratic principle) came to be ever present considerations in how the activity of

government was thought and practised.

With the incorporation of social democratic concerns, in order to be legitimate, governmental activity had to be faithful to the will of the governed object as much as possible, otherwise it risked making evident or increasing the 'democratic deficit,' that is, the always present gap between representation (the government) and what it represented (the people, society). The social democratic response to situations where there was a 'democratic deficit' was to assume that the problem was one of inclusion. In other words, if there was a deficit this was due to somebody having been left out of the represented body-politic. Thus, the solution was the incorporation of that unrepresented part of society into the represented body-politic. This 'democratic' incorporative drive came to form part of the language of state-driven development. The state had not only the right but the duty to intervene in order to insure the full integration of every element of the nation into the body-politic represented by the state. Of course, in practice this objective remained as an ever receding horizon which called for further interventions.

These ideas took shape in Paraguay alongside specific local processes such as: the nationalism that emerged with the Chaco war; the growing discontent with the way the Paraguayans living in the Chaco were exploited by foreign companies; and the decline of the tannin industry. The last factor was critical because this industry was the major supplier of foreign currency and fiscal revenues for the Paraguayan state (Kleinpenning 1992:280). Thus, when foreign aid began to step in, it was welcomed with open arms by Paraguayan governments. As early as 1937, and as part of a strategy to entice Paraguay away from Nazi Germany, the US began to provide Paraguayan governments with economic aid (Mora 1998:453-455; see also Horst 1998:70). When at the end of WWII and the beginning of the Cold War, Truman launched what has been called the 'development era' (Esteva 1992:6), Paraguayan internal and external politics were already heavily entangled with foreign aid (Mora 1998:455-458). This entanglement became even tighter when General Alfredo Stroessner took power in 1954.

In the eight years prior to Stroessner's ascension to power, seven presidents had come and gone. Unlike these seven, Stroessner accomplished the dubious feat of keeping himself in power for more than 34 years. The power and endurance of the regime rested upon a tripartite structure formed by the government bureaucracy, the armed forces and the Colorado party.¹ In his triple role as President of the Republic, Honorary President of the Colorado Party and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, Stroessner was at the apex of this structure. Membership in the Colorado party was mandatory for all state employees as well as for all members of the armed forces except conscripted soldiers. A network of *seccionales* (party offices/cells), which extended nationwide, operated as a

¹ For details on how the regime was organized and operated see Barreto (1996); Hanratty and Meditz (1990); Lambert (1997); Lewis (1980); Nickson (1997); Roett and Sacks (1991); Yore (1992).

parallel structure to the state, and at times the distinction between these was blurred. Positions in the government were given as pay offs to loyal cadres of the party. Within the armed forces and security forces, positions were granted with the implicit recognition that they were to produce profits to the person in charge and the *patron* who had given the job.

Thus, in addition to direct coercion, Stroessner's regime had nearly the whole country bounded through a patronage system as a way to obtain acquiescence and loyalty. This system extended to the rural poor, to blue-collar workers, to state employees, to cadres of the regime, and to private businessmen. For the regime, external economic support was critical since it provided an important part of the 'resources' which circulated within the nation-wide patronage network. Stroessner fashioned himself as a committed anticommunist who faithfully supported the US and its foreign policy. In turn, he received support from the US in the form of military supplies, and direct or indirect financial assistance through loans from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (at times approaching the Paraguayan state's total annual expenditures). Those who occupied the higher echelons of the regime were given the administration and execution of development projects (from big civil engineering projects to rural development schemes) as recognition for their loyalty to the regime. Throughout the thirty-four years of the regime, these 'officials' amassed considerable fortunes from embezzlement, bribes and 'commissions' paid by contractors.

The 'development scheme' of the regime was based on infrastructure building that would allow the integration of unexploited natural resources into the economy of the nation (see Lewis 1980: 151-167; Kleinpenning 1988; Kleinpenning and Zoomers 1991). This scheme was mostly applied in the Eastern part of the country, where hydroelectric dams and roads were built (Ferradas 1998). In the Chaco the only important infrastructure project executed was the Trans-Chaco highway that connected the Mennonites' colonies in Central Chaco to Asunción. Yet in spite of this highway, the environmental conditions of the Chaco discouraged the settlement of small peasants (Kleinpenning 1991:47). For this reason, the Chaco did not suffer as intense and fast an expansion of the 'agricultural frontier' and exploitation of its natural resources as the Eastern region. Nevertheless, this highway project had enormous impact in the region as it underwrote the Mennonite's agro-industrial boom that reshaped the demographics of the area and shifted the centre of market-related economic activity away from the Paraguay river to the central Chaco (Renshaw 1996:36-37; Borrini 1997:87-88). Indeed, as the requirements for a labour force increased in the Mennonite colonies, Indigenous peoples from all over the Paraguayan Chaco, except the Yshiro, were attracted to the Central Chaco (Stunneberg 1993:221; Borrini 1997:101-102. See Maps 2 and 6).

In the Yshiro area of Alto Paraguay, some lands that had been used for logging were slowly converted into *estancias* (ranches) owned by former logging camp overseers, military officers and a few successful local store keepers. Other lands were acquired by real estate speculators or remained in the hands of the state. In the *estancias*, only a few Yshiro obtained *changas* (casual labour), the rest had to search for alternative means of

subsistence. This search soon became intertwined with the state's development policies.

Developing Patronage

The end of the tannin boom did not mean great changes in the economic activities that Ebitoso women realized, since they had access to market goods by offering domestic services to Paraguayans and by selling handicrafts to the people who navigated the Paraguay river.² For men, however, things were quite different because *changas* (casual labour) in *estancias* were not enough to keep everybody fed. Consequently, they turned to hunting, an activity that throughout the tannin boom had been mostly performed within a frame of values connected with the *Esnwherta au'oso* and the Yshiro *puruhle* narratives. Although trade of wild species had existed before, in the new circumstances hunting became intimately linked to market demands, which created another point of convergence between the *yrmo* and the world. Thus, since the 1950s, when the demand for wood decreased, the intensive hunting of animal species which were highly sought after in the market has been common.³

Missionaries and Development

While Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Alto Paraguay were adjusting to the changes brought on by the decline of the tannin industry, the state was expanding its intervention through development. State rhetoric about development of the Chaco was, as it had been with *laissez-faire* progress, strongly charged with ideas of 'total conquest' and the conversion of the 'green desert' into an oasis of work, production and welfare (see Olmedo 1966:11-12). In this rhetoric it was clear that the aim of 'development' in relation to Indigenous peoples was their integration into the national society and their

²Since the end of the 19th century the Paraguay river was a highly traveled waterway. Large boats carried all kinds of products up and down the river. Although with the end of the tannin boom the circulation of boats diminished, still there was enough circulation to make exchanges and trade with people traveling in them an important source of income for the Yshiro.

³Between the 1950s - 1960s feline skins were in high demand. Between 1970s - 1980s alligator and caiman skins were sought after, whereas fish have been in high demand since the 1990s. To the extent that hunting and making handicrafts became intertwined with the market, the focus on teaching and learning how to survive from the 'bush' was in many cases reduced to the species that were more useful in the new context. This impoverishment of knowledge further reinforced the relative importance of the market for Yshiro families' subsistence.

final disappearance as a distinct society (see Horst 1998:82 - 157). For this purpose, the state Department of Indigenous Affairs (DAI) was created in 1958. The head of this institution wrote the following (which I mentioned in the preface) about the Yshiro in a book on the prospects for the development of the Chaco:

The Chamacoco have always been recognized as skillful workers in ranches, as cart drivers and as woodcutters. In this indigenous environment, far away from the centres of cultural influence, the habit of working has produced in them the first rudimentary signs of evolution. This phenomenon . . . had its complement twelve years ago when two self-sacrificing New Tribes missionaries started their evangelizing work. They . . . also taught children, youth and adults how to read and write . . . [I]t would not be audacious to assert that, [by] speeding up this task [ie., development], only memories will be left of the fact that this region was once inhabited by Chamacoco Indians (Borgognon 1966:38-39).

To accomplish this objective of integration while also making sure not to disturb the supreme interest of 'free enterprise,' DAI's director understood that Indigenous peoples needed lands for agriculture, credits, education, health and employment; all of which was to be delivered through missions and other *indigenista* institutions (Borgognon 1968:349-350; see also Horst 1998:126-155).

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the first mission to target the Yshiro was Catholic. This mission was established in Fuerte Olimpo in the early 1920s. However, lack of resources and the fact that the Yshiro kept moving from logging camp to logging camp made the mission a failure that was soon abandoned. It was not until the 1950s that the Ebitoso came into closer contact with missionaries. At that time, two female missionaries of the New Tribes Mission (NTM), Ms. Jones and Ms. Nelson, arrived to a logging camp which eventually became the Yshiro community of Diana.⁴ Most elders comment that the missionaries came to their territory when the Ebitoso had started to feel

⁴The exact date of arrival of the first NTM missionaries is not clear. The current missionaries claim that the mission began operations in 1955 (see Renshaw 1996:235), however, according to Borgognon's paragraph above (which was written in 1963 and published in 1966) the approximate date seems to be 1951. Some Yshiro say that the missionaries were among them for a short period of time seven years before they came to take up permanent residence, making 1944 the earliest possible date. In any case, official operations by NTM in Paraguay commenced simultaneously with the Cold War and growing US aid for development in Latin America. Many authors see a link in this, they argue that NTM, which is closely associated to the Summer Institute of Linguistics, was involved in counterinsurgent activities throughout Latin America (see Hvalkof and Aaby 1981; Stoll 1982; Colby 1995:775-779).

the very concrete possibility that they would be exterminated by diseases. Under such a critical situation, it is not surprising that the Ebitoso experienced this event as a turning point in their history. Indeed, the missionaries brought 'aid' (medicines and food) which helped to forestall the grim destiny that commentators say awaited the Ebitoso. The missionaries also brought formal education and the Bible, however, they did not bring credits, jobs, or lands.

With this 'aid,' the NTM missionaries slowly convinced most Ebitoso to settle in Puerto Diana where they would have the missionaries' protection, in addition to access to *patrones* from the nearby Paraguayan town of Bahia Negra. The rest of the Ebitoso settled in Ylhirta, near the Paraguayan town of Fuerte Olimpo, where the Catholic church had reserved 200 hectares of land to set up a new mission. Thus, by the early 1960s the Yshiro were settled in three places: the Ebitoso in Diana and Ylhirta, and the Tomaraho in *obraje* (logging camp) San Carlos (See Map 7).

The Catholic mission in Ylhirta did not begin to fully operate until the mid 1960s. Nevertheless, according to some Ebitoso, once they started their work the Catholic priests and nuns did not attack the Yshiro's beliefs as ferociously as the NTM missionaries did in Puerto Diana. Don Bruno Barras, the Yshiro leader and intellectual I introduced in the previous chapter, told me during an interview in 1996 that he thought Catholic missionaries were more tolerant because they saw Yshiro's beliefs simply as superstition. In contrast, the first New Tribes missionaries understood those beliefs as an expression of the Devil. He based this appreciation on his experiences with both set of missionaries. He was taken into a Catholic boarding school for two or three years when he was ten years of age. Later, in his early twenties, he was trained by, and worked with, the New Tribes Missionaries as a teacher. When I asked him to narrate how some Ebitoso had become Christians he responded:

(s) They [New Tribes missionaries] first befriended Cleto [a mature Ebitoso man] and made him a teacher. They gave him gifts. That's how they prepared their teachers. They visited people, giving gifts or some 'aid' [food, clothing and medicines] in order to gain their friendship . . . Eventually these women [the missionaries] came with their friends to the sacred place, the *tobich*, and discussions and disagreements began to spread among the men. The Ebitoso almost fought each other because some were on the side of the missionaries and others were on the side of the culture. Little by little more people sided with the missionaries and the others have to ask for permission to do *debylylta* [the initiation ritual]. This minority group got smaller and smaller until they asked permission for one last ritual. My grandfather says that many cried because they saw that their culture was going to disappear. It was 1956 when the ritual was abandoned and many embraced evangelism . . . They [missionaries] did not understand that [the ritual] was our belief and they said, 'if you keep on doing this you are all going to die little by little because you are doing

something improper, but if you join the mission you will see things differently because this is a diabolic ceremony and it is not good for you.' Many things they said. And this is how the Ebitoso abandoned their rituals . . . the joy of our own games, the healthy foods, the extraordinary happiness, all of that faded away as the Yshiro became Christians (Tape-recorded interview, 16/07/1996).

Although commentators have different interpretations about the arrival of the missionaries, it is clear that for most people the abandonment of *debylylta* epitomizes the changes that had been operating since the arrival of the Whites. Don Vaso, who I also introduced in the previous chapter, was very fond of the missionaries and had a perspective on their arrival that differed from Don Bruno's:

(s) Before, there were lots of Yshiro but then too many of them died. There was no cure when they got sick. The people cleared a circle . . . and performed their ritual . . . Then, two young women [the New Tribes missionaries] arrived and they made friends with Cleto, they gave him gifts. Then, they came where the ritual was being performed. It was prohibited for a woman to enter there, in the *tobich*. The elders rushed over to kill those women but Cleto stopped them. He said that it would be better to befriend them. So the two women stayed . . . Before, the Yshiro had no religion, they only knew the *Anabsero*. They dressed up and sang all day. Then, the missionaries told us about the Bible. They told us that in the Bible it is said that we should not do *debylylta* anymore because we were all going to die. They said we have to recognize the lord Jesus, to save ourselves . . . They preached and gave medicine to the people, and taught the Yshiro to read the Bible. So, these missionary ladies stayed here for a while but there was a *patron* here. He used to give work to the Yshiro. He expelled the ladies. He did not want the missionaries to teach the Yshiro to read and to know how to keep their accounts. Because he was a mean man and he expelled the missionaries, he later fell in the river and the piranha ate him. Then, the ladies stayed and gave us medicines. They took care of us. You see my children, they are all alive because they saved them (Tape-recorded interview, 15/09/1999).

Regardless of how nowadays people value the arrival of the missionaries, it is clear in their stories that, for a series of circumstances, the Ebitoso who wanted to practice the initiation ritual became increasingly powerless to stop the missionaries from interfering and convincing people not to participate in them. The evangelization carried out by the missionaries certainly produced frictions with some Ebitoso, yet these frictions were mollified by the missionaries' offerings of aid. In a context of growing uncertainty and insecurity created by diseases, the loss of old *patrones* and the arrival of new ones,

this aid provided some relief for the predicaments the Ebitoso faced. For example, many elders say that, by the time the missionaries came, the ancient powerful *konsaho* had almost disappeared and the ones left were unable to cope with the new diseases. The medicines brought by the missionaries were also of much help (see Susnik 1995: 217-235); and, as Don Vaso hinted in the paragraph quoted above, literacy provided a partial defence against the most blatant stratagems that the Whites' played on the Yshiro. Aid in the form of food also became a critical resource for the Yshiro's sustenance when there was no work available. In addition to all this, we must not forget the always present restrictive force of the army, and the ways in which the Yshiro's own subsistence had become intertwined with the Whites' economic activities and their implicit values.

Out of conviction or out of coercion, depending on who tells the story, the case is that in 1956 the Ebitoso performed the last initiation ritual. There is something, perhaps a coincidence, that dramatizes the relevance of this abandonment. The ethnographer Branislava Susnik did her first fieldwork among the Ebitoso in 1955 and returned in 1968. There is a noticeable difference between the ethnographies produced from each of the fieldwork periods (published in 1957 and [1969]1995, respectively): in contrast to the earlier report, in the second ethnography Susnik's 'informants' consistently use the term Chamacoco (the name given to the Yshiro by the Whites) as a self-denomination. It seems as though the 'production' of Yshiro, (which had as a paradigmatic moment the initiation ritual) was displaced by the 'production' of 'Chamacoco Indians,' beings created in the new relations which had begun to characterise a radically transformed *yrimo*.

A brief note about the Tomaraho before I continue the analysis of the processes that ensued after the end of the tannin boom. The company that owned the logging camp where the Tomaraho settled was the last to close down. Yet once it stopped producing tannin, it continued to exploit other wood products and started some cattle raising activities. Thus, the Tomaraho continued to subsist through a mix of labour for the company and non-commercial hunting. As the years went by and the logging company became increasingly diffident in relation to the Tomaraho, the latter became more reliant on subsistence-hunting to survive. However, as cattle-ranches proliferated and wire fences were set up, hunting became less and less reliable leading to an acceleration in the decline of the Tomaraho population which by the 1980s was near final collapse. I will return to this later. The point I want to rise here is that the Tomaraho did not receive any kind of aid from missionaries or the government. Thus, very little of the processes that I will discuss in the following sections apply to them.

Aid, Markets and Values

Among the changes which ensued from the interconnections between the *yrimo* and the world was that younger generations of Ebitoso saw and sought alternatives to secure their subsistence through the lens of the values, needs and desires that emerged

from those interconnections.⁵ In contrast to other Indigenous peoples of the Chaco, the economic marginality of Alto Paraguay favoured the Ebitoso's relatively higher degree of autonomy from the market. Yet to the extent that certain needs and desires could only be fulfilled through it, the market still influenced the way in which the Ebitoso went about subsisting.

Under the new socioeconomic circumstances, continuous access to market goods was dependent upon an individual's capacity to secure and maintain a *patron* who would be responsive. There were two kinds of 'new' *patrones*: those involved in the trade of animal hides (hunting *patrones*) and the missionaries (or, more generally, *indigenistas*). The missionaries' patronage operated as a necessary complement for the other kind of patronage.

Hunting *patrones* were male Paraguayans, usually owners of a store or *estancia* (ranch), active participants of the Colorado party local office, and partners of the military authorities. These *patrones* would choose their 'personnel' and give them credit in the form of food and other items so they could feed themselves and their families during the hunting season of a given species. By the time the hunting season was over because of seasonal conditions or because the animals had become scarce, a hunter would probably owe the patron almost the same or more than what he had earned. Between seasons, the *patron* would give goods on credit in exchange for the next season's catches to those hunters who had proved 'more productive' and had not accumulated large debts. In any case, *patrones* made sure their hunters were always indebted to them so that the chain of debts was very difficult to break (Renshaw 1996:131-132). To the extent that the local authorities were involved in this business, there was no way to escape the chain of debts without risking, at the very least, to be left without a *patron* and the relative security they offered.⁶

In this situation, the aid that the missionaries gave in the form of food, clothes, tools, and medicines became critical for the survival of Ebitoso families when for any reason, *patrones* were not offering work, or credit was insufficient. When aid came directly from the State, either through the military or the Colorado party, it usually became (and continues to be) part of the 'business' circuit since it would be used at the

⁵I use the past tense to underline the point that some of the conditions described here have been, as we will see, in a process of change during the last couple of decades. Nevertheless, I must make clear that many of these conditions, particularly patronage, continue to operate, although in changed circumstances.

⁶Although by the 1980s the Paraguayan state began to establish diverse regulations on the use of wildlife, the involvement of local authorities in the trade of wild animal hides meant that these regulations were seldom enforced. I will return to this in Chapter Nine.

discretion of the military authorities, state employees or party officials who acted as *patrones* in hunting activities to reinforce the bonds between themselves and the hunters.

These changes were accompanied by transformations in the ways in which resources (food, market goods, tools and the like) circulated within the communities. Until the arrival of the missionaries, the circulation of resources among the Ebitoso was still shaped by a combination of clan and gender ascription, age ranks and by the composition of residential groups, which were mostly formed by uxorilocal extended families.⁷ With the pressures from the missionaries, the abandonment of the initiation ritual deepened the process that had started with the incorporation of the Whites' foods which, as we saw in the previous chapter, had no regulations regarding its consumption (Susnik 1995:97-98). That is, the abandonment of the initiation ritual deepened the progressive disregard for age, clan and gender considerations in the distribution and consumption of food. As a result of these processes, the nuclear families displaced the uxorilocal extended family as the basic unit of distribution and consumption (see Susnik 1995: 169-171; Renshaw 1996:174).

New values, of course, played a very important role throughout this displacement. Susnik (1995:92-93), for example, mentions that younger couples began to give much importance to possessing market goods as a symbol of prestige. This was particularly the case with those who had developed close rapport with the missionaries and their ideas of work and progress. Susnik argued that these new values, centred on the nuclear family, conspired against the maintenance of reciprocal ties beyond the closest relatives. The intensification of debt-bondage relations also contributed to changing family patterns, especially since the 'hunting *patrones*' only allowed the hunter's nuclear family to take food through credit while the hunter was away (see Susnik 1995:88-95). All this ultimately reshaped networks of sharing within the communities. Nowadays, although sharing usually extends beyond the nuclear family, and ideally should involve the whole residential group, the tendency is to restrict sharing to progressively closer kin (see Renshaw 1996:149).

As we have seen, direct programs of state-driven development that targeted the Ebitoso involved little more than the granting of aid through the missionaries. This aid, nevertheless, was a necessary component of the economic and political system that began to emerge after the decline of the tannin industry; a system characterized by patronage relations. Thus, it is fair to conclude that state-driven development meant the expansion of patronage networks into the life of the Ebitoso communities. These will become more obvious in the following discussion of how, as patronage networks reached deeper into the communities, new forms of leadership began to emerge.

⁷In this kind of family arrangement, males move into their female partners' family household.

Patronage and Indigenous Leaders

When the ethnographer Branislava Susnik visited Diana for the first time in 1955, people told her that Cleto, the ‘friend of the missionaries,’ had finally displaced the old *polotak* (war leader) Curbit as the ‘person in charge’ of the community (Susnik 1957b:6). This, I surmise, is an indication of changes in the sources of authority of Ebitoso leadership. A *polotak*’s authority was, during the *laissez-faire* period, predicated upon their age, their prestige among peers of the *tobich*, their skills at negotiating with the *patrones* of the logging camps, and their capacity to mobilize groups of labourers, either through persuasion or by activating bonds of reciprocity established through the initiation rituals (see Susnik 1957b:119-126, 1995:43-45 and 90-97; Cordeu 1989c:568). These leaders progressively lost their authority along with the elders in general. As many contemporary elders say, “[when we were younger] we did not want to hear the *agalio* (advice) of the elders. Those were old words and each one wanted to do things in his/her own way” (Field notes, interview with Keiwe, 14/06/95).

In the late 1950s, the new sources of authority were the relationships some Ebitoso individuals established with particular *patrones* with the purpose of assuring for themselves and a group of followers reliable access to credit and aid. These individuals had influence rather than authority. Their influence was predicated upon their privileged relations with particular *patrones*. Indeed, influential individuals maintained a sort of leadership role as long as they could position themselves in a nodal point in the network through which market goods circulated into the Ebitoso communities. In this sense, patronage networks and circulation networks were in many senses intertwined with each other. Since circulation networks were also shaped by kinship, the latter also became intertwined with patronage networks.

Pyramidal Networks of Patronage/Circulation

Given the importance market goods acquired for the Ebitoso’s subsistence, between the late 1950s and the mid 1980s, circulation networks in the Ebitoso communities took a shape that can be visualized as a pyramid. In effect, given that market goods entered to the communities through the *patrones*, their relation with Ebitoso individuals who they trusted formed the tip of a pyramidal network through which market goods circulated. Since there were several *patrones*, many loosely bounded groups, or pyramids, extended from specific ‘influential’ Ebitoso individuals (see Renshaw 1996:234-238).

The bottoms of these pyramids were formed by progressively more distant relatives of those influential individuals. This created a paradoxical situation. While those Ebitoso closer to the tip of the pyramids had a more secure access to credit from their *patrones*, this security came at a price. They had greater pressures to respond to their *patrones*’ demands than those at the bottom of the pyramids. These people obtained their

little security from being situated at the intersection of several circulation networks. Certainly this was less reliable but gave some Ebitoso a greater margin of independence from particular *patrones*. In any case, the pyramidal shape of the circulation networks must not be taken as being as neat as has been described here because those individuals who were closer to the tip in a given network could be at the bottom in another. However, as I said, those who were at the tip of a pyramid were really hard pressed to be responsive to the demands of their *patrones*. These demands varied depending on whether the *patrones* were missionaries or were involved in the trade of animal hides.

Hunting Patronage

In the patronage network connected to the trade of wild animal hides, a hunter could position himself (women did not participate in commercial hunting) at the tip of a pyramid by showing good hunting skills and by maintaining a good balance in his account. Paraguayan *patrones* economically enticed these 'trustworthy employees' to take responsibility over large credits for a group of hunters. In this way, the *patron* handed down to a few influential individuals or *encargados* (person in charge) the task of discerning those who were trustworthy and deserved credit from those who did not deserve it. As I have said, these individuals were influential as long as they were at the entrance point of the pyramidal networks through which market goods circulated within the communities.

However, this position was tenable only as long as the individual could meet the Paraguayan *patrones'* demands to keep a good credit balance. Thus, *encargados* had to be especially careful and selective with regards to whom they would extend the benefit of credit, usually restricting it to progressively closer kin. This implied a form of restricted circulation which was resented by those relatives who were located beyond its reach and mistrusted by those who were at its borders. As a consequence, the 'authority' of these influential individuals (who still exist) has always been on shaky grounds. The more successful they are in securing the trust of their *patrones* by carefully selecting who deserves credit, the more they become the target of gossip and resentment among those people in the communities who maintain a less direct relation with them.

Missionary Patronage

In order to become an influential individual in the patronage network that extended from the missionaries (Catholic in Fuerte Olimpo and NTM in Diana), an individual had to respond to the missionaries' demands to abandon the 'old ways.' That is, by refraining from practices such as the initiation ritual, ritual chanting, fasting, storytelling, retelling of visionary dreams and the like, an individual would receive more aid and in many cases would administer the distribution of aid in the community. According to several Ebitoso, the demands of the NTM missionaries also included

conversion to Christianity; sending children to school; showing 'work discipline;' and participating in Biblical studies.⁸

In the community of Diana, as a consequence of these demands, those families who were closer to the missionaries ended up being among the most literate and shared to a greater extent than others the missionaries' discourses about progress. Moreover, the missionaries handed down responsibilities to those individuals and families who, in their views, had made more 'progress;' that is, those who had moved away from everything that the missionaries considered Indian. For example, Cleto, the man who initially befriended the missionaries, and who Susnik described as being 'very acculturated,' became the first teacher, the first 'person in charge' of a community (i.e., leader/influential individual), the first Yshiro minister, and the first Yshiro to administer the store opened by the missionaries in the community.⁹

Patronage and The Lack of Leadership

Although expanding patronage networks shaped new kinds of 'leaderships' in the Ebitoso communities, the influence of these individuals was quite unstable. After people failed to show up at a meeting called by the leaders of the (now abandoned) community of Wututa, Doña Elsa Boyani, a Tomaraho elder who had been raised among the Ebitoso, commented to me in 1991:¹⁰

(s) The old system in the big villages was such that the elders would meet in the *harra* (place in the centre of a community) and would begin to talk. When they met, they gave much advice and they stressed the unity and the love that people must have for each other. When the leaders talked and asked for their people's support, the people never turned their leaders

⁸It would be erroneous to understand conversion simply as a facade to obtain benefits from these particular *patrones*. Although the people who felt coerced to convert to Christianity clearly narrate this experience as one of conscious accommodation to unfavorable circumstances, there are many other people who talk about their conversion as a heart felt search for a way out of their predicaments, which obviously included much more than basic economic needs.

⁹ Both Susnik (1957b:6, 1995:40) and Renshaw (1996:236) mention these roles but without giving the name of the individual who occupied them. After I asked people in Diana it became clear that it was Cleto who occupied all these roles.

¹⁰Wututa was a community created in 1987 and finally abandoned in 1995. In Chapter Three I will provide a detailed account of the circumstances leading to the creation and abandonment of this community.

down. They were united, they worked as a group for there was harmony and there was joy. There was no hatred among them. Now, it may seem strange but the people of the new generations have no trust in each other. When the leaders look for their people's support, they turn them down (Field notes, 03/08/91).

As we will see later, the community's lack of support for their leaders has recently changed but, as Doña Elsa's comment reveals, the leaders who emerged from patronage networks had little authority and little capacity to mobilize their communities. In effect, the need for these new leaders was limited since many people could sustain their own individual relationship with Paraguayan *patrones*. Moreover, the limited scope of this new leadership (i.e., the channelling of market goods), the displacement of previous bonds of reciprocity and the individualist ethic promoted by missionaries and settlers, conjoined to create a situation in which centrifugal forces permanently conspired against the emergence of a strong leadership with the capacity to mobilize entire communities in the pursuit of collective projects.

The demands of different *patrones* added new constraints to the Ebitoso's ways of living. Although with a new language of state-driven development, the hegemonic coincidence establishing that Indians had to be transformed into modern productive citizens, continued to inform the practices of the Whites who were in contact with the Ebitoso. Thus, while the life of the Ebitoso could not be totally engineered, as development rhetoric claimed, the hegemonic coincidence had as an effect the narrowing of the space within which those lives could unfold. However, by the beginning of the 1970s, the 'hegemonic coincidence' began to crumble. This had important consequences for how development and Indians were conceived by the Whites and for the opportunities it created for Indigenous organizing.

The End of Hegemonic Coincidence and the Transnational Connection

Adding to the general turmoil that many parts of the world witnessed during the late 1960s, the Catholic Church in Paraguay went through important transformations that changed its 'traditionally' uncritical attitude toward the state. Increasingly since the mid 1960s and peaking in the early 1970s, the Catholic Church entered in direct confrontation with the Stroessner regime over social and political issues (Carter 1992:63-88). The Theology of Liberation revolutionized the way in which many members of the clergy saw the Catholic church's role in society and, thus, contributed an important institutional space for 'progressive ideals' in Paraguay. Several 'progressive' projects with a focus on Indigenous peoples were designed within this institutional space (Vysokolan 1983:32; Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995: 325-327). These projects, along with the transnational networks in which they were inserted and the various political visions that they represented, had important consequences for the development of Paraguayan

indigenismo. One of these consequences was the demise of the hegemonic coincidence and the transformation of a relatively amicable *indigenista* field into a field fraught with antagonisms between different *indigenista* institutions.

Among the projects generated in the early 1970s by members of the Catholic Church, *Marandú* (information in Guaraní) stands out for its objectives and for its effects in the Paraguayan *indigenista* field. The project was inspired by the *Barbados Declaration* (IWGIA 1971), which among other things, demanded that the state respect Indigenous peoples' right to be different. The declaration also asked that missionaries cease proselytization and instead contribute to Indigenous peoples' struggles for liberation. Finally, it also called upon anthropology to contribute data and interpretations that could be used by Indigenous peoples to fight for their liberation.

The Paraguayan *indigenista*, Miguel Chase-Sardi, a signatory of the Barbados Declaration, enlisted the support from the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), based in Copenhagen, for project *Marandú* during the 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm. Later, Survival International (London) and the Inter-American Foundation also became sponsors of the project. The objectives of *Marandú* were as follows: to inform Indigenous peoples of their rights; to train leaders in organizational skills with the aim of creating an Indigenous organization of national scope; to connect this organization with international support groups; and to promote a national campaign of education in order to fight the rampant racism that prevailed in Paraguay against Indigenous peoples (Renshaw 1976; Chase-Sardi and Colombres 1975; Bodley 1982:207-209; Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:326-327; Horst 1998:257).

Marandú was part of the widespread process of organization building that, throughout the 1970s, shaped the transnational Indigenous rights movement which was composed of both Indigenous organizations and non-indigenous support organizations (see Sanders 1977; Bodley 1982:165-216; Van Cott 1994; Wilmer 1993; Ramos 1998; Warren 1998; Albó 1999:823-860; Brysk 2000). However, as we will soon see, in Paraguay the process of creating Indigenous organizations was quickly thwarted.

In 1974, members of *Marandú* joined anthropologist Mark Munzel and IWGIA in publicly blaming the Paraguayan government and some Paraguayan *indigenistas* for their complicity in genocidal practices used against the Ache-Guayaki in the Eastern region of Paraguay (see Munzel 1973, 1974).¹¹ Formal complaints were filed before the Organization of American States and the UN Sub-commission for Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities by Richard Arens, a U.S. professor of law, under the auspices of the Anti-slavery Society of London and the International League for the Rights of Man of New York. The lobbying of the human rights network, particularly

¹¹Horst (1998:250) has pointed out that the events surrounding the Ache-Guayaki case were the result of the Stroessner regime attempting to speed up the process of integration of Indigenous peoples.

influential with the Carter administration in the US, was threatening to the Stroessner regime since they asked the US government to suspend aid for development to those countries that abused human rights. Thus, in October 1975, the regime reorganized the DAI and renamed it *Instituto Nacional del Indígena* (INDI) in an attempt to improve its image. INDI was still under the jurisdiction of the military but its new task was “to plan and execute development programs for Indigenous peoples *while respecting their cultures*” (Decree No. 18,365, cited in Horst 1998:246; Bejarano 1976:238. Emphasis added).

The regime did not forget the support that *Marandú*'s members gave to Munzel's public complaint against the Paraguayan government's genocidal practices. In the context of the Cold War, where any criticism of the status quo in Paraguay was depicted as a communist threat to 'National Security' (see Yore 1992), the government and some *indigenista* institutions depicted *Marandú*'s activities in this light (see Bejarano 1976:109; Horst 1998:219-238). In December 1975, amidst a wave of repression, several members of *Marandú* were imprisoned and tortured. They were accused of being communists and the project was terminated (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995: 328-329; Horst 1998:248-249). However, the Paraguayan government soon released the prisoners. This turn of events responded to the international attention that Richard Arens' edited book about the Ache-Guayaki situation (*Genocide in Paraguay*) directed towards Paraguay. The book, published in early 1976 added strength to the Indigenous rights network that was lobbying the US governments in order to obtain the release of the prisoners (see Sanders 1977:26).

The Paraguayan government finally released the prisoners and also allowed Indigenous leaders who had worked with *Marandú* to create *Asociación de Parcialidades Indígenas* (API), an Indigenous organization of national scope. This was a clever move since, by doing this, the regime depicted itself as tolerant with dissidents without losing control over the *indigenista* field. In effect, with the previous creation of INDI, which was given the authority to oversee all, even private, activities related to Indigenous peoples affairs, the regime had already created the conditions which would allow it to remain a key player in the *indigenista* field.

The events of the first half of the 1970s showed that the hegemonic coincidence had come to an end. Now there was a sector in the Paraguayan *indigenista* field which not only questioned the legitimacy of the use of coercion to integrate Indigenous peoples into the national society but also supported the idea that Indigenous peoples' cultural differences should be respected. This sector, which I will call **critical indigenismo or indigenistas**, became part of the growing transnational network formed by the Indigenous rights movement and, since then, has mostly depended on the latter for funding and other forms of support. The other sector of Paraguayan *indigenismo*, which I will call **integrationist indigenismo or indigenistas** because they continued to favour a model of development that implied the integration and eventual disappearance of Indians as distinct societies, remained strongly attached to the state through INDI.

The connection of one of these sectors with a transnational network produced a fundamental shift in the whole dynamics of the *indigenista* field. In effect, the critical *indigenistas* had brought the transnational human rights network into these dynamics. This network had the capacity to influence a transnational public of decision-makers and the flow of development aid towards the Stroessner regime. Thus, it became an ever-present interlocutor which played the role of audience and arbiter of the struggles waged by the contending sectors of Paraguayan *indigenismo* (see Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:330; Robbins 1999:116-117; Horst 1998: 150-250).

Although the hegemonic coincidence came to an end in the mid 1970s, it is important to point out that the differences and antagonisms that emerged were often muffled by both sides. In effect, given the different capacities that each of these sectors had to mobilize support in the national and international scene, toning down their antagonism provided some advantages to both. On the one hand, it provided the critical *indigenistas* some space to manoeuvre within the national scene, which was tightly controlled by the regime. On the other hand, it provided the government-backed integrationists some 'democratic' legitimacy which helped to avert international campaigns which could hinder the flow of development aid to the regime. Under the umbrella of this 'truce,' many individual *indigenistas* circulated as staff from institutions aligned with one sector to the other. Moreover, both sectors even maintained some degree of collaboration on specific projects. Particularly during the first years of the API's existence and until the mid 1980s, this kind of collaboration between the different sectors of Paraguayan *indigenismo* was common. Yet under this collaborative appearance a muted 'war of positions' was raging.

Law 904/81 and Surrogate Antagonisms

Within the more or less forced 'collaborative spirit' that dominated the Paraguayan *indigenista* field after the mid 1970s, INDI convoked several *indigenista* institutions and API in order to discuss the situation of Paraguay's Indigenous peoples. The meeting, convened in 1978, was aimed at drafting the *Estatuto de las Comunidades Indígenas* (Statutes of Indigenous Communities), later known as Law 904/81. Although the initiative came from the state, Stroessner's government only intended it to ameliorate the regime's international reputation which had been badly hurt by the Ache-Guayaki campaign. Thus, the government kept delaying the final drafting and approval of the law. Law 904 was finally passed in 1981, after the critical *indigenistas* mobilized their international contacts who, in turn, pressured the Paraguayan government with the threat of pulling back development funding (Robins 1999:116-122; Kidd 1997a:116 ; Horst 1996:253-348).

Law 904/81 refuted two 'corollaries' of the hegemonic coincidence, that is, that Indians had to be transformed in the name of progress and development, and that, pedagogic violence should be used when needed to enforce this transformation. In effect,

article one of Law 904/81 declared that the Law's aim was "the social and cultural preservation of the Indigenous communities [and] the defence of their patrimony and traditions." Article four, in turn, said that "under no circumstance will the use of force or coercion be accepted as a means to promote the integration of Indigenous communities into the national society." Considering these articles one can say that in the Law was inscribed the end of the hegemonic coincidence.

The Law also included the recognition that Indigenous peoples needed enough land to maintain their ways of life (article 18); and that their communities needed legal status (article 7) (see INDI 1998). Although the Law incorporated the most basic demands of the critical *indigenistas*, it also have several problematic aspects such as the lack of precision regarding specific responsibilities of state institutions (see Vysokolan 1981; 1983:41). Many of these problems became fully visible as critical *indigenistas* pushed for the application of the Law, however, the main problem was readily visible: the Law gave INDI an enormous capacity to manipulate Indigenous communities.

According to the Law, in order to claim lands, Indigenous peoples had to follow a series of steps: First, a minimum of twenty families have to gather together to form a group. Second, these families had to choose leaders who would request legal status for the group as an Indigenous community, and for themselves as legal leaders (article 9). Finally, the community through its leaders would make a formal request for lands to the government (article 20).¹² The problem was that, according to the Law, it was in INDI's hand to ultimately grant legal recognition to the community and its leaders (article 12). Without that recognition, leaders could not start the process of claiming lands. This meant that the leaders were pressed to maintain good relations with INDI's bureaucrats. The full dimensions of the problem become clear if we consider that article 3 of the Law left open a window for integrationist agendas. In effect, the article stated that "respect for traditional forms of organization does not preclude that, in use of their right for self-determination, Indigenous communities can adopt other forms of organization . . . allowing their integration into the national society" (INDI 1998:2). Some critical *indigenistas* thought that, in this form, the Law increased the state's capacity to extend its

¹²According to the Law (articles. 18, 21 and 24), in the Chaco, each Indigenous community has the right to obtain from the government a minimum of 100 hectares per family composing it. Whether Indigenous communities received this minimum or more had to be determined by the state *Instituto de Bienestar Rural* (Institute of Rural Welfare), which had to factor into its calculation that the amount of land actually granted to an Indigenous community had to be enough to assure its economic **and cultural survival**. For example, the calculation of the actual minimum of land necessary for an Indigenous community with 'agricultural traditions' would have to factor in the quantity and quality of land in relation to agricultural practices. This calculation would vary if the community under consideration had a 'hunting and gathering tradition.'

patronage network into the communities by promoting leaders who, in order to obtain lands, would comply with the state's goal of integration.

With Law 904/81 the position of Indigenous leaders as representatives of their communities became a focal point of controversies between the different sectors of *indigenismo*. This had important repercussions for the Ebitoso, as well as for other Indigenous peoples, because it meant for them the proliferation of new *patrones* who contributed to the intensification of the centrifugal forces already operating in the communities.

Owning Indigenous Leaders' Voices

The passing of Law 904/81, in addition to experiences with development projects during the 1960s and 1970s, modified the critical *indigenistas'* strategies regarding land and development for Indigenous peoples. Until the 1980s, *indigenistas* had either purchased lands to settle and promote agricultural development projects for Indigenous peoples or convinced governments to donate some hectares of state land for that purpose. By the mid 1980s, many *indigenistas* started to see their role as one of supporting Indigenous peoples' land claims by acting as pressure groups to make the Stroessner government abide the Law 904/81 (see Stunneberg 1993:179-181; Vysokolan 1992:176-178)¹³. This new strategy finally broke the 'truce' that had reigned between both sectors since the mid 1970s. Again disputes about each *indigenista* sector's legitimacy to represent the interests of Indigenous peoples erupted. In these disputes, to 'own' the voice of the Indigenous leaders was critical. By 'owning' the voice of Indigenous leaders I mean that *indigenistas* actively searched for leaders who, in more or less subtle ways, would say that the agenda of a given sector of Paraguayan *indigenismo* was the same agenda of the Indigenous peoples they represented.

Among the Ebitoso, the upsurge of antagonism between the sectors of Paraguayan *indigenismo* further intensified the centrifugal forces which impeded the emergence of a common collective agenda. The anthropologist John Renshaw, who visited the community of Diana in the late 1970s and early 1980s, already saw several factions that had formed in the community. Each faction and their leaders were associated to different *patrones*: the military, the missionaries and the ranchers (see Renshaw 1996:234-237). With the passing of Law 904/81, factionalism and the struggle for leadership intensified

¹³In 1991, only 13 out of 96 Indigenous communities of the Paraguayan Chaco had land titles granted (Stunneberg 1993:219). In 1997, 70% of land claims (amounting to 970,000 hectares of land) were still waiting to be solved (see Lackner 1999).

since *legal* leadership became a much desired position.¹⁴ An 'influential individual' who had the legal representation of a community was in a position to obtain more benefits from the hub of the *indigenista* patronage network located in Asunción.

This hub was constituted, until the late 1980s, by the API and INDI. This is because INDI was the institution which granted legal leadership and API was touted the organization that represented all Indigenous peoples. Given that disputes for leadership were no longer defined solely in the communities but also in the offices of the *indigenistas* in Asunción, Ebitoso (and other Indigenous) leaders had to move back and forth between their communities and the capital city. Apparently, at the beginning, local *patrones* connected their client-leaders (i.e., their trustworthy influential individuals) to the wider patronage networks in the capital city. For example, local military authorities connected 'their' client-leaders with military officers who staffed the higher echelons of INDI. Similarly, missionaries connected their own proteges with their respective institutions in Asunción.

Indigenistas promoted to the status of leaders those individuals who would better echo their own positions. They did this by channelling 'aid' for a community through them and by attacking as 'inauthentic' those leaders that they perceived as aligned with 'the enemy' (i.e., the other sector of *indigenismo*) (see Chase-Sardi 1987:126). Leaders, in turn, used the language of their *indigenista patrones* to frame their own claims over legal leadership. However, as the leaders became familiar with the *indigenista* field they were able to achieve some independence from specific *patrones* by strategically switching alliances (see Cordeu 1999:25-27; Kidd 1995a:63-64; Horst 1998:311-345). This underscores the point that Indigenous leaders were clearly aware that they would receive support from different *indigenistas* insofar as they were able to 'speak the languages' of the different sectors of *indigenismo*. In order to play one sector against the other to their own benefit leaders had to develop and intimate knowledge of the *indigenistas'* discourses and agendas, which in turn required some leaders to stay for longer periods of time in the capital city than in their communities.

Nevertheless, in order to sustain their leadership, these leaders had to keep *patrones* and followers connected through a two-way flow: on the one hand, leaders had

¹⁴In several passages throughout the dissertation I qualify some leaders as 'legal.' By this I intend to signal that in the Yshiro communities there are many leaders or influential individuals who do not have legal status. The distinction is important because while non-legal leaders supposedly cannot carry out certain legal procedures such as claiming lands or demanding aid from the state on behalf of a community, they have the capacity to mobilize groups of supporters for different purposes, including the ousting of a legal leader. In addition, INDI officials often bypass legal leaders for whom they have no sympathy and attend to claims from these other individuals. In this way they erode 'unfriendly' legal leaders.

to channel their *patrones*' 'aid' to the communities in order to have a group of followers to represent; on the other hand, leaders lent their voices as 'representatives' of a group of a given community to their *patrones*. This two-way flow, mediated by leaders, had two interconnected effects. Firstly, it produced a situation in which influential individuals found it possible and profitable to create a new faction, claim to represent it, and 'exchange' this representation for some *indigenista*'s aid. Secondly, because of these 'exchanges' Indigenous leaders became inescapably immersed in the underlying struggle between competing *indigenistas*, which increasingly began to include issues of authenticity. I will address the first point in more detail in Chapter Three. For now, I turn to the second point.

The Politics of Authenticity

As we saw, until the critical *indigenistas* began to pressure the Paraguayan government to abide by the Law 904/81 both sectors of Paraguayan *indigenismo* maintained a 'truce' which allowed some degree of collaboration between them while an underlying 'war of positions' was taking place. This was particularly the case with the API, which became a gathering point for *indigenistas* of different convictions, from military officers who were members of INDI to critical *indigenistas* who had formed *Marandú*. These *indigenistas* worked together 'assisting' the Indigenous leaders of the API with their execution of a variety of programs such as land purchases, vaccination campaigns and a national census of Indigenous populations (see Horst 1998:260, 284; Renshaw 1996:21-23; INDI 1981). Yet under the collaborative facade each *indigenista* sector was trying to win over the API's leaders for their own agendas.

According to Horst (1998:256-263,283-284), who bases his analysis on documents produced by critical *indigenistas* and interviews which he held with them in 1995, INDI's top officers combined threats of coercive measures and economic enticements, such as giving a salary to API's leaders, as a way of (successfully) co-opting them. However, if one considers other information and the views of those who were API's Indigenous leaders at the time, the behaviour of critical *indigenistas* did not differ very much from that of the other sector. According to these former leaders, as they gathered confidence in themselves and tried to give API the direction they considered best, the critical *indigenistas* working as technical support staff began to obstruct the actions they proposed. As critical *indigenistas* would deny their support for those actions that they considered erroneous, the leaders of the API started to lean on staff members from INDI in order to carry them out.

The attitude of the critical *indigenistas* is not surprising if we consider Horst's report that, notwithstanding their inspiration derived from the Barbados Declaration, the people who formed *Marandú* (and later the technical support staff of API) were "eager to communicate [their] own agenda to their native audience, sometimes even to the exclusion of Indigenous peoples' interests" and "presented issues from the perspective of

what non-Indians believed the Indigenous peoples should know" (Horst 1998:226). Indeed, this attitude underlies *Marandú's* former director, Miguel Chase-Sardi, attack of API's leaders. For example, he asserted that the problems with API originated in one of *Marandú's* 'big mistakes,' which was to "accept leaders who were not [authentic Indigenous] leaders," since "these leaders, sent by the communities . . . were mostly those individuals who were more apt to relate with the national society. Therefore, they were the most acculturated individuals [who had] acquired the guile of Paraguayan politicians [. . .] and had lost the Indigenous concept of leadership, which is to act as a servant and distributor of goods among [their] people" (Chase-Sardi 1981:160; Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:331). When Indigenous leaders did not match these critical *indigenistas'* expectations of how an authentic Indigenous leader should behave, they were not only left without their support but they were also accused by their former mentors of stealing money from API.¹⁵

This controversy shows how the politics of authenticity began to creep into the *indigenista* field. Step by step, the value of an Indigenous agenda became dependent on whether it represented authentic Indigenous interests, which for critical *indigenistas* was to retain Indigenous peoples' 'indigeness.' Of course, 'indigeness' was defined according to the critical *indigenistas'* criteria.

Without denying that some leaders were effectively co-opted by INDI and turned into mere functionaries who worried mainly about their salaries, many leaders were (and still are) convinced that working from within the state would render results that could not be otherwise achieved. The increasingly intolerant attitudes on the part of the critical *indigenistas* toward these positions, only reinforced Indigenous leaders' perceptions of all *indigenistas* (whether integrationist or critical) as *patrones* with their own agendas. Don Bruno Barras, the Ebitoso leader I mentioned before, and who experienced first-hand the emergence and fall from grace of API, expressed this eloquently: "I have worked with every one of the *indigenista* institutions with presence in the Chaco. The one thing I learned from them was: me, me and me."¹⁶

Summing up, the passing of the Law 904/81 created a new terrain upon which the *indigenistas* played out their antagonisms. In order for the agendas of the *indigenistas* to claim some legitimacy, these had to be supported by Indigenous voices. Yet instead of opening spaces for Indigenous communities to express their views, the new situation

¹⁵Alberto Santa Cruz, the first president of API was jailed for several months and then released and cleared of all the charges (Alberto Santa Cruz, personal communication, November 1998).

¹⁶The leader was quoted by the anthropologist Verena Regehr (personal communication, September, 1999).

created new centrifugal forces in the form of new factionalism.¹⁷ These erupted as influential individuals competed for the support of *patrones* and for legal leadership. In any case, some Indigenous leaders learned that playing different *indigenistas* against each other they could create for themselves some degree of independence. Yet the price paid for using this strategy was the introduction, by critical *indigenistas*, of the politics of authenticity. In other words, playing *indigenistas* against each other opened the door for a politics in which the value given to an Indigenous leader's position depended on whether such position reflected dominant views of indigenosity or not.

When the 'transition government' of General Rodriguez replaced the Stroessner's regime in 1989, the situation of Indigenous peoples and the politics within the *indigenista* field did not change very much (see Kidd 1997a).¹⁸ In fact, 'democratic rule,' which began in 1993, made things even more complicated. Political parties now joined *indigenista* institutions in deploying 'aid' through client-leaders who would support their candidates (see Kidd 1995a:64-69).

Democracy, Development and Hunter-Gatherers

The most remarkable event of the post-Stroessner period was the drafting of a new constitution in 1992. This provided critical *indigenista* and Indigenous leaders with the opportunity to address concerns that had emerged through their experiences with Law 904/81 of the previous decade (Horst 1998:349-409). One of these concerns was that the state had tended to grant Indigenous communities the minimum amount of land indicated by the Law regardless of whether or not this minimum was enough to sustain the 'cultural tradition' of a given community (see footnote 13 above). This meant that an Indigenous community whose economy and culture were based on hunting and gathering would not receive enough land for their economic and cultural survival.

This concern began to emerge in the mid 1980s, when some critical *indigenistas* and applied anthropologists informed by 'participatory' trends in development expressed doubts about the wisdom of promoting development projects that were based on outsiders' objectives and values. These *indigenistas* and applied anthropologists began to ponder whether the neglect of Indigenous peoples' objectives and values could explain the repeated failures of development projects based on agricultural schemes (see Regehr 1984; Robbins 1984; Seelwische 1984; Stunneberg 1991:34-39). Building on these ideas, other applied anthropologists, such as Volker Von Bremen (1987, 2000) and John

¹⁷As I mentioned, in the following chapter I will analyze in more detail how this factionalism operated.

¹⁸Stroessner was ousted in a putsch led by General Rodriguez in February, 1989. We will discuss this in more detail in coming chapters.

Renshaw (1989,1996), argued that development projects failed because they were based on an agriculturalist mentality or ethic that was antithetical to the mentality or ethic of the Indigenous peoples who inhabited the Chaco. The mentality or ethic to which they made reference was determined by their hunter-gatherer traditions.

The Hunter-Gatherer Paradigm

According to Von Bremen and Renshaw, the Indigenous peoples' behaviour towards development projects reflected the mentality of hunter-gatherers. Von Bremen (1987, 2000), who elaborated the most popular version of this idea, argues that Indigenous peoples of the Chaco are hunter-gatherers who live in harmony with nature and, thus, they do not transform it. Rather, they adapt to it and gather from nature whatever it has already produced. According to Von Bremen, this way of life underscores a 'philosophy of passivity' through which Indigenous peoples of the Chaco interpret the new circumstances produced by the contact. This 'philosophy' induces Indigenous peoples to learn the details of their environment in order to recognize when and where there would be an abundance of resources necessary for their survival. This is a 'philosophy of passivity' in the sense that Indigenous peoples' knowledge is oriented not to transform the environment to make it productive but just to anticipate where the fruits of its natural productivity will be available. Looked at through the lens of this 'philosophy,' and to the extent that they offer goods freely available, development projects appear to Indigenous peoples as (modern) hunting and gathering grounds where resources abound.

In this way, Von Bremen does not see Indigenous peoples' shifting alliances with competing *indigenistas* as being related to the politics of an all pervasive patronage system. Rather, he sees this shifting alliances as evidence of the hunter-gatherer mentality. For him, Indigenous peoples do not shift alliances but move from one development project (or, hunting and gathering ground) promoted by a sector of *indigenismo* to another project promoted by another sector. The shift from one hunting and gathering ground to another depends on the abundance of resources offered by them. Von Bremen concludes that development projects fail because they try to convert people whose 'mentality' is averse to transform nature (i.e., hunter-gatherers) into people who do transform it (i.e., agriculturalists).¹⁹

¹⁹I cannot expand on this here but it is important to stress that Von Bremen made reference to the supposed mentality of peoples whose pre-contact and early contact subsistence was dependent on hunting and gathering methods. However, by 1980s most of these peoples were subsisting on the basis of a mixed economy where wage-labor and several forms of agriculture were very important. For a thorough critique of Von Bremen's and other similar arguments applied to Indigenous peoples living in the Chaco see Gordillo (1993).

I must begin my discussion of Renshaw's version of the hunter-gatherer mentality by highlighting that, in a 1996 edition of his doctoral dissertation, originally defended in 1986, this author called for a critical revision of his and Von Bremen's ideas prevalent in the 1980s. He wrote:

I do not mean to criticize Volker Von Bremen. His work has been misinterpreted. Yet I think that it is time to make a critical review of the concepts that we used in the 1980s. Re-reading my chapter on property, resources and equality, sometimes I fear it tends to reinforce the view of Indigenous peoples as hunters of projects. It is an important argument of this work but it must be read with a critical attitude. It was a useful idea, although still it does not capture the whole reality of the situation and culture of Indigenous peoples of the Chaco (Renshaw 1996:9-10).

In spite of this qualification, and given the impact of his work in Paraguayan *indigenista* circles, discussing Renshaw's thesis is important.

Renshaw (1989, 1996), argued that the existence of mechanisms of 'generalized reciprocity' among hunter-gatherers determines a cultural preference for wage labour. According to him, the pressures to share, characteristic of hunting and gathering societies, implies that Indigenous peoples of the Chaco prefer those activities which provide immediate returns, such as hunting and gathering, over those activities where returns are deferred, such as in agriculture. Renshaw argues that, in the Chaco context, *changa* (casual labour) is, among the new economic activities, the closest to hunting and gathering since its return in the form of wages is paid immediately or in advance (through credit). Thus, for Renshaw wage labour is better adapted to the requirements of an ethics of 'generalized reciprocity' characteristic of hunter-gatherers.

From this perspective, Renshaw sees the failure of development projects as resulting from these projects' disregard for the economic ethics of the Chaco's Indigenous peoples. In effect, development projects fail because, by trying to incorporate Indigenous peoples into activities with deferred return (i.e., agriculture), they interfere with those activities Indigenous peoples prefer because they produce immediate returns (i.e., wage labour/hunting-gathering).

The impact of Von Bremen and Renshaw's ideas in the Paraguayan *indigenista* field was enormous. Almost every *indigenista*/anthropologist working in the Paraguayan Chaco, at one time or another, explained the dynamics between Indigenous peoples and the Whites by reference to either of these versions of the hunting-gathering mentality (see ARP 1994; Delport 1998; Fritz 1993; Kidd 1995a; Miller 1989; Prieto and Bragayrac 1995; Rojas 1996). What is more important, this new imagination, in which the Chaco Indians were characterized as hunter-gatherers, was successfully black-boxed, thereby becoming an 'authorized imagination' with the status of a paradigm. Indeed, the 'hunter-gatherer paradigm' played an important role in how the constitutional assembly drafted article 64 of the new Paraguayan constitution of 1992. This article states that Indigenous

communities have the right to be granted lands which are enough in quantity and quality to ensure the conservation and development of their own ways of life (see CNP 1992: art. 64).

From the moment when the new constitution was approved to today, the linkage of land and way of life has become the central issue dividing the critical from the integrationist *indigenistas*.

Contemporary Debates, Exclusionary Debates

The main arguments that critical and integrationist *indigenistas* rise to back their positions about lands for Indigenous peoples are diverse. Critical *indigenistas* argue that the maintenance of an Indigenous way of life requires large tracks of land; whereas the integrationist *indigenistas* argue that small holdings, properly worked, should be sufficient. At the core of this debate is the question of whether Indigenous peoples' of the Chaco are hunter-gatherers or not. In this context one would have expected the very definition of what is a hunter-gatherer to be a highly contentious issue. And yet surprisingly, almost everybody has accepted Von Bremen's and Renshaw's definitions as valid.

As we will see in later chapters, the fact that these can be used for multiple and even mutually contradictory purposes, is at the root the popularity of these ideas. For example, the integrationist sector of Paraguayan *indigenismo*, which is linked to the state and the powerful national association of landowners *Asociación Rural del Paraguay* (ARP), claims that contemporary Indigenous peoples of the Chaco no longer fit these definitions of hunter-gatherers. This sector asserts that tracks of land which would be enough for agricultural activities should solve Indigenous peoples' 'development problems' by fully integrating them into the economy of the nation (ARP 1994; Stahl 1993). The critical sector believes that because hunting and gathering still shape the ways of life of Indigenous peoples in the Chaco (either through values, mentalities or practices), only allocating lands large enough to sustain these ways of life will solve their 'development problems' and, in addition, ensure the preservation of the environment (Grunberg 1997; Von Bremen 1994).

As I will discuss more fully in subsequent chapters, in these debates, competing *indigenista* institutions mobilize diverse imaginations that have emerged in the last two or three decades of the 20th century (including Indigenous peoples, environment, and sustainability), but leave little space for Indigenous peoples to carry on with their lives according to their own imaginations. As Renshaw, who was involved with *Marandú* and later with API and INDI, expressed after many years of his involvement with the Paraguayan *indigenista* field, "There have been some advances in the last few years . . . but until now the voices that are more clearly heard are those of the *indigenista* interlocutors" (1996:9). In my experience, this is not a surprise considering that several non-indigenous supporters who are strongly committed to the 'Indigenous cause' imagine

their relations with Indigenous peoples in similar ways as those expressed in the following quote:

... I became much more involved in national politics and, without realizing it, the Enxet [Indigenous peoples of the Southern Paraguayan Chaco] *began to regard me as a powerful leader in their struggle to regain their land*. Over a two-year period, the Enxet were transformed from an unknown Indigenous group to significant actors within national politics ... *I was perceived by the Enxet as the leading force behind this movement and they were willing to back whichever political action I suggested* (Kidd 2000:30. Emphasis added).

I do not dispute that many non-indigenous supporters are a key resource for Indigenous peoples' movements. However, the temptation to interpret the role of non-indigenous supporters as if they were leaders (or saviours) has nothing but negative effects. Indeed, these kinds of interpretations ensure that Indigenous peoples will continue to be objects of the conversations and disputes between *indigenistas* without ever being addressed as subjects with whom to establish a dialogue. During the past decade, Yshiro intellectuals have begun to respond to this situation by furthering visions of themselves and their future that try to avoid being entrapped by the imaginations which dominate the ongoing debates in the *indigenista* field and its transnational network. As I will discuss below, in these attempts, it is evident that for some Yshiro intellectuals the first and most pressing task is to recover the capacity to set the terms of these debates for themselves.²⁰

Conclusion: A New Emerging Governmentality?

If as Ferguson (1990) argued, development's instrument-effect is the extension of the state's bureaucratic power, then in the Paraguayan context, development extended a form of power which was expressed through an all-pervasive patronage system that reached deep into the Ebitoso communities. The extension of patronage networks was not an 'anomaly' in relation to a normal model of development. Rather, it was one of the

²⁰In this sense I disagree with Horst's (1998) overall understanding of Indigenous peoples' movements and their impact on Indigenous legislation in Paraguay. He presents an epic storyline according to which Indigenous peoples have been the main protagonists leading the debates that ended up in the constitutional recognition of their rights. Although in some sense they are main protagonists, up to now they have not been precisely the leading voices of the debates about their lives and futures. This is not intended to deny agency to Indigenous leaders, which they certainly have, but to make clear the need to critically assess the ways in which even their non-indigenous supporters constraint Indigenous leaders' agency.

concrete ways in which 'development' materialized as a practice in this particular setting' (see Barreto 1996).

This particular materialization of development had several effects. In this conclusion, I want to focus on three of them that I consider key in order to understand the scenario in which this story will unfold in the following chapters. These effects are, 1) the new kind of leadership that emerged among the Ebitoso; 2) the proliferation of *patrones* with different demands; and 3) the transnationalization of the Paraguayan *indigenista* field.

Concrete development projects for Indigenous peoples of the Chaco amounted to little more than the granting of 'aid,' mainly through the Catholic and New Tribe missions. However, this form of development directly or indirectly (by complementing the system of debt-bondage common in the area) contributed to the displacement of earlier forms of Ebitoso authority. This displacement was already taking place as a result of the changes in values, family patterns, and livelihood of the Ebitoso communities. For a series of reasons, the new forms of 'leadership' were ill-suited to counter the centrifugal forces operating within the Ebitoso communities since the arrival of the Whites in the Yshiro territories. First, the 'authority' of the new leaders, based as it was on their positions at the 'entry points' of circulation networks, was very limited and highly dependent on their capacity to respond to their *patrones'* demands. Second, given that in principle almost anybody could have his/her own *patron*, new leaders proliferated as Ebitoso 'wannabe-leaders' found themselves a *patron* among the many *indigenistas* that were spawned after the end of the hegemonic coincidence.

In effect, the end of the hegemonic coincidence brought a new series of *patrones* with new demands onto the scene. Thus, new leaders kept emerging in response to those demands. The passing of the Law 904/81 made the proliferation of leaders and their mutual struggles even more acute. This is because different sectors of Paraguayan *indigenismo* supported their own client/leaders' claims to legal leadership and disputed the claims of other *patrones'* client/leaders. Yet the new conditions in which the *indigenista* field started to operate after the end of the hegemonic coincidence also meant that the new leaders' role as brokers became more complex because now they had to 'reciprocate' their *patrones'* aid with their 'representativeness.' This meant that the other side of the relation that leaders brokered (i.e., the communities) acquired more weight than it had before. Now leadership depended on a delicate balance between the demands of *patrones* and the demands of supporters from the communities.

In part, the relative equalization of *patrones* and supporters' demands was an effect of the 'transnationalization' of the *indigenista* field. Given the capacity that the Indigenous rights and the human rights network had to influence the flow of external development aid critical for the Stroessner regime, the entire *indigenista* field had to open to imaginations that circulated throughout those transnational networks. In other words, at least when they addressed international interlocutors, even the integrationist *indigenistas* had to grapple with imaginations that commanded respect for Indigenous peoples' human

rights and cultural differences. Thus, along with the critical *indigenistas*, the integrationists were compelled to legitimize their agendas by having client Indigenous individuals, who represented a community or group, supporting their policies. In order to be useful for *patrones*, a client/leader needed to have a minimum of legitimacy as the representative of a community or group. This meant that the leaders became also accountable to the community and not only to the *patrones*.

But the transnationalization of the Paraguayan *indigenista* field also brought to bear a new politics of authenticity that, as we will see, has remained a pervasive feature of Paraguay's inter-ethnic politics. Lately, the politics of authenticity has been expressed through the continuing debates among *indigenistas* on whether or not Indigenous peoples of the Chaco are hunter-gatherers, and what consequences this may have for their development. Yet the striking feature of these debates is that Indigenous peoples are mostly absent from them. They only participate as the objects of the debates and not as debating subjects. This means that, in this case at least, the Yshiro have limited space to effectively influence the way in which the *yromo* and the world create and re-create their mutual interconnections. The agenda that inspires the Yshiro intellectuals with whom I am associated is precisely about creating this space.

As I had warned in the introduction to this part of the thesis, the story I have narrated in this and the previous chapter has many imprecisions and leaves many questions unanswered. Nevertheless, it helps to describe a change which I will take as the starting point from which to begin a more in-depth analysis of how neoliberal governmentality has come into being. This change, and starting point, is the end of the hegemonic coincidence.

We have seen that the Whites imagined Indians in a way that made the use of pedagogic violence 'natural' and justifiable in the pursuit of progress. Conversely, pedagogic violence helped to give stability to the imagination-Indians as building blocks for progress. I pointed out that the interplay of pedagogic violence and the imagination-Indians formed the basis for the hegemonic coincidence. Precisely, the end of the hegemonic coincidence marks a change because at that point it became evident that pedagogic violence and the imagination-Indians were not any longer mutually sustaining and that new imaginations were becoming authorized.

As I said before, Law 904/81 can be seen as an inscription of the end of the hegemonic coincidence. I argued that it refuted both 'corollaries' of the hegemonic coincidence, that is, that Indians had to be transformed in the name of progress and development, and that, pedagogic violence should be used when needed to enforce this transformation. This, I surmise, marks a departure from the previous imagination-Indians. Moreover, the very introduction of the term 'Indigenous' suggests that another imagination is operating here. Now, it might be remembered from my discussion in the Introduction that Indian was not just like any other imagination but one that formed the core of the ontology that grounds modern governmentality. Thus, the question that comes to mind is, does this change of imagination imply a change in the dominant

governmentality? If so, how did this take place? And, what are the characteristics of the emerging governmentality? I address these questions in the following part.

PART II *POROWO/MORALITIES*

Esnwherta said to the Yshiro: 'Because you killed my sons [the Anabsero] now you have to take their place. You will relate to the new generations as they related to you. And you will do it exactly as they did, otherwise you are all going to die.' That's the responsibility that Esnwherta gave to the *tobich oso* [the initiated men].

Keiwe, relating the *Esnwherta au'oso*. Tape recorded interview, June 1996

This sense of responsibility, of course, is a metaphor that denies closure; the actions, the connections, and intentions are not causal but obscure ceremonies.

(Vizenor 1995:675)

For a long time I had noticed that in matters of morality one must sometimes follow opinions that one knows to be quite uncertain, just as if they were indubitable . . . but, because I then desired to devote myself exclusively to the search for the truth, I thought it necessary . . . that I reject as absolutely false everything in which I could imagine the least doubt, in order to see whether, after this process, something in my beliefs remained that was entirely indubitable.

(Descartes [1636] 1998:18)

Descartes's *malin genie* has always been with us, in one disguise or another, his presence confirmed by ever renewed desperate attempts to annihilate the threat of relativism, as if no such attempts have ever been undertaken in the past. Modernity was lived in a haunted house.

(Bauman 1993:140)

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the way in which White settlers imagined Indians already prefigured the way in which they should treat them. In this sense, one can say that the imagination-Indians was also a moral imagination because it implicitly addressed a central moral question: what is the right thing to do (with the Indians)? Of course, the Cartesian project 'haunted' this question with the demand of absolute certainty; a certainty that could only be produced according to the logic of a regime of truth in which the starting assumption was the ontological separation of world and word (see page 16). Since the 18th century this regime of truth has increasingly

appeared as if it relegates moral questions to the back-room of beliefs while actually it only reformulates them as matter of 'facts' (see Docherty 1993:10; Larmore 1996:89-117; Latour 1999). In effect, this regime of truth has increasingly displaced God and custom as the source from which one could answer the question, 'what is the right thing to do.' In replacing those 'traditional' sources of moral answers, the modern regime of truth has installed facts or reality as the new source. Therefore, this regime of truth would answer to the question what is the right thing to do with the Indians by saying: know what the Indians are and you will know what is the right thing to do with them!

According to the logic of this regime of truth, facts (reality) speak for themselves and moral conduct automatically derives from them. Thus, given its grounding on Cartesian dualism, and given its moral significance, I will call this logic 'Cartesian moral logic.'¹ By moral logic I do not refer to specific moralities, rather, I refer to the logical procedure by which moralities are derived. For example, the modern regime of truth sets up the moral question ('what is the right thing to do') as a problem involving three terms, the subject who will display the right conduct, the morality that will indicate what the right conduct is, and the object of the right conduct.² According to the Cartesian moral logic, in order for the subject to know what is the right way to behave in relation to an external object (e.g., Indians, nature or reality), she or he must know what that external object is. Two related ideas are implicit in this logic. The first is that the object and the subject are self-contained entities. In other words, that they pre-exist their mutual relation. The second is that moralities derived from self-contained external objects are beyond doubt because they are not distorted by the subject's interests in those external objects, they are purely 'objective.'

¹I must point out that there exist other moral logics that also embody the ontological divide articulated by Descartes, yet relate to the 'Cartesian moral logic' in controversial ways (see Rorty 1979,1993; Bauman 1993b; Docherty 1993; Latour 1993:49-70). Of course, discussions about the relative value of the sources (word or world, or both) from which these logics derive their moral criteria are virtually unending. In spite of the highly abstract and circumscribed space in which these debates take place, all these moral logics have had impacts on everyday life as they are embodied by different actants. Nevertheless, Cartesian moral logic remains the dominant form of addressing moral questions in governmental circles. For this reason I will not address these other moral logics except tangentially. As I explain below, my focus will be the relation between the dominant Cartesian moral logic and another moral logic which under certain circumstances is enacted by the Yshiro.

²Throughout the chapters in this part I will repeatedly refer to 'the moral question.' By this it should be understood that I am referring to the question 'what is the right thing to do.'

In my own terminology I would say that this logic does not acknowledge that apparently self-contained entities (subject, object, moralities) are authorized imaginations, networks of actants which are indissolubly linked. This logic does not perceive that changes in moralities are changes in the whole network which produces at the same time those moralities, the subject who applies those moralities and the object upon which those moralities are applied. For example, we have seen that an index of the end of the hegemonic coincidence was the idea that exercising pedagogic violence was no longer the right thing to do to Indians. From the dominant Cartesian perspective this means that the moralities applied in relation to the Indians improved because it was discovered that, to say it in simplistic terms, representations of the Indians as savages, backward and the like, were not accurate; Indians (now Indigenous peoples) were actually people who lived in harmony with nature, who cherished egalitarianism and so on. This, (supposedly more accurate) 'representation' of the Indians required other (improved) moral conducts. From my own perspective, I would say that the whole network changed, thus we are dealing with an altogether different reality with its own objects, subjects, and moralities. Indeed, the end of the hegemonic coincidence signalled not only a change of the imagination-Indians and its associated moralities but also a change of the imagination-Us-Moderns, which was produced within the same network.

Briefly, my point is that visible changes in the imagination-Indians and its associated imaginations-moralities imply that the whole networks that sustained these particular actants changed. In the following three chapters, I intend to take a closer look into how this transformation has taken place since the end of the hegemonic coincidence and what consequences it has had. I will argue that new imaginations and moralities have emerged from the struggles of different actants against some of the effects of state-driven development. These new imaginations and moralities have reshaped the 'restricted governance' of earlier periods and produced small but important changes in the modern ontology upon which the former was grounded. In this way, they contributed to the emergence of neoliberal governmentality. I will show that this has taken place through a process that created a closely knit transnational network by simultaneously multiplying the connections between different actants (ranging from Yshiro communities, to social movements, and to development institutions) and by translating the different moralities that these actants enacted through their struggles.

In this part, I will use moralities as a lens through which to explore these struggles. Some readers might question why I enter into an analysis of moralities considering that moralities are just an epiphenomenon of more substantial or central processes. I choose this 'lens' because, as I indicated, in the modern regime of truth the gulf between 'fact and value' is taken as a starting point of inquiries about 'what must be done' (see Szerszynski 1996:109). Thus, showing that these inquiries (and the responses to them) are moral regardless of their claims of being just pragmatic, is a necessary part in the critique of this regime. But I have also chosen this lens in order to stress (again) the moral intention I have in writing this ethnography. In this sense, one of the objectives of

this part is to make more visible how this intention has shaped my telling of the genealogies of the previous part and also how it will shape my telling of the subsequent parts of this story. Thus, I have titled this part *Porowo/Moralities* both to highlight the centrality that moralities will play in this analysis and to stress the idea implicit in the *porowo* narratives that all storytelling is moral.

Using moralities to look at changes of governmentality poses a methodological problem. As I said, specific moralities are actants that emerge from networks of other related actants. In this sense, moralities are situated, that is, they are the product of specific networks, with specific shapes. For example, the moralities guiding the missionaries in their relations with the Indians of the Chaco emerged from networks composed by actants that were also part of the networks from which the moralities guiding the entrepreneurs emerged. But each network also had its own, not necessarily shared (or shared in the same way), actants. For example the role that the actant-God, or the Bible played in one network was not the same as the one they played in the other network. This gave each set of moralities their particularity, their situatedness.³ Now, the methodological problem is, how to distinguish between situated moralities without having to, in each case, give a detailed account of the networks from which they emerge? For this, I need a common thread or point of reference that will allow me to situate different moralities.

I use moral logics as this thread for three interconnected reasons. First, because moral logics are an unavoidable component of the moralities informing the struggles and changes I want to analyse. In effect, moralities are in all cases obtained through a certain procedure (i.e., moral logic) which I can extract from specific circumstances.⁴ Second, having this common thread will allow me not only to distinguish between moralities in relation to the Cartesian moral logic but in relation to another moral logic that I call relational. I will give more details on this moral logic in Chapter Three, now it will suffice to say that the relational moral logic, which is a constituent of the moralities displayed by some Yshiro, does not see self-contained entities as the source where one can find moral answers. Rather it is the network of relations making up actants (entities) what must be closely scrutinized in search for highly contextual moral answers. Third, distinguishing these moral logics will allow me to analyse how, and with what effects, they interact in the continuous process of mutual interconnection between the *yrimo* and

³If we were to narrow our focus we could even see that there were differences between moralities of individuals as well.

⁴The word 'extract' thoroughly describes what I will do, for the moral logics of which I speak are not already there. It is through a certain procedure (my analysis/distinction making) that I will distill/ produce/ simplify them from the complex circumstances and events that make up this story.

the world.

Throughout the three chapters in this part, and following the thread of the moral logics, I will progressively move from a narrow focus on a particular struggle among the Ebitoso towards wider processes involving the Yshiro but exceeding them and their geographical locale. In Chapter Three, I begin with an analysis of the circumstances in which a traditionalist group emerged among the Ebitoso. I identify in these events a point of intersection between the dominant Cartesian moral logic and the relational moral logic, and show how translations between them in the context of steep asymmetries change the meaning of the relational moral logic with the effect of making it increasingly more circumscribed. In Chapter Four, I follow the thread of moral logics as I highlight the connections between the events that brought about the emergence of 'Ebitoso traditionalism' with events reaching beyond the communities. I have two aims in this chapter: showing how the situated moralities from which traditionalism emerged came into existence in part as a result of processes set up by actants struggling with state-centred development, and showing how these processes actually promoted the growth of a tightly knit network connecting these actants and other actants with development institutions. In Chapter Five, I analyse how the new moralities and imaginations mobilized in these processes have been translated at key decision-making nodal points within governmental and development institutions with the effect of reconfiguring the rationale of government into a 'neoliberal governmentality.' It will be shown that this governmental rationality frames contemporary discourses and practices of development.

CHAPTER THREE: EBITOSO TRADITIONALISM¹

In the early 1980s, a group of Ebitoso leaders from Diana and Ylhirta (the two existing Ebitoso communities at the time) began to work together in order to obtain, from the Paraguayan government, legal property of 21,000 hectares of land in the place known as Ynishta. All these leaders stood out in their communities because of their variously privileged positions within diverse patronage networks. Some were well connected with integrationist *indigenista* institutions, others were better connected with critical *indigenistas*, and yet others only had connections with local *patrones* such as the military, ranchers or the New Tribes' missionaries.

According to INDI's interpretation of the Law 904/81, the first step the leaders had to take was to gather at least 200 families together in order to make a community big enough to claim this amount of land. In effect, INDI interpreted the law as saying that the state should give a community 100 hectares of land per family when in reality this figure was just the minimum. Although, the total number of families from Diana and Ylhirta who were willing to move was around seventy, the leaders convinced almost everybody in those communities to sign the petition for Ynishta in order to meet the required number. After most Ebitoso had signed the petition, the numbers of signatures were still short by about sixty families. A group of leaders headed by Don Bruno Barras decided to ask their ancestral rivals, the Tomaraho, for their signatures. The Tomaraho, who were living in very bad conditions in the logging camp of San Carlos, agreed to sign the petition. However, they were not sure if they would actually move to the new lands. Nevertheless, their elders thought that it was a good idea to be part of the land claim; if they eventually decided to leave San Carlos they would have a place to go.

According to the law, having gathered the necessary number of signatures, the next step was the election of leaders whom INDI would legally recognize and have as interlocutors during the land claim. The election was held in 1984 and it took place only in the Ebitoso communities (Stunnenberg 1993:229).² These communities chose the legal leaders from the group of leaders/influential individuals who were carrying forward the land claims. The individuals who won the election were those relatively more literate,

¹The version of the events that I narrate in this chapter is mostly based on a juxtaposition of the different versions narrated to me by their main protagonists. When available, I have also used written documents to form a wider picture of these events.

²Since that first election it became the norm for the Ebitoso communities to choose a *comision directiva* (steering committee) of at least three leaders, one of whom would act as the head of the committee.

fluent in the official languages and familiar with the intricacies of the Stroessner's bureaucracy. In part, these 'literate' individuals won the election because those community members who actually voted were the most literate people who understood better what was at stake in the election. However, it was not literacy *per se* but kinship that defined the election outcome. It might be remembered that, as a strategy to promote literacy and the gospel, the New Tribes' missionaries gave 'aid' mainly to those families who sent their children to school and Bible study groups (page 80). Through the years, siblings from those families kept sending their own children to school and, in the long run, those who were more literate tended to be close relatives among themselves.³ In other words, to say that the more literate individuals voted for the most literate leaders, is the same as saying that those leaders were elected by their closer relatives.⁴ In a few paragraphs more it will become evident why it is important to bring up this correlation between literacy and kinship. For now, let us continue with our story.

Ynishta, The First 'Independent' Ebitoso Community

In 1985, several families from Diana and a few from Ylhirta moved to the new settlement in Ynishta (See Map 8). The elected leaders told people in the communities that Ynishta would be the first community where the Ebitoso would be able to decide what they wanted to do without the interference of missionaries, military, or local *patrones*. They enticed people to move to Ynishta with two promises: mitigation of the exploitative relations with Paraguayan *patrones*, and a 'development project' to be financed by the *indigenistas* who worked in INDI and API. The 'development project' actually boiled down to a cooperative store that the leaders would manage and which, in theory, would replace Paraguayan *patrones*. The store would provide credits to the Ebitoso and, thus, would allow them to break from debt-bondage relations with Paraguayan *patrones*. However, given the circumstances in which the new community was created, the legal leaders became some sort of *patrones* themselves. They ended up adopting this role for two main reasons, first, in contrast to Diana and Ylhirta, which were close to the Paraguayan towns of Bahia Negra and Fuerte Olimpo respectively, Ynishta was thirty kilometres distant from the closest Paraguayan town, Bahia Negra. Without

³As a result of the missionaries' influence, a high degree of literacy was usually accompanied by discourses which equated progress with moving away from the 'old ways.'

⁴We must keep in mind that by the time the Ebitoso settled in Diana and Ylhirta, their numbers had decreased significantly and there were only a few families left. Through intermarriages, most descendants of those few families are today related to each other.

roads connecting these settlements and because the Ebitoso lacked motorboats, the old *patrones* were not as easily accessible. Second, both sectors of Paraguayan *indigenismo* routed their aid through the legal leaders, at least immediately after these families moved to the new community.⁵

In spite of similarities, some important differences existed between the quasi-patronage system in Ynishta and the patronage networks operating in Diana and Ylhirta. In the latter cases, excepting the missionaries network that operated according to a different economy of demands, the patronage networks connected to the trade of animal hides were built on the basis of a system of debt-bondage. This system was productive for *patrones* as long as four conditions were met: 1) *patrones* had total power to decide whether or not they would grant credit to an Ebitoso individual; 2) the Ebitoso had no effective means to pressure *patrones* for credit; 3) *patrones* operated more or less as a common front so that no debtor could switch *patron* without paying his/her debt; and 4) the local authorities actively dissuaded the Yshiro from attempting to withdraw from debt-bondage relations without paying their debts.

None of these conditions were fully met in the case of the cooperative store located in the new community:

- First, the leaders had some degree of discretion with regard to granting or denying credit but not as much as *patrones* did. In effect, INDI and API limited this discretion by tying further economic support for 'development projects' to the economic performance of the cooperative. These institutions expected that the cooperative would be run according to a logic of management mainly concerned with the self-preservation of the enterprise. Meeting this demand was very important for the leaders of Ynishta because without a steady flow of financial support from those institutions their leadership would be at risk.⁶ In addition, it is likely that issues of self-esteem might have been involved. Ebitoso leaders have to endure their Paraguayan neighbours' permanent teasing about their supposed lack of acumen to operate even the simplest business.⁷ This 'teasing' is very hurtful,

⁵It is useful to recall that at this time the antagonisms between the two sectors of Paraguayan *indigenismo* were still cloaked with an appearance of collaboration.

⁶ It must be remembered that the legal leaders emerged not only from law 904/81 but also from would-be-leaders' previous influence in specific patronage networks. Thus, as before, the legal leaders' capacity to channel goods from *patrones* (now mainly *indigenistas*) into the communities, remained a central source of 'authority' (see Kidd 1995a:63-68).

⁷Paraguayan *patrones* (especially store-owners) celebrate with scoffing happiness the 'failures' of Ebitoso cooperative stores. The counter-side of this happiness is the

especially for those Ebitoso who, as the legal leaders of Ynishta did, share the Paraguayan's discourses about progress and backwardness.

- Second, in contrast to Paraguayan *patrones*, the leaders were more susceptible to the influence of kin, especially since it was hard for them to convince people that the 'aid' given by *indigenista* institutions had to be treated according to an 'economy of demands' governing more 'business-like' patronage networks. The result was that the demands from INDI and API were strongly countered by those of the leaders' kin (practically the whole community) who kept asking for more credit.
- Third, comparable to the last point made above with respect to *patrones*, the leaders could not use violence to coerce the community to be 'loyal' to the cooperative. The local Paraguayan authorities would not cooperate with new '*patrones*' that took away their clients. Thus, people in the communities did not worry about trying to pay their debts to the cooperative.

By 1986, the leaders began to see that if they kept giving credits when requested the cooperative would go bankrupt. Yet kin pressures for further credit would not stop. Thus, the leaders first started to refuse credit to their most-distant relatives, who were in a weaker position to pressure them. Then, they followed suit with progressively closer kin.⁸ Doing this, the leaders forestalled the collapse of the cooperative for three years but also eroded their own base of support. So, when the cooperative finally went bankrupt, so did their leadership.⁹

Independently of what ultimately happened with the cooperative, it is worth stressing that the first individuals and families to whom the legal leaders denied credit were adversely affected. These individuals and families had to reconnect with their old Paraguayan *patrones* who were 'offended' after they have been 'abandoned' by their clients. Thus, in several cases these Ebitoso had to endure conditions that were even harder than the usual ones, in order to obtain credit from offended *patrones*. Some of the 'influential individuals' who had lost the election for legal leadership were among this group of people. These 'influential individuals' still had contacts with *indigenista* institutions and some of them, including Don Bruno Barras, took the newly

dread with which local Paraguayan store-owners see the possibility of a community store succeeding and taking away their clients.

⁸Recall that from the 1950s onwards a change of orientation towards the nuclear family had been taking place in the Ebitoso communities (see page 77).

⁹However, some of these leaders were able to use their connections with integrationist *indigenistas* to obtain different jobs in the administrative apparatus of the state.

disenfranchised group's complaints to INDI and API, thus becoming their spokespersons.

These institutions requested, from the legal leaders, an explanation as to why they were denying credit from the cooperative to some members of the community. The leaders answered that they had suspended credit to those with large debts because they were not paying them back. If these peoples were complaining, the leaders said, it was because they were illiterate and backward, and, thus they did not understand how the cooperative worked. This seemed believable to many staff members of these institutions because, in effect, the first people to whom the leaders denied credit were among the less literate members of the community. But if the people without credit were illiterate, this was due to the correlation between kinship and literacy that I mentioned before. In other words, they were out of credit not because they were illiterate and did not understand how the cooperative worked but because they were distant relatives of the legal leaders. Nevertheless, by these times (early 1986) the critical *indigenistas* had begun to distance themselves from API, and the integrationist approach promoted by INDI had become dominant in the former organization; thus, the explanation provided by the legal leaders was accepted without further questions.

As we will see, these events are a very good entry point to analyse the intersection between different moral logics and the situated moralities arising from them.

Relations Make Entities

It would be erroneous to assume that the explanations the legal leaders gave to INDI and API, regarding their management of credits, were produced with Machiavellian insight in order to sound similar to the vision of development that had become dominant in those institutions. Actually, these kinds of explanations continue to be common among those who have managed other cooperative stores in Yshiro communities. Another eleven cooperative stores have opened and closed in different Yshiro communities between 1986 and 1999 without reaching the goal of long term sustainability. Individuals who have acted as storekeepers are usually chosen, by the communities or the funding organization, among the most literate members of a community. These 'storekeepers' often explain that the cooperative under their charge failed because their fellow community members were illiterate (*no son letrados*) and could not understand how it should work. This sort of explanation, I argue, is a reflection of situated moralities arising from the intersection between Cartesian and relational moral logics. A more recent example of conflicts around a cooperative will help me to highlight the point.

In 1999, an environmental NGO provided funds for the opening of a cooperative store in one of the Ebitoso communities. To avoid the repeated failures of past cooperative stores, the NGO staff and leaders agreed in a public meeting held with the community that credit should not be given to anybody. The aim of the cooperative, it was said, was to provide food at the cheapest price in the area; not to provide food through credit when there was no money available. After less than a month, many people started

to voice their anger because the storekeeper kept to the rule of not giving credit. As the storekeeper thought that the offended parties would listen to me, he asked me to talk to some of them and explain again why he could not give them credit. I took great pains at explaining to those who were angry, the rationale of 'momentarily' suspending the demands on the storekeeper. In this way, I argued, the store would remain open and would keep providing food at cheaper prices than the Paraguayan's stores did. Ginés, an Ebitoso elder in his sixties, after listening to me silently, began to tell me the following story:

(s) At its beginning it was not like this. Then, *Porosht* [God] made man and woman with black bee's wax. The people were black. God told somebody that he was going to send big rain and that everything/everybody was going to die, except those who made an oven with mud and entered into it. Some people did this and killed *amyrmyt bahlut* [the great armadillo] and fed on it during those days that the rain poured. There were some other people who ran into the bush to save their life. After the waters drained off, the people came out from the oven. The people who came out of the oven were White and they were very intelligent for they had followed the laws of God. The others who saved themselves in the forest, but did not follow God's laws, kept being black and not very intelligent. In those times, there was still a tree that connected the earth with the sky. People would go up to the sky through the tree and would gather the honey that was all over the place as if it were dew. But it happened that termites began to eat the tree and eventually it fell down. Some people were left up in the sky and the others were left on the earth yearning for the now unreachable sky. Thus, the Whites thought and calculated that they could make a tower to reach the sky again and they set up to do it. But when they started to construct the tower they confused each other with their orders and there was no longer any understanding among them (Field notes, 12/09/1999).

I was perplexed by Ginés telling me this story which appeared to me not to be related with our previous conversation about the store. Only later, it began to dawn on me where the connection was. This is a *puruhle* story which narrates how certain aspects of the *yrmo* came into being. As I mentioned before, the *puruhle* narratives are very flexible, thus stories or fragments of stories can be arranged in such ways as to convey specific messages. In this case, and without curtailing other resonances and meanings of a very dense narrative, Ginés' story was aimed at contesting my assumption that the problem was about misunderstanding the rationale behind the refusal to give credit in the store. By telling me the story of how 'Whites' and 'Blacks' were distinguished, including in this their different intellectual capacities, Ginés was ironically recognizing the 'rigorousness' of my arguments but also the futility of trying to impose them on 'different' people. If, by

following the laws of God, Whites 'get things right' while the 'others' must go about with their not so precise intellect, the story of the tower brings into perspective that a consequence of the Whites' reasoning capacities is the lack of mutual understanding. Through his story, Ginés highlighted that the problem was not to understand what the cooperative was and how it should work. The problem was that he did not accept the underlying moral logic that positioned the idea of how the cooperative should work (an idea based on what a cooperative is) above the relations that provided the reason for the cooperative to exist in the first place. In other words, it was problematic to try sustaining the cooperative without caring for the relations among community members: without understanding among them, there would be no community and, without community, there would be no cooperative.

Why do I call this a relational moral logic? As has been discussed for other Indigenous groups, non-dualist ontologies open up an "intellectual landscape . . . in which states and substances are replaced by processes and relations" (Descola and Palsson 1996:12). In these intellectual landscapes, entities exist only as an effect of the relations that constitute them (see Descola 1996:99). Given that for many Yshiro 'all that exists' co-emerges from the relations that are described in *puruhle* narratives, the source of morality cannot be other than those relations too. Thus, while the Cartesian moral logic gives precedence to self-referential entities over relations, a relational moral logic gives precedence to relations over entities.¹⁰ From this perspective, relations are the source of morality and, since relations are always in the making, morality is always contextual. This implies that the rightness or wrongness of relations are defined by reference to specific situations where several 'spheres of life' intersect with each other.¹¹ Community members apparently accepted that their relations with the cooperative would be 'regulated' by ideas of what the cooperative's role was. Yet these ideas were (and still are) tested in concrete circumstances and evaluated according to how they impact the relations among members

¹⁰It could be argued that in the narrative above the claim to a relational logic is countered by the distinction between Whites and Blacks. However, one must keep in mind two things about the *puruhle* narratives: First, they do not describe stable origins fixed once and for all but transformations that came about because of changes in relations. Secondly, the elements of a narrative are chosen in order to convey specific messages. In this case, the message is not about the distinction between Whites and Indigenous peoples per se (a process that is narrated in other forms in other contexts and narratives) but about why a certain moral logic is not acceptable.

¹¹Hornborg (1996:55) provides a good example of this when he points out the contrast between economic practices invested with meanings deriving from other spheres of life (e.g. respect for the ancestors) and economic practices turned inwards on themselves in a closed, self-referential, and thus ultimately tautological web of concepts.

of the community. This is why Ginés and others rejected what had been agreed upon in the meeting.

Something similar had occurred with Ynishta's first cooperative store in 1986 when the leaders suspended credit. The affected group complained because the legal leaders gave precedence to the definition of the cooperative (i.e., what a cooperative is and how it must function) over the relations that pre-existed it. It is significant that up to the present, when those events are recalled, most people do not complain about the fact that the leaders kept giving credit to their closer kin. This is an expected conduct in the relations among kin. But precisely because of this, commentators explain the unfairness of the situation in one single, bitter phrase: 'The leaders were our relatives too.'

At first sight, the suspension of credit can be seen as a relational moral logic, embodied by the disenfranchised group (which from now on I will call 'dissidents'), being curtailed by the Cartesian moral logic promoted by the leaders. However, if one looks closer into these events, a more nuanced understanding emerges. For example, it is clear that the leaders privileged relations over definitions (or, what is the same, entities) when closer kin were involved. This underscores that the situatedness of the moralities at stake in these events was in part defined by the mutual entanglement of Cartesian and relational moral logics. Let us discuss the point by reference to how the dispute revealed changing conceptions of 'sharing.'

As I mentioned before (page 77), according to the anthropological literature on the Paraguayan Chaco, most Indigenous peoples express the view that, at least ideally, individuals have the obligation to share with all the members of the residential group (Renshaw 1996:149; see also Kidd 1999:44-46). However, as Strathern (1996:23) has pointed out, while networks can ideally extend indefinitely, in practice they are cut by other networks. Who is within and who is outside a given network of sharing is defined by the circumstances in which the sharing occurs. In the Yshiro case, changing networks have intersected at different times giving rise to different forms of sharing.¹² For example, before the missionaries arrived, a network of sharing was delimited through the intersection of the *Esnwherta au'oso*, the relations with the *ukurb'deio* (lit. powers),

¹² As we will see in the next chapter, this runs counter to Kidd's (1999:44) argument that the egalitarian character of Indigenous peoples life is "the result of certain moral values persisting since pre-invasion times." I want to be clear on this, I do not argue against the idea that egalitarianism is a value embedded in the practices of many Indigenous peoples. I argue against taking this egalitarianism as something inscribed in the being of Indigenous societies and not as an effect of contingent and changing circumstances.

gender and clan ascription and age ranks.¹³ After the missionaries came, and the initiation ritual was abandoned, networks of sharing changed. In effect, clan, age ascription, or the *Esnwherta au'oso* were no longer keys to sharing, and the nuclear family and patronage relations were the relevant networks/actants that defined how sharing should be performed. I argue that in the events under analysis a similar process of transformation took place when, in Ynishta, the leaders brought the functioning of the cooperative to bear on their sharing (or not sharing) with their relatives.

This form of sharing reveals a morality that is situated at the intersection of the relational and the Cartesian moral logics. In effect, the leaders tried to strike a balance between two different ways of understanding 'what is the right thing to do' regarding sharing the assets of the cooperative. Thus, they gave prevalence to relations over self-referential entities (i.e., the 'proper' functioning of the cooperative) when closer relatives were involved and the opposite when distant relatives were involved. However, soon after the leaders started to do this, the logic that gives primacy to self-referential entities began to take hold of the unfolding events.

Wututa, the Traditionalist Community

INDI and API's lack of attention to the dissident group's complaints showed some of their spokespersons that, as influential individuals, they had lost ground in those institutions. Thus, some of these Ebitoso spokespersons began to remain for longer periods of time in Asunción in order to rebuild their connections within these institutions and to strengthen other ties with critical *indigenistas*. Early in 1986, when the dissidents had started to raise their voices against the legal leaders, a group of critical *indigenistas* approached some of the spokespersons, including Don Bruno Barras, to inquire about the feather paraphernalia the Yshiro used for their rituals. The *indigenistas* wanted to collect some samples for a new Museum of popular art (see Escobar 1999:341-343). The spokespersons informed them that the Tomaraho were the people to contact because they still performed the initiation ritual. These Ebitoso spokespersons also offered themselves to guide the *indigenistas* to the Tomaraho's camp in the interior of the Chaco; they knew how to get there because they were the ones who in the early 1980s obtained the

¹³For many Yshiro, there are a number of relevant interlocutors in human/non-human relations. These include the *Anabsero*, *Porosht* (God) and *Diguichibio* (spirits and ghosts). What modern knowledge categorizes as natural phenomena (rain, thunder, etc.) and celestial bodies, the Yshiro also consider beings. A very important category of non-humans is the *bahlut*, the first exemplar of a species. Since plants and animals are like splinters of the *bahlut*, it is with them and not with the individual specimens that relevant relations are established. All these non-humans are usually referred to with the general label of *ukurb'deio*, which can be translated as power, capacity, potency.

signatures for the land claim from the Tomaraho.

During that visit, the Ebitoso spokespersons convinced the *indigenistas* to help the Tomaraho to move to Ynishta. Upon their return to Asunción, these *indigenistas* created an NGO, *Comisión de Solidaridad con los Pueblos Indígenas* (Commission of Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples - CSPI), in order to obtain funds for the relocation. When the Tomaraho moved to Ynishta in May 1986, CSPI provided them with tools, seeds and food to sustain their families during the initial period in the settlement.

The relocation of the Tomaraho to Ynishta added tensions to an already explosive situation. The legal leaders and their supporters did not welcome the Tomaraho. Although the Tomaraho had legal rights to the land because they had given their signatures for the claim, there was a strong feeling among many of the most literate Ebitoso that the Tomaraho did not deserve the land because they had not followed through the process of the land claim. The dissident Ebitoso sided with the Tomaraho when these feelings began to surface in discussions and commentaries. In addition, many of these Ebitoso began to partake in the *dibylylta* (initiation ritual) performed by the Tomaraho. The most literate Ebitoso, still in good terms with the legal leaders, began to insult those other Ebitoso by calling them 'backward' and 'uncivilized.' Finally, the dissidents' spokespersons were able to call for a new election of leaders. They calculated that with the vote of the Tomaraho they would win the election. However, the legal leaders obtained from INDI an order that the Tomaraho should choose their own separate leaders. Thus, the legal leaders won the election again.

In the meantime, floods destroyed the crops of the Tomaraho and several members of CSPI created another NGO, *Ayuda a las Comunidades Indígenas del Paraguay* (Aid for Indigenous Communities of Paraguay - ACIP) to keep supporting them.¹⁴ For some of the dissidents' spokespersons, it was evident that the main interest of the key staff of this NGO was the preservation of the rituals and other 'cultural traits.' When they lost the election, these Ebitoso convinced the NGO to help them and the Tomaraho to create a new community where they could practice their 'traditions' without being bothered by the other Ebitoso. Thus, in 1987, the Tomaraho and the dissident Ebitoso moved to Wututa, a place that was within the territory of Ynishta but located fifteen kilometres inland from the main settlement which was located on the Paraguay river (see Map 3 and 8). The Tomaraho and the Ebitoso set up their settlements close to each other but separate, and although the Ebitoso spokespersons obtained the legal recognition of Wututa as a single Indigenous community, there was an agreement between Ebitoso and Tomaraho that each group would have their own leaders and would manage their own issues.

In Ynishta and Diana people commented that those who had moved to Wututa

¹⁴ ACIP was financed by another NGO, the German *Indianerhilfe und Tropenwaldschutz Dr. Binder*

were not only backward and illiterate but also lazy since the only thing they wanted to do was to 'sing' (i.e., perform *dibyllylta*) and be photographed by the *indigenistas*.¹⁵ People from Wututa ridiculed the people of both Ynishta and Diana for trying to be like Paraguayans, but only achieving clumsy results. Given the language used, *indigenistas* connected with ACIP began to see the dispute as one between 'traditionalists' and 'acculturated' groups (see Chase-Sardi 1987:126, 1990:58-61). Soon, the leaders of Wututa were using these labels to differentiate their community from those of Ynishta and Diana.¹⁶

Entities Make Relations

As we can see, what started as a dispute over which moral logic should have precedence, very soon became a dispute between Ebitoso factions who supposedly bore distinct defining traits. That is, the dispute very quickly became framed in terms of the Cartesian moral logic, at least to some extent. In effect, from the dispute emerged two entities (factions) whose mutual relations were in some circumstances predicated on the traits that defined them. This is most visible, again, in how sharing of resources was performed in the new context.

After the dissidents formed the new community of Wututa, in many cases they began to consider being or not being a traditionalist as an important criterion to determine with whom they should share their resources. This implies that while, on the one hand, the dissident group openly rejected the imposition of a logic that made defining traits a criterion relevant for sharing, on the other hand, they extended the reach of that very same logic when they started to use 'traditionalism' as a relevant criterion for sharing. However, I must stress that the relative dominance (or the direction of the translation) of

¹⁵Indeed, the staff member from ACIP who was in charge of supervising 'the project' was a musicologist who spent most of his time in the community recording ritual chanting (see Cordeu 1999:23).

¹⁶The common people in Wututa invented a neologism rooted in Spanish to refer to themselves: *cultureros*, meaning *los que siguen su cultura* (those who follow/continue with their culture). Nowadays, the Yshiro in general use the term *cultura* in different ways. At times the term refers to their 'traditions' in general, at other times it specifically refers to the *debylylta* (initiation ritual) and the narratives associated with it. In the last sense, *cultura* is often contrasted with *religión* which includes all Christian faiths. It should be noted that many of the 'traditionalist' leaders were sympathetic but did not participate in the ritual activities of the *cultureros*. Thus, when in later chapters I speak of leaders who supported the *cultureros*, it must not be assumed that they were *cultureros* themselves.

one logic over the other was (and is) a matter of contingent circumstances. This will become clear as I discuss how I came to be involved with the traditionalist Ebitoso.

In 1990, while doing undergraduate studies at Universidad de Buenos Aires, I had a summer job as a tourist guide on a cruise that navigated from Asunción to Corumbá (Brazil) along the Paraguay river (see Map 2). On these trips, I met some of the 'traditionalist leaders' of Wututa who gave talks on their culture and sold handicrafts to the tourists. Through the summer these leaders told me about their community, and the visions that they had for it. I told them about my studies in anthropology and my interest in working with Indigenous peoples. By the end of the summer, they invited me to go back to Paraguay and work with their community. I took up the invitation and a year later, when I had to prepare my undergraduate thesis, I went to Wututa to do research. During this first fieldwork, the leaders were very explicit about their expectation that my work should be useful for the community. We agreed that I would do my best to find funding for some community projects. I returned to Argentina and spent the next eighteen months finishing my degree and applying for funding. Meanwhile, the traditionalist leaders began a land claim for 10,000 hectares that included Karcha Bahlut, the place where the original *tobich* shared with the *Anabsero* was located (see Map 3 and 8).

In 1993, part of the traditionalist Ebitoso decided to occupy Karcha Bahlut in order to pressure the government for a legal resolution of the land claim. In the same year, we received the first funding for community projects. In the following years and until 1997, ox-carts, cows, fishing boats and nets were purchased, and a visitors' house and a museum were built in Karcha Bahlut, through a project funded by The Center for Field Research/Earthwatch, an American NGO that connects volunteers with researchers. The project was atypical in that it was not a development project *per se* but a 'basic research' project. Earthwatch funded a research on 'traditional knowledge and technologies.' The volunteers sent by the organization worked with Yshiro instructors observing and recording how they used different 'traditional technologies.' The volunteers also helped to develop herbariums and ethnotaxonomies that were to be part of an *in situ* archive and museum. Daily wages for Yshiro instructors were budgeted and the money which came from housing the volunteers was used to purchase ox-carts, cows, boats and other items necessary for the community.

In this context, I witnessed many discussions that arose because somebody had invited a non-traditionalist relative from another community to work with a volunteer. The core of the disagreements was about whether being a traditionalist or not should be a relevant criterion to decide if a relative from other community deserved a share from the benefits of the project. In most situations people accepted that a person's 'traditionalism' was not as important as her/his status as a relative. The traditionalist leaders' persuasion played an important role in these outcomes.

Because this project was not a development one, the leaders had no pressures to meet established economic goals. The only 'restriction' they had for how they could use resources from the project was their own capacity to convince community members to

use those limited resources in certain ways and not others. I soon realized that the leaders were extending their network of supporters by making the benefits of the project reach as far as possible. Although in comparison with 'real' development projects, this one was modest in terms of its material input, the leaders were very eager to make it an example of the benefits that traditionalism could produce. Turning the label of backwardness around, they argued in community meetings that the support the American volunteers gave showed that *progreso* (progress) was predicated upon the maintenance and strengthening of Yshiro traditions.

In cases where the resources under consideration had to be used according to restrictive criteria established by external funding organizations, the outcomes of these discussions were different. For example, access to credit from the cooperative store set up in Wututa with ACIP's financial support, was restricted to the 'traditionalists,' or so argued the leaders acting as storekeepers. In effect, given that ACIP expected the storekeepers to make the store sustainable, they ended up using a similar strategy as the leaders of Ynishta had used to balance the contradictory demands from external institutions and from kin: they denied credit to some people (usually their more distant relatives). Yet they felt or were pressed to justify their decisions and I often heard them use the arguments that those to whom they denied credit were not really traditionalists, or that they were indebted beyond their capacity to repay the cooperative for the credits received.

Thus, once Wututa was established as a distinct community, even the traditionalist leaders had to operate under similar constraints much like the leaders of Ynishta. Edgardo Cordeu, an anthropologist who specializes in Yshiro mythology, has responded to this by considering that the similarity of circumstances across the Ebitoso factions shows that Ebitoso traditionalism is 'inauthentic.' In effect, for him, traditionalism has been no more than a clever manipulation by the self-fashioned traditionalist leaders of some critical *indigenistas'* infatuation with the 'Other' (see Cordeu 1989d:43-45, 1991c:10-12, 1999:24-26). I will address this argument in the next chapter but in preparation for it I want to show that some of the events leading to the emergence of traditionalism go well beyond any leaders' capacity to manipulate them. Moreover, they actually go beyond any human capacity to do it.

Powers and Relations

Don Veneto Vera, an Ebitoso intellectual and *konsaha* (shaman) who is in his late fifties, was among the people who moved from Puerto Diana to Ynishta in 1985. In 1986, when the Tomaraho arrived, he began to join a group of Ebitoso men who frequented the Tomaraho's *tobich*. Don Veneto explained to me in Spanish: "I liked to go see those *tobich'oso* (the ones from the *tobich*) because *me hallaba*" (lit. 'I found myself,' it also connotes entertainment and enjoyment). At the beginning, he took part in the rituals performed by the Tomaraho as an observer. Soon, however, *ukurb' deio* (powers, see

fn.13, above) began to visit him (and other Ebitoso participants) in his sleep. *Ukurb'deio* invited him to enter into closer relationships with them. Initially, the guidance of Tomaraho elders was critical because Don Veneto could not clearly understand what *ukurb'deio* were telling him during his dreams. Later, as he started to understand, the *ukurb'deio* began to instruct him directly.

The transformations that Don Veneto has undergone as a result of these relations are visible to his neighbours. On the one hand, they point out that he is now poorer than before because he does not try to make as much money as he once did, and the little that he has is spent to purchase alcohol.¹⁷ On the other hand, several of them recognize that Don Veneto now has 'powers.' When I asked Don Veneto if he considered himself to be economically worse off than before he answered affirmatively and explained that this was due to the demands imposed on him by the *ukurb'deio*. To not respond to these demands is very dangerous. Nevertheless, Don Veneto does not complain because, while he does not have time to make money, the *ukurb'deio* make sure that his family remains well provided for. Once, while we were out hunting, he told me: "I never come back to my home without something to eat. Every time I go hunting, I already know where I will find my prey. The *ukurb'deio* tell me. They give me that animal. We are never hungry in my home." His family is also provided for by the gifts from people whom Don Veneto has cured of some diseases. If his family is poor, he told me in an interview in November 1999, it is a sign of how little knowledge the Yshiro of today have of the *ukurb'deio*:

These people [most Ebitoso] do not know that they can hunt and fish because we [konsaho] talk with the *ukurb'deio*. We sing what they tell us to sing so that there will be plenty of animals and fish. If we don't sing there will be draught, or flood, or the animals will go away . . . We sing and they say: 'Don Veneto is singing all day; Don Veneto is *borrachon* (drunkard); Don Veneto does not want to work.' They have no respect. They should be sharing their food with my family for it is because we [konsaho] sing that they can eat well (Tape-recorded interview, 07/11/99).

The agreement established with *ukurb'deio* is based on the understanding that Don Veneto has to follow their instructions strictly, otherwise he would die or get sick. In turn, as in his comments above, the *ukurb'deio* give him different capacities that are beneficial for the community. Among these powers are his control over rain or mosquitos, the power to bring fish to the surface, to attract certain animals and to cure. The instructions and demands of the *ukurb'deio* are varied, ranging from restrictions in the consumption of certain species to the performance of rituals that contribute to the

¹⁷Before these transformations, Don Veneto was relatively well off, having a few cows and acting as a herbalist healer, an art he learned from Paraguayan herbalists. *Konsaho* (shamans) do not use herbs for healing purposes.

reproduction of human and non-humans, to fasting, singing and the consumption of alcohol to enhance visionary dreams.

Through Don Veneto and other people who like him have relations with *ukurb 'deio*, a (re)new(ed) network connecting humans and non-humans began to emerge. This network had important effects on how some Ebitoso relate to each other. For example, the restrictions on the consumption of certain species or parts of an animal translate into sharing those species or parts with people who can consume them. Don Veneto's healing powers cannot be 'bought' but, at the discretion of the 'patient,' they have to be reciprocated with gifts. In turn, the performance of rituals demanded by the *ukurb 'deio* often requires Don Veneto to enlist the aid of those who have become part of those networks of reciprocity. In short then, by being connected with the *ukurb 'deio* a group of the Ebitoso have woven a network of reciprocity that extends across the human/non-human divide. This network can be seen as an aspect of traditionalism that is far removed from any single human's capacity to manipulate. This is a heterogenous network involving non-humans with their own characteristics and volition.

It is important to stress that not everybody enters into these kinds of human/non-human relations. Some people are never approached by *ukurb 'deio* in their dreams. Some are never invited to establish deeper relations with them. Some people do not accept the offers. Relations between humans and non-humans are not fixed once and for all, rather they are contingent upon particular conditions. In effect, those relations may develop or not depending on the availability of guidance to interpret dreams, on the quality of those interpretations, on the willingness of both *ukurb 'deio* and human to establish a relationship, and on the clarity of their mutual communication.¹⁸

In Wututa, a general respect or appreciation for the 'old ways' did not translate into a community free from conflicts. In fact, new and different tensions and conflicts emerged because not everybody participated in the emerging network connecting human and non-humans. Disagreements arose about which ritual procedures were proper and which ones were not. Up to today, some Ebitoso elders continue to affirm that the Tomaraho do not perform rituals properly and also complain about the new Ebitoso *konsaho*'s use of alcohol in the *tobich*. Fearing the likely negative consequences of wrongly performed rituals, these elders refuse to participate in them. The Tomaraho and Ebitoso practitioners scorn them as being *evangelio* (evangelists). Other conflicts arose because some people began to argue that certain tasks needed to sustain the network of

¹⁸For example, somebody told me the story of a man who during a dream was following the instructions of an *ukurb 'deio* so that he could have the power to cure the flu. While he was listening to the instructions, another voice interfered. His wife was trying to wake him up. With this noise the would-be *konsaha* made a mistake in what he was doing and as a consequence instead of receiving the power to cure the flu, he developed a bad skin condition.

reciprocity connecting humans to non-humans interfered with the performance of other tasks by which the community obtained market goods. For instance, some leaders complained that rituals interfered with the economic activities (agriculture) being financed by ACIP, and thus they were risking the loss of 'aid.' In contrast, other leaders complained that the organization's key staff implicitly promoted the performance of rituals to the detriment of economic activities.

All these conflicts were at the root of the final demise of Wututa. I mentioned before that a group of Ebitoso from Wututa moved to Karcha Bahlut in 1993. This group was formed mostly but not only, by people who were part of the newly emerging network of reciprocity. Between 1994 and 1995 Wututa was finally abandoned as a place of settlement. The Tomaraho, who had complained about their conflicts with some Ebitoso neighbours, obtained their own lands and moved to Pitiantuta with ACIP's support. The Ebitoso who had remained in Wututa scattered between Ynishta and Puerto Diana.¹⁹

As the leaders who had initially invited me moved to Karcha Bahlut in 1993, I decided to follow them and their group. Don Veneto was among the people who moved to Karcha Bahlut. In 1995 he began to invite me to the meetings that a group of men organized in a *tobich* that they had opened nearby. When I returned the following year, Don Bruno Barras, who had started to reside part of the year in Asunción, met me at this city's airport. He informed me that a group of journalists, artists and members of the Paraguayan parliament were going to visit Karcha Bahlut in order to witness the first *dibyllyta* (initiation ritual) to be performed solely by the Ebitoso since 1956. Upon my arrival in Karcha Bahlut, Don Veneto explained to me that some *Anabsero* had visited him in his dreams and had instructed him to find a boy to go through the initiation. Given that nobody seemed willing to offer their child for such an experiment, his grandchild was selected in spite of the fact that he was only nine years old (before, boys were initiated when they entered puberty).

The ceremony was performed at the end of July in 1996 and was partially witnessed by the leaders' Paraguayan guests. The leaders did not miss the opportunity to signal to their guests the religious importance of Karcha Bahlut and how badly the community needed to have the legal property rights to the land. In 1998, the community received the titles of the land. Up to the present, over twenty young Ebitoso males, ages nine to twenty, have been initiated.

Conclusions

¹⁹Briefly, contemporary Yshiro communities were created in the following sequence: Ylhirta and Diana (settled in the 1950s); Ynishta (1985); Karcha Bahlut (1993); and Pitiantuta (1995). Wututa was created before the last two but had a short life (1987 - 1995). See Map 8

The events that brought into being Ebitoso traditionalism developed from a confrontation between the relative preponderance of different moral logics. A relational moral logic, which was concerned with the effects and duties arising from relations, found its limit in the intersection with a Cartesian moral logic, which was concerned with the responsibilities and duties arising from the 'nature' (i.e., definition) of entities. However my discussion also shows that these different moral logics, that I neatly distinguish in words, are actually very much entangled with each other and with other actants/networks. The circumstances in which these entanglements occur, their constraining and enabling character, ground situated moralities in concrete practices. This disallows easy generalizations that would conflate the relational moral logic with 'traditionalism' and the Cartesian moral logic with 'acculturation.'

As I have tried to show both Ebitoso factions were dependent on *indigenista* *patrones* 'development aid.' These made them, and particularly their leaders, very susceptible to the Cartesian moral logic implicit in their *patrones* demands for a sound economic management of project resources. Yet both set of leaders had to also operate within the constraints imposed by the relational moral logic implicit in their kin's demands. Precisely because of these similarities, the boundaries of these 'factions' are much more blurry than what they would appear at first sight. Is then 'traditionalism' just a mirage, a clever manipulation of the leaders, a 'no-thing'? No, I would say that traditionalism is certainly more than a 'no-thing' but also that it is less than a thing.

The actant 'Ebitoso traditionalism' - as much as 'Ebitoso acculturation' - is the performance of a network of relations. It is not a composite of traits. As such, the actant-traditionalism changes as the relations that constitute it change. For example, 'disenfranchised Ebitoso' became traditionalists when they entered into relations with CSPI and ACIP. The 'traditionalist' Don Veneto became a *konsaha* when he entered into relations with the *ukurb' deio*. Young Ebitoso males became *weterak* (initiated males) through their relations with Don Veneto. Changing relations keep changing the performance of the actant-Ebitoso-traditionalism.

What then of the moral logics? If they are not 'traits' that define factions, what role do they play in all of this? Cartesian moral logic and relational moral logics are differently embedded in concrete practices. They also have different genealogies. Yet these differences do not qualify them as unrelated. As I showed in Part I, the actants with which we are dealing (including the moral logics under analysis here) are all offsprings of interconnected processes. The difference between these moral logics does not reside in their origins but in **how and what they 'see,' and with what results**. The difference between them is a subtle one because they both produce entities and relations. However, while the Cartesian moral logic sees relations as emerging from self-referential entities who enter into contact with each other, the relational moral logic sees entities as emerging from relations. The effects of each of these moral logics will become fully visible through my subsequent discussion. For now, let me advance the argument that the Cartesian moral logic leads us to the kind of political, ethical and epistemological conundrums typical of

modernity, which I discussed in the Introduction. In contrast, the relational moral logic contains the promise of a way out of these conundrums.

The subtlety of the difference between these logics warrants that in concrete practices, the events or behaviours shaped by one of these logics can be easily translated into the terms of the other. As we have seen with the emergence of the Ebitoso factions, and their use of traits to define their mutual relations, depending on the circumstances these translations may actually deepen the grasp of one logic to the detriment of the other. But these asymmetrical translations between logics cannot be understood if we only focus on the Yshiro. Actually, the translations that we have seen in this chapter probably would have not taken place if the *indigenista* institutions had not been somehow involved. In effect, their role in these events was critical since it was through their demands, and their capacity to make those demands pressing for the Yshiro, that the direction of the translation between moral logics mostly favoured the Cartesian one. As we will see in the next chapter, for the most part translations in the other direction do not go farther than the Yshiro communities. Rather, the Yshiro's highly contextual practices, informed by the relational moral logic, are consistently translated into immutable traits graspable for a Cartesian moral logic concerned primarily with entities.

CHAPTER FOUR: TAMING DIFFERENCES

In the previous chapter I concluded by indicating that, as an upshot of the conflict that brought about Ebitoso traditionalism, the Cartesian moral logic to some extent deepened its grasp within the *yrmo* to the detriment of the relational moral logic. I also pointed out that the power position of INDI/API and CSPI/ACIP in relation to the Ebitoso was fundamental in shaping this outcome, which I hinted, can be seen as the translation of the relational moral logic into the Cartesian moral logic.¹ I indicated that precisely because its expressions in visible conduct are quickly translated in terms of the Cartesian moral logic, the relational moral logic remains circumscribed to the *yrmo*. This is evident in the way in which INDI/API and CSPI/ACIP seem to have understood the conflict between the two emerging Ebitoso factions.

From CSPI/ACIP's perspective, this conflict arose because a traditionalist group of the Ebitoso was struggling to retain their indigenoussness against the wishes of another group of 'acculturated' Ebitoso (Chase-Sardi 1990: 56; see also Chase-Sardi 1987:125-129; Escobar 1999:356-357). These *indigenistas* understood that they were helping the traditionalists to become 're-tribalized' and, thus, to avoid becoming 'a miserable rural lumpenproletariat' (Chase-Sardi 1987:129). According to INDI/API's perspective, the conflict arose because the traditionalist group, who intended to remain unchanged, was a drag for the group that was more 'developed' among the Ebitoso. For these institutions the alternatives that the Yshiro were facing were either to remain backward and forever poor or to become developed and share in the opportunities offered by full participation in the national society. In short, INDI/API and CSPI/ACIP understood the conflict in the same way but with inverse values. In effect, sharing the Cartesian moral logic, both *indigenista* institutions 'translated' a conflict that focussed on the relative weight that should be given to relations and entities into a conflict between entities (factions) which were clearly defined by specific 'traits.'²

However, beyond their common grounding in the Cartesian moral logic, INDI/API and CSPI/ACIP's positions enacted different situated moralities that positioned them on

¹In this section I will treat API and INDI as a single organization. At this point in time, the mid 1980s, API actually executed the policies designed by INDI. I will also treat CSPI and ACIP as a single organization because the core personnel of both NGOs were the same.

²As we have seen, being aware of the patronage dynamics that connected them to their non-indigenous allies/patrones, the Ebitoso leaders played a role in reinforcing a sense of 'accuracy' in these translations.

opposing sides of a dramatic plot involving dire alternatives. These situated moralities arose from the intersection between the Cartesian moral logic and the networks in which each one of these institutions-actants took shape. As indicated in Chapter Two (page 83-84), at the end of the hegemonic coincidence, the integrationist and critical sectors of Paraguayan *indigenismo* became attached to different networks of funding and other forms of support. These networks produced different imagination-Indians (or Indigenous peoples), associated moralities, and visions of development. The network in which INDI/API was inserted harbored an 'older' vision of development for Indigenous peoples which implied their incorporation into, participation in, and adoption of institutions such as literacy, bio-medicine and market relations. In contrast, the network in which CSPI/ACIP was inserted nursed the increasingly more accepted vision that the preservation of the Indigenous peoples' cultural traditions was an essential component of a new form of development: sustainable development.

In the first part of the thesis I provided a 'working picture' of the network of actants/imaginations from which the integrationist sector's perspective emerged. In this chapter, I will explore the changing networks from which the preservation of Indigenous peoples' cultural differences came to emerge as an authorized (moral) imagination. I will also discuss the effects that the emergence of this authorized imagination has had in the Paraguayan *indigenista* field and the transnational networks in which it was enmeshed. I will carry out these explorations in three different registers: the process of networking by social movements; the transformation of the role that expert knowledge played within these movements in Paraguay; and the situated moralities of expert knowledge.

Networking

Until the 1970s human rights (including Indigenous rights) had been part of the development agenda only to the extent that the latter promoted the achievement of some second generation (socioeconomic) human rights such as "rights to a standard of living that ensures health and well being [. . .] social security, education and participation in the cultural life of the community" (Messer 1993:222). It was assumed that development would extend these rights by 'integrating' populations into the 'national societies' and within the reach of the state, the ultimate guarantor of those rights. The early precursors of both international legislation and institutions concerned with Indigenous peoples such as International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention 107, the Anti-Slavery Society, and the Inter-American Indigenist Institute focussed their concerns on the racism and discrimination suffered by Indigenous peoples because these attitudes were seen as blocking Indigenous peoples' full enjoyment of those rights.³

³It was within this spirit that Paraguayan *indigenismo* promoted the integration of Indigenous peoples into the national society as a matter of 'man's rights' (see page 64).

In 1968, the beginning of a turning point became visible when participants at the 38th International Conference of Americanists in Stuttgart passed a resolution criticizing nation-states which violated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the process of integrating Indigenous peoples into their national societies. The International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), that was founded at this meeting, promoted a resolution of the same kind at the Eight Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in September of the same year (Wilmer 1993:141). In the following meeting of Americanists, held in Lima, Peru in 1970, a resolution was passed calling for a "guarantee of the indigenes' rights to be themselves and express their own culture, without being subjected to duress in the form of assimilationist programmes or catechetical programmes of a sectarian or intolerant nature" (Martinez Cobo 1986:209).⁴

As with other cases of gross human rights violations by governments in Latin America, the international human rights' network played a fundamental role in denouncing abuses to Indigenous peoples' human rights connected with state-driven development projects. Activists from this network lobbied donor countries and multilateral organizations in order to obtain sanctions against those states that committed human rights abuses. One of the sanctions they tried to obtain was the suspension of development aid. During the Carter administration it became part of the official policy of the US to make development aid conditional upon a recipient country's record of human rights (Sanders 1977:25-26; Tomasevski 1993:84-85; Keck and Sikkink 1998:102-103). Although it was applied selectively, this policy helped some campaigns for the human rights of Indigenous peoples like the Ache-Guayaki mentioned above (see Arens 1976; Davis 1988; Dostal 1972; Horst 1998:158-252).

However, and particularly important for Indigenous peoples that relied heavily on transnational supporters, the international human rights' network was not very useful for the objective of transforming the integrationist development policies of national states. Once the worse violations of human rights were addressed, it was very difficult to make integrationist development agendas an issue of concern for human rights activists. Although since the late 1960s anthropologists and some Indigenous rights advocates began to embrace the idea that respect for cultural difference was a viable alternative to integrationist policies of development, this was not the case in the wider international human rights networks (see Bodley 1982; Brysk 2000:202-203; Davis 1977:166-168; Wright 1988:368-371). For example the Inter-American Commission in Human Rights rapporteur for the Ache-Guayaki case felt that while abuses to these peoples' human

⁴In North America and the Andean countries, the emerging international Indigenous advocacy network conjoined ongoing processes of Indigenous organizing and mobilization. In countries like Paraguay, Brazil and Venezuela this network provided a platform for these processes to take off (see Albó 1999; Brysk 1994, 1996; Maybury Lewis 1999; Ramos 1998; Sanders 1977).

rights had taken place, these seemed to be “the inevitable result of the difficult transition that the Ache were making from a nomadic to a sedentary way of life” (cited by Davis 1988:33). Paraphrasing Kecks and Sikkink (1998:27), one can say that Indigenous peoples’ movements and Indigenous rights advocates could not produce convincing enough ‘causal stories’ to make integrationist development agendas a violation of human rights. In short, through their use of the human rights network Indigenous movements and their advocates were able to forestall some cases of gross human rights violations, but they could not change the underlying integrationist premises of development.⁵

Allison Brysk (1994) has argued that, given these limitations of the ‘human rights regimes,’ Indigenous peoples’ movements shifted the focus of their actions towards ‘environmental regimes.’ I partially agree with this view but I think that looking at this process as reinforcing ties rather than ‘shifting’ orientations is more useful to capture the complexity of a process that involves much more than ‘organizational learning,’ as she argues. It is indicative of this complexity that *Marandú*, the project whose goal was to create the first Indigenous organizations in Paraguay (see page 82), was born at the 1972 U.N. Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm. This conference marked the beginning of a new era in which concerns about development would become further complicated by concerns about the environment. This is not surprising. As must be obvious by this point, the close connection between Indigenous peoples and the environment (the successors of the imaginations Indians and nature respectively) was already there in dominant modern imaginations. What had begun to change by the time of this conference was the way in which the relation between two terms of modern ontological dualism, nature and society, were perceived. Alongside with this, the whole series of associated opposing pairs, including modern/savage, began to also be perceived differently.

Although environmental movements, organizations, and policy have a longer history going back well beyond the 20th century (see Bramwell 1989; Worster 1977; Grove 1995), the novelty in the late 1960s was that a new perception of the relation between the environment and development began to make headway into key nodal points

⁵This is evident in the very slight transformations that considerations of the human rights of Indigenous peoples, in connection with development policy, underwent through the 1970s and early 1980s in institutions such as the United Nations, Organization of American States, International Labour Organization, World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank. Still in the late 1980s Indigenous advocates were pointing out the limitations of a human rights approach that did not take into consideration issues of livelihood such as land rights (see Davis 1988:63-66). It was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that these institutions recognized the need to take steps beyond the mitigation of the impacts produced by integrationist development (see Burger 1998; Davis 1993; Deruyttere 1997; Krammer 1998; Sanders 1998; Swepston 1998; Tomasevski 1993:67-68).

of decision making in North America and Western Europe. By the late 1960s a combination of factors, including some widely publicised environmental crises (such as acid rain and oil spills in seas) and the cultural criticism of advanced industrial societies' insatiable materialism, pushed reconsiderations of the environmental costs of development to the doorsteps of industrialized countries' decision-makers (see Dalton 1993:50-53; Keck and Sikkink 1998:122-123). The U.N. Stockholm Conference of 1972 gave official status to the idea that the conciliation of environmental concerns and development was an issue that had to be addressed by governments; although there was strong governmental opposition (especially among developing countries governments) to subordinating development goals to environmental concerns (Conca *et al* 1995:20-21; Sachs 1992:26-28).

This, I surmise, marks the end of 'restricted governance' because the problems governments had to address since exceeded the exclusive concern with society. Now, they could not claim legitimacy without imagining a new relation between society and nature in which the 'needs' of both were taken into account. The search for a common ground between the 'needs' of society (i.e., development) and the 'needs' of the environment (i.e., protection from human impact) became a central issue in the emerging development/environmental agenda (Keck and Sikkink 1998:124-125).

By the mid 1980s, when environmental activism became a full-fledged transnational movement, different positions about how the new relation between nature and society should be imagined were proliferating as different institutional and collective actants established connections with each other. Just to mention a few, these actants included radical environmentalism arguing for the total subordination of human activity to natural cycles; environmental justice movements and ecosocialists placing social inequalities at the top of the environmental agenda; peasants and Indigenous peoples mobilised against the destruction of their lands (some of them eschewing the very distinction between social and environmental issues); and ecological modernization advocating technical fixes for environmental problems (see Collinson 1997; Esteva and Prakash 1998; Hajer 1995; Harvey 1996: 383-387; Painter and Durham 1995; Parajuli 1998; Taylor 1995). As a result of the debates in this increasingly more interconnected network, some of the institutions and social movements that formed it incorporated environmental concerns into their development agendas or incorporated developmental concerns into their environmental agendas. From this mutual merging of concerns 'sustainable development' emerged as the core working concept.

Since its popularization by *Our Common Future* (WCED 1987) the ambiguities in the definition of 'sustainable development' made it very suitable to be used across the interfaces connecting different organizations and movements with radically different views (Ekins 1993; Worster 1993; Adams 1995). For Indigenous peoples' movements and their advocates, sustainable development was a particularly opportune concept that contributed to the opening of an avenue to further their strength and leverage within the development networks. In the midst of heightened 'environmental awareness' (Lanthier

and Olivier 1999), the trope of 'endangered forest, endangered peoples'⁶ proved to be doubly useful for Indigenous peoples and their advocates: it provided not only an exceptionally fertile 'causal story' to frame integrationist development as inherently abusive of human rights (rights concerning more than just the population directly affected), but it also provided a platform to build the argument that Indigenous peoples were a critical resource in the global search for sustainability. As the goal of sustainable use of the environment became the philosopher's stone of several development agendas, the perceived ways of life of Indigenous peoples became, if not models to follow, at least models to preserve alongside nature. In addition to already circulating romanticized visions of Indigenous peoples in idyllic harmony with nature, anthropologists and other development professionals avid to make Indigenous knowledge palatable to (already predisposed) technocratic consumers, played an important role in extending this argument (Ellen and Harris 2000:12-14).⁷

With a synergistic effect, these developments were paralleled during the 1980s by Indigenous movements' participation in wider processes of democratization that swept through Latin America, giving them a higher profile in national politics (see Diaz-Polanco 1996:83-87; Van Cott 1994; Ramos 1998:119-144; Horst 1998: 349-409; Warren 1998). Thus, respect and appreciation for cultural differences began to expand, at least as rhetoric, into the policy-making of development donors, governments, international institutions and even markets (see Brysk 2000). This reconfigured perception, in which "Indigenous peoples are given central focus *because of* rather than *in spite of* their cultural differences" (Ellen and Harris 2000:13; emphasis in original; see also Conklin and Graham 1995; Conklin 1997), received official sanction from governments and development institutions during the Rio U.N. Earth Summit in 1992 through Principle 22 of the *Rio Declaration* and Chapter 26 of *Agenda 21*.⁸

⁶I take the phrase from the title of an article by Peter Brosius (1997) on environmentalists' representations of Indigenous knowledge.

⁷ As we will see, Paraguayan *indigenistas* in general were not oblivious to these processes. To the contrary, many were active contributors in shaping them.

⁸According to Principle 22, "Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development" (UNCED 1992). Chapter 26 says that "[i]n view of the interrelationship between the natural environment and its sustainable development and the cultural, social, economic and physical well-being of Indigenous people, national and international efforts to implement environmentally sound and

A brief aside before I return this discussion to the Paraguayan context. Indigenous peoples were not the only actants to be singled out as critical elements in shaping a 'sustainable future' which included development. Along with the old Fordist triad of governments, industries and unions, NGOs were hailed as one of the most appropriate instruments to achieve that future. Thus, while many NGOs originated as advocacy groups and grassroots movements that were critical of occurrences related in one way or another to state-driven integrationist development, in searching for leverage they became increasingly interconnected with governments and multilateral institutions that promoted development. Given this increasing connectivity, NGOs started to appear as the most propitious instruments to achieve a vision of development that had been recast with the input provided by those same NGO-based critiques.

The processes discussed above did not establish a normative consensus around concepts such as sustainability and respect for cultural differences. Rather, these processes established more or less flexible imaginations (Indigenous peoples, the environment, sustainable development) that help the translation/articulation of one actant/institution to the next, by muffling the jumps and the conflicts inherent to all translation. As a result of the process of translation/articulation (i.e., networking) which was fostered by diverse actants resisting state-centred and integrationist development, the 'development network' became enlarged by the Indigenous rights and environmentalist issue networks. This enlarged network is pervaded nowadays, from international development agencies to local grassroots initiatives, by mutually contesting yet connected agendas including those who see development as a self-improving process as well as those who want to abandon the whole enterprise (see Pearce 2000:15; Fisher 1997:442). I will leave this issue to be addressed in later chapters and return now to the Paraguayan context.

The members of CSPI, as many other *indigenista* institutions in Paraguay, were not oblivious to the fact that, by 1987, environmental issues had started to become the orthodox language of development circles. However, for CSPI the concern was not the environment but humanitarian issues as they connected to cultural survival. In effect, the Tomaraho and their Ebitoso friends were worth helping because they retained a visible 'cultural difference' (i.e., their rituals) (see Escobar 1999:341-342). For the project of 'cultural salvage,' which basically consisted of helping the Tomaraho relocate to Ynishta and providing them with some tools and consumables, humanitarian reasons were justification enough to obtain locally available funding. But these reasons were not enough to secure the external funding for development projects that both Tomaraho and dissident Ebitoso requested from CSPI. For this CSPI had to articulate what, paraphrasing

sustainable development should recognize, accommodate, promote and strengthen the role of Indigenous people and their communities" (UNCED 1992).

Thorndahl (1997:51), one might call the Yshiro's 'ecological utility.' Thus, when the members of CSPI searched for funding to create ACIP, the project they proposed to the German NGO that financed their operations included the argument that they will use the Yshiro's ethnobotanical knowledge in order to domesticate wild species. It was argued that, in this way, the Yshiro could preserve their culture while pressures on diminishing natural resources would be lifted (personal communication with ACIP's staff in 1991 and 1993; also see Chase-Sardi 1990:63; Cordeu 1999:23-24).

The need to justify a project for Indigenous peoples on this ground obviously underlines the increasing interconnectivity and the mutual conditioning between Indigenous rights' networks, environmental networks, and development networks. In the following section I will focus on how this interconnectivity and mutual conditioning has produced transformations of expert knowledge at the interface between Indigenous peoples' advocates and development in Paraguay.

Knowing⁹

The Argentinian anthropologist Edgardo Cordeu visited Wututa, the dissident community that split from Ynishta in 1987, just around the time it was being established as an independent community.¹⁰ According to his view, what was at stake in the schism that occurred in Ynishta was a dispute for legal leadership that, although cunningly cast in terms of a struggle for traditions by some leaders, was ultimately fuelled by a dynamic in which factionalism operated as a mechanism to maximize the exploitation of benefits offered by diverse sectors of Paraguayan *indigenismo* (Cordeu 1989d:43-45, 1991c:10-12, 1999:24-26).¹¹ Tacitly situating himself above unscientific biases, this scholar sees the critical *indigenistas*' (CSPI/ACIP) 'uncritical' and 'utopian' view of Ebitoso traditionalism as the result of their being "intellectuals with political yearnings" (Cordeu 1999:23-25). These comments provide a good starting point to discuss the changing

⁹This and part of the following section has been greatly inspired by Povinelli's (1993) analysis of how Australian Aborigines' complex understandings and performance of 'production' has been translated by experts and governmental agencies into non-production.

¹⁰Cordeu has done extensive analysis of Yshiro mythology (see Cordeu 1974, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1989a, b, c, d, e, 1990, 1991a, b, c, 1992a b, c, d, 1994a ,b, 1997a ,b, 1998, 1999) and he was my formal undergraduate thesis supervisor. However, the actual supervision was done by another professor.

¹¹This view has some echoes of the hunter-gatherer paradigm but since Cordeu never developed this point it is difficult to say whether this is only a coincidence.

politics of expertise in the Paraguayan *indigenista* field and how these have been transformed by the process described above.

As we have seen in the first part, what I have called the critical sector of Paraguayan *indigenismo* was the offspring of, among other 'parents,' a philanthropic tradition, new trends in social theories and the emergence of an international Indigenous rights' network. Similar to what Ramos (1998:270-276) describes for the Brazilian case, at its origins this sector had a strong dose of amateurism in the sense that its activities had not yet been bureaucratized or professionalized, although there were a few professional anthropologists involved.¹² But in contrast to the Brazilian case, where this form of civil activism started in 1978, in Paraguay it took form at the height of the Southern Cone's civil unrest in the late 1960s and early 1970s.¹³ Thus, radical ideals about the role of the intellectuals in society, circulating at the time in the region, nourished the thought of these *indigenistas*. In fact, three of the eleven signatories of the Barbados Declaration, that stated that anthropology should commit itself to the struggle for liberation, worked in Paraguay (see page 82).¹⁴

This version of engaged anthropology had its roots in Marxist analyses of the colonial situation; neo-Gramscian elaborations of the cultural dimensions of domination (Lombardi Satriani 1975; 1978); the search for a non-Eurocentric ground for politics and epistemology (Kusch 1977, 1986); and Freire's (1970) 'pedagogy of the oppressed.' Adolfo Colombres, one of the theorists of *antropología social de apoyo* (social anthropology in support of Indigenous peoples) as he calls this current of thought, was associated to *Marandú* and the people who later formed CSPI (see Chase-Sardi and

¹²Let me be clear on this point, by amateurism I do not mean to be disrespectful or condescending with the many non-professional anthropologists that formed and still form this sector. As Miguel Bartolome (1989) has pointed out, many of these 'amateurs' have shown a sensibility and political compromise that has been lacking in many anthropologists with professional credentials. However, the distinction is relevant in order to understand under what circumstances and 'demands' these people produced and continue to produce knowledge.

¹³Just to mention a few events, during this period Che Guevara was killed in Bolivia (1967); Salvador Allende won the presidency in Chile (1970) and later was toppled by Pinochet (1973); General Peron returned to the presidency of Argentina after seventeen years (1973) of exile only to die a year later, unleashing the escalation of violence that reached its peak with the military coup in 1976. All of these events occurred in a climate of generalized guerrilla activities in every country neighbouring Paraguay.

¹⁴ These were, Miguel Chase-Sardi (Paraguayan), Miguel Alberto Bartolome (Argentinian) and Georg Grunberg (Swiss).

Colombres 1975; Colombres 1982, 1992:9).¹⁵

In contrast to the dilemmas that divided the waters between 'pure' and 'applied' in Anglo-American and French anthropology (see Grillo 1985; Ferguson 1997; Shore and Wright 1997; Bare 1997), for this Latin American current of thought, lack of political involvement was not considered a neutral position but an endorsement of the *status quo*. Thus, either one was for liberation or was against it. For example, several years after the turbulent 1970s, Miguel Bartolome (1989:416) condemned a group of anthropologists from *Centro Argentino de Etnología Americana* (CAEA), who worked in Paraguay, because of their lack of political or humanitarian involvement with Indigenous peoples, and qualified them as 'avid purchasers of myths.'¹⁶

Underlying the politics of involvement or detachment that divided the anthropological waters, there was an implicit chasm between radically different positions towards knowledge. In effect, in contrast to the 'scientism' of CAEA, for the anthropologists connected to *Marandú*:

... the scientific value of an interpretation is not as important as it is its mobilizing capacity and its political efficacy. This kind of anthropology also searches for scientific objectivity but the burning needs of the colonized people are not subordinated to it. The task is to ... search for the interpretation that is more favourable to the group although without moving far from what is real and true (Colombres 1992:160).

In the 1970s, this stance was tenable in the context of grassroots political organizing or when working with some transnational interlocutors such as IWGIA and Survival International (SI). Chase-Sardi recalled, for example, that in the Stockholm conference of 1972, when he presented these ideas to gather support for *Marandú*, the only one who understood and supported the position was Peter Aaby of IWGIA (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:326). However, this 'lenience' towards 'scientific objectivity' started to be abandoned as the Indigenous rights' network began to build connections with international development institutions. As I indicated in Chapter Two, these connections intensified after the Stroessner regime imprisoned *Marandú* staff in the mid 1970s.

As all the neighbouring countries were falling under military dictatorships and state terror, many intellectuals were either killed, disappeared or had to flee. Those who

¹⁵Other theoreticians of this current of thought are Darcy Ribeiro, Stephano Varese and Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (Nahmad 1997:240), all signatories of the Barbados Declaration.

¹⁶Cordeu, who criticized members of CSPI for being 'intellectuals with political yearnings' (Cordeu 1999:25) was trained in this institution.

remained in Paraguay had no other choice but to become 'more pragmatic and less ideological.'¹⁷ The discourse of development and the connections with development institutions provided this pragmatist cloak.¹⁸ But this was not without a price: these institutions required that *indigenistas*' actions be guided by objective 'scientific knowledge.' This is how applied anthropology inspired in Anglo-American traditions, where an expert's authority was more heavily based on his/her 'scientific' credentials, entered into the scene in the mid to late 1970s. In effect, since Paraguayan universities did not offer professional training in anthropology and the foreign anthropologists who had not fled state terror were not interested in 'applied anthropology,' the only way to access those qualifications was (and still is) either to hire foreign anthropologists or to seek out training in other countries.

Through the 1970s, development institutions became more open to hire anthropologists and anthropologists became more willing to work in development institutions (see Hoben 1982; Grillo 1985; Escobar 1991; Ferguson 1997:164-165). Given that it must be instrumental in guiding interventions, knowledge produced for consumption within the development institutions is characterized by the assumption that there is an objective world that is "not just knowable but knowable in positivist, empiricist terms" and thus, complex situations "are reified into objectivized categories" (Stirrat 2000:36; see also Ferguson 1990; Escobar 1995). As professional applied anthropologists began to produce texts about the situation of the Indigenous peoples of the Chaco, this kind of objectivist rhetoric began to displace earlier non-professional but openly engaged, political rhetoric. This does not mean that non-professionals' writing or even activities disappeared but gradually the 'professional anthropologists' began to set the terms with which Indigenous peoples' situation was to be described and analysed.

Nevertheless, the professional anthropologists' objectivist discourse did not diminish the radical political underpinnings of many of their proposed interventions, in principle the contrary seemed to be the case. As the newly arrived anthropologists mingled with local *indigenistas*, elements of the previous openly politicized views were to some extent incorporated into the new 'scientific' views that were becoming dominant in development circles. In the new configuration of expert knowledge, *antropología social de apoyo*'s idea that Indigenous peoples had to find their own paths of development was accommodated along with the bottom-up approach that started to be favoured by development institutions in the late 1970s (see Rahnema 1992; Finnemore 1997:210-211). The non-professional and romanticized idea of authentic indigenouness

¹⁷This is the attitude that Bray (1991:129) attributes to the Paraguayan peasant organizers that were imprisoned during in the same wave of state terror.

¹⁸This underlines that development as an anti-politics machine (Ferguson 1990) can be a double-edged sword useful to both the state and its critics.

as pure and uncorrupted also fit well with the view, increasingly accepted in development circles since the 1980s, that Indigenous peoples were spontaneous ecologists useful for sustainable development. This was another element that contributed to the formation of the 'hunter-gatherer paradigm' of which I spoke before (see page 91-93).

By the mid to late 1980s an overwhelming majority of professional anthropologists working in the Paraguayan Chaco were connected to the networks that linked local NGOs to: international development institutions; donor governments of North America and Western Europe; and transnational environmental and Indigenous advocacy organizations. Conversely, as I mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, through the 1980s, development institutions became increasingly more inclined to operate through NGOs for community development projects. Thus, in Paraguay, the resources to train or hire professional anthropologists were practically monopolized by the *indigenista* institutions that were not directly related to the state, that is, mostly those of the critical sectors of *indigenismo*. In this situation, INDI/API, was partially set aside from the development networks and denied access to authorized knowledge. Thus, paradoxically, they became the personification of 'backwardness' because their moral imaginations and their visions of development did not derive from the new authorized imaginations: Indigenous peoples, environment and sustainability.

In 1987, when the conflict in Ynishta ended up with the split between two Ebitoso factions, there was already a consensus among anthropologists of the Chaco that respecting hunter gatherers values and ways of life should be a central component in Indigenous/non-indigenous peoples relations (see Renshaw 1986; Von Bremen 1987; Perasso 1987). Under the umbrella of combined 'expert authority' and access to development funding, the 'hunter-gatherer' paradigm became the indisputable terrain upon which different blueprints for the development of the Indigenous peoples of the Chaco began to be discussed in Paraguay (see Thorndahl 1997:128-136). This does not mean that the critical *indigenistas* imposed their authorized imaginations, rather they layed down a series of propositions that, in spite of their designs, proved to be useful for a multiplicity of actors and purposes.¹⁹ As we will see in the following section of this chapter, these propositions are moral claims that, in no small part, gather their strength from their being presented as facts. In this sense, all the expert's positions so far discussed (politically detached or engaged, non-professional or professional), embody situated moralities that emerge at the intersection point between the Cartesian moral logic and particular networks. In the following section I will argue that these situated moralities, heavily imbued with the Cartesian moral logic, tend to translate practices embodying relational moral logics into immutable traits.

¹⁹I am using the term 'proposition' as it is used in logic. According to *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, in this context a proposition is "a statement consisting of subject and predicate that is subject to proof."

Relating

Implicit in Cordeu's (1999:24-26) critique of CSPI's members is the idea that in order to see reality as it 'really' was, these *indigenistas* should have remained (at least politically) detached and uninvolved from what they were describing. From Cordeu's perspective, to produce 'objective knowledge' is a value in itself, regardless of the possible consequences that such knowledge may have. I will not dwell on a discussion about what is at stake in claims of objectivity (see Haraway 1991: 183-201), what I want to highlight is the moral dimension of these claims and how these are articulated as situated moralities.

Cartesian Moral Logic and the Politics of Authenticity

The 'scientific detachment' displayed by Cordeu responded to his positioning within an academic setting that while not necessarily requiring detachment and political neutrality, still does not have as an unavoidable 'authorizing' condition the production of knowledge instrumental for different sorts of interventions. That is, academia still is (not for long perhaps) a space in which it can be claimed that knowledge is valuable for knowledge's sake. Not having an agenda directly connected with the ongoing politics of Ynishta, Cordeu was particularly sensitive to the 'constructed' character of Ebitoso traditionalism and, operating within the Cartesian moral logic, this meant that he ended up evaluating traditionalism in terms of its authenticity. This is because, according to the Cartesian moral logic, if any doubt exists with respect to the self-contained essence of the traits that define an entity (in this case traditionalism), then authenticity is in doubt. In other words, authenticity is conflated with autonomy and self-referentiality. Cordeu could not fail to see the connections between the emergent traditionalism and the intervention of CSPI and, thus, qualify the former as inauthentic.

For intellectuals who were situated in a network of political activism and shared with CSPI the ideas of *antropología social de apoyo*, the preoccupation for objectivity was secondary. Yet they shared or were aware of globalized 'standards of public credibility' that conflate authenticity with self-referentiality and autonomy (see Hornborg 1994). Thus, they portrayed the emergence of Ebitoso traditionalism as the flourishing of a dormant seed that had been there all the time and therefore as a process that, at its core, had no connection with their own intervention (see Escobar 1999:357). Through the years and as the demands for objectivity have become more pressing, this kind of argument has been refined and made more sophisticated by applied anthropologists through a series of propositions about what constitutes the 'indigenusness' of Indigenous peoples of the Chaco, and what consequences for proper actions are derived from these 'facts.'

One of these general propositions is implicit throughout entire texts regarding the relations between Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Within the margins set by a plot that describes these relations as a process of 'proletarianization' driven mostly by

violent means (see Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:250-253), and one that describes them as “relatively peaceful when compared with the genocidal wars that were perpetrated [in Argentina]” (Kidd 1995a:47), the implicit proposition is that Indigenous peoples are the unwilling victims of a process of colonization solely driven by the Whites (victimizers). With these roles in place, it is almost automatic that narratives about the colonization of the Chaco constitute ‘romances of resistance’ where the complexity of the process, including ways in which different moral logics interact with each other producing unforeseen effects, is lost (Abu-Lughod 1990). These romances of resistance get their dramatic effect from a storyline that stresses the endurance of ‘core traits’ of Indigenous cultures against all odds.

The endurance of these core traits precisely constitutes the second general proposition about Indigenous peoples of the Chaco. The trait most often cited is Indigenous peoples’ morality, which according to several authors is clearly distinguishable from the individualistic Western one. This morality expresses itself most visibly in the economic relations among Indigenous peoples (moral economy) and between humans and nature (moral ecology). For example, as I mentioned before, the moral economy of the Chaco Indigenous peoples is supposedly characterized by an equalitarian ethic of sharing which, at least ideally, prescribes the obligation to share with the entire residential group (Renshaw 1996:149; Kidd 1999:44-46). This ethic is expressed through ‘authentically Indigenous’ forms of sharing and generosity. Kidd describes an example of this moral economy in the following terms:

Food that enters the household is pooled, and all members have free access to it . . . visitors . . . receiv[e] food whenever people [from the household] eat. It is within the household that children are raised, and this is described by the Enxet [Indigenous people from the southern part of the Paraguayan Chaco] as “caring for them” . . . Personal, nonconsumable property is [within the household] freely lent and borrowed, often without having to ask permission . . . Between households, there is a great deal of voluntary sharing of food. This is regarded as an expression of love between people and usually takes place among close kin . . . Among the Enxet . . . the creation of love is synonymous with the creation of social relationships (Kidd 1999:45).

Indigenous peoples’ moral ecology, in turn, is characterized by a refusal to transform the environment. According to Von Bremen, hunter-gatherers maintain the idea that the resources that sustain their livelihood are abundant enough, and in this way:

[They] do not worry about their reproduction . . . because they consider themselves integral part of the environment . . . each natural and cultural phenomena have specific functions that were determined in a past without time . . . to survive in such a world the most important thing . . . is to know, more than anything else, the characteristic qualities [of those

phenomena] . . . Thus, the fundamental objective [in the life] of the hunter gatherers . . . is to conserve the world such as it is . . . (Von Bremen 1987:13-14; see also a more recent statement of these ideas in Von Bremen 2000).

In these narratives, what distinguishes Indigenous from non-indigenous peoples (or between authentic from non-authentic Indigenous people) besides the role of victims and victimizers, is morality. In principle the difference seems to be the content of these contrasting moralities, but a closer look reveals otherwise. For example, consider Kidd's depiction of the 'authentic Indigenous morality,' where the indigeness of sharing only emerges from a rhetoric that exoticizes practices that, at least as they are described, the proverbial 'Western person' could not fail but to find familiar. In the same vein, consider Von Bremen's depiction of Indigenous peoples' 'mission in life' that, beyond a formulaic recognition of the non-dualistic perspective that grounds it, does not seem to be very different from some versions of Western environmentalism.

Then, where does the difference lie? It lies in the implicit assumption that Indigenous moralities are essences out of history. In effect, Von Bremen argues that "even a hundred years of colonial history in the Chaco have not eliminated these mechanisms [i.e., the moral ecology of the hunter-gatherers] from the Indigenous peoples' behaviour" (Von Bremen 1987:10). Kidd, in turn, says that in spite of colonization, exploitation, and missionary indoctrination, the Enxet "have managed to maintain *an authentic indigenous* morality" (Kidd 1999:38, emphasis added).

These moralities are reified into objectivized categories in such a way that, paraphrasing Ingold (1996), they portray Indigenous peoples as transitional figures between nature and humanity - although, with more than a little tilt in the direction of nature. In his critique of the 'optimal forager' model, Ingold (1996) points out that hunter gatherers are treated ambivalently as products of natural adaptation and as practitioners of rational choice. Insofar as *indigenistas* and applied anthropologists in the Paraguayan Chaco see Indigenous peoples' moralities as a sort of unchanging essence (see Gordillo 1993:75), it is clear that the ambivalence between nature and humanity (as the domain of historicity) is tilted towards the former.²⁰

This naturalization/objectification of Indigenous peoples is not mainly the result of 'outmoded theoretical' positions unaware of the 'constructionist turn' in anthropology, rather it is the result of positions whose coordinates are given by complex and often

²⁰Depending the author, this 'tilt' might be expressed either as some kind of eco-biological determinism (Stahl 1993; Alvarson 1999) or a rational choice that (paradoxically) operates almost unconsciously (Fritz 1993, 1994). The exception to this might be Renshaw (1996) who depicts a 'rational choice' conduct directed by Indigenous values.

mutually contesting demands.²¹ For example, the demands for clear-cut and manageable categories and the commitment to cultural diversity; among other demands, are resolvable by reified traits that define authentic indigenosity (i.e., really different from 'Westernness'). These traits form the basis for establishing which relations are appropriate between the national society and Indigenous peoples. Indeed, the propositions that define Indigenous peoples as victims, as essentially egalitarian and as spontaneous ecologists have their corollaries in assertions about what legislation and forms of development are most appropriate for Indigenous peoples so defined (see Von Bremen 1987, 1994; Kidd 1995a, 1995b; Stahl 1993; Grunberg 1997). The power of these assertions, which are moral claims, comes from the 'truth' supposedly inscribed in the very being of Indigenous peoples. In other words, experts observe certain 'facts' (for example behaviours which reveal moralities) which define what Indigenous peoples are above and beyond what Indigenous peoples could say about themselves. The statements that Indigenous peoples might make about themselves and their own situation are taken, at best, as indexes of more profound realities, such as unconscious moralities, underlying economic structures and the like, which are accessible only to the expert.

In the disregard for what Indigenous peoples could say about themselves are implicit the idea that 'facts' speak by themselves, and the assumption, perhaps the hope, that these facts can conciliate dissension and silence opposition (see Latour 1999:216-257). However, as we will see in the coming chapters, while many facts are made to speak, only a few of them do it with a voice loud enough to be heard. Thus, the production of 'facts' does not settle by itself debates and controversies among *indigenistas*. Yet the attempts to make 'facts' speak do have important effects: as long as it is assumed that the 'facts' that constitute the reality of Indigenous peoples speak by themselves, there is no need to speak *with* Indigenous peoples.

Relational Moral Logic and the Politics of (Significative) Differences

But, where am I in all this story of experts and situated moralities? I started my undergraduate studies at Universidad de Buenos Aires in 1985, a year and few months after the military dictatorship (1976 - 1983), came to an end. With the return of exiled professors and a general rejection of all that was related with the dictatorship years, a Marxist inspired anthropology became dominant. Although unstated, the idea that being committed to social justice and anticapitalist struggles was a requirement to authorize anthropological knowledge also became dominant. In this context, models of a detached and politically neutral anthropology were again pushed to the fringes. In principle, the

²¹The political consequences of both objectivist and deconstructionist analysis of 'indigenosity' has produced a great deal of controversy in anthropological circles (see Briggs 1996; Mato 1996; Brosius 1999).

same did not happen with the objectivist undertones implicit in the idea that the contribution of the discipline to social struggles was to 'unveil' the reality of capitalist domination. However, by the late 1980s, post-modernist criticism of objectivist approaches began to make headway in some university circles. This, together with the demise of the Communist bloc, the anticlimatic experience of the Argentinian democracy blurring the boundaries between those in the government and those in the opposition, and the changing conditions of academic work under IMF-backed structural adjustment, induced a profound reconsideration of the meanings, possibilities and venues for academics' political commitment.

When I began my work with the Yshiro in 1991, I was not under any concrete pressure to produce instrumental knowledge beyond a vague moral imperative of being of service to 'their cause' - which I assumed was more or less the same as that of most oppressed rural people living under capitalist conditions. However, I was not connected to any formally organized political group that would compel me to translate that imperative into a concrete agenda. While I received funding from Earthwatch and the Argentinian National Council for Scientific Research (between 1992 and 1997), my situation did not change since these organizations were interested in the 'pure' (i.e., academic) aspects of my research rather than in its practical 'secondary effects' (for example, the construction of an *in situ* museum and herbarium in Karcha Bahlut). In contrast, the Ebitoso leaders who had invited me to work with their community did have more practical demands of me. But these were not about the knowledge I could produce, rather they were about the skills I could lend to them for the purpose of obtaining resources that, at the same time, would benefit their community and enhance their position as leaders. Thus, I soon found myself developing a research agenda focussing on processes in which I obviously contributed a great deal. Although I did not see it early on, this situation eventually made the dichotomy knower/known or subject/object (and its implicit Cartesian moral logic) unsustainable for me.

As I became more familiar with some of the Yshiro, their language and the contexts of their actions and discourses, the grounds on which my perception of their situation rested started to change. In effect, I could not avoid noticing the contradictions between my understanding of their situation and their own. By 1993, I was acquainted with *antropología social de apoyo* which gave me some sort of road map for my vague political commitments. Among the postulates of this way of practising anthropology was the prescription that the anthropologist should contribute in the revalorization of the Indigenous peoples own culture and knowledge, and should "transfer to the oppressed the most important result of the discipline," which was:

... the description of the mechanisms by which they have been exploited and degraded for centuries ... [The anthropologist] must limit her/himself to inform and put in the oppressed group's hands the theoretical elements that will allow them to become conscious of their own reality and all what it is at stake in it. This transfer will stimulate a change in the group, a

process in which the role of the anthropologist will diminish until it disappears" (Colombres 1992:158).

Thus, in addition to thinking that I was contributing to the revalorization of the Ebitoso's own culture by collecting information on their 'traditional knowledge' and assisting them in the construction of the museum, I also intended to transfer to them 'the most important results of the discipline.' Here is where I started to experience the contradictions that I mentioned above.

The most striking of these contradictions was the fact that many Yshiro refused to see themselves as victims of the Whites' capitalist exploitation. Rather, they stressed their role as active and willing participants in establishing relations with the Whites. This does not mean that there was no criticism of these relations but, at the time, I found this criticism to be not radical enough. Instead of understanding that the stories they told me embodied critiques which were grounded in a different moral logic, I tended to understand the 'soft criticism' of my Yshiro interlocutors in terms of more or less explicit versions of the idea of hegemonic processes and false consciousness.²² However, I was always left unsatisfied with these answers.

It was not until 1995 that I started to become familiar with critiques of Cartesian dualism (Latour 1993), feminist theorizing on positionality and situatedness (Haraway 1991; de Lauretis 1990; Scott 1992) and Native American epistemologies as they are expressed in contemporary Native American literature (Marmon Silko 1977; Scott Momaday 1969, 1979; Vizenor 1994). These readings had a profound impact and alerted me to the possibility that the perspectives held by some Yshiro, which I saw as the effects of hegemonic processes and ultimately a kind of false consciousness, might manifest an ontology and moral logic different from the one upon which I was operating. Of course,

²²Many Yshiro narratives about contact portray the Yshiro as active and willing parties in establishing relations with the Whites. Indeed, as my discussion in Chapter One shows (page 55-58), the most common version of how relations unfolded underlines that an established bond of reciprocity was betrayed by the Whites (see Kidd 1999:56, for a similar narrative from the Enxet). Thus in contrast to my (previously held) and other scholars' understandings that implicitly delineate the roles of victims and victimizers, Yshiro narratives focus on how the relation between Whites and Indigenous peoples changed and as a result produced those roles. In fact, the role of unwilling victims of White colonization is one that many Yshiro leaders reject, in part because a logic of victims and victimizers lends itself to redress the situation by punishment and/or compensation which, while they are unlikely, are rejected because they tend to reinforce the fixity of roles and the separateness of the parties without changing the quality of the relation. As we will see, some Yshiro intellectuals stress that justice consists in changing the relation as to make unequals more equal.

this kind of self-reflexive 'turn' had already become well established as an authorizing condition for disciplinary knowledge.

As I began to pay attention to the different grounds from which I and my Yshiro interlocutors analysed the situation in which we were all immersed, I felt that my 'ears opened' and communication with some of them improved. This new listening capacity not only allowed me to be more receptive to the things that people told me or did, it also gave me a different understanding of the contradictions that I felt about being an observer of processes in which I was actively involved. Although it took a long time before it happened, I, as many other colleagues under different circumstances, had my 'epiphany' and many of these contradictions fell into place.

For reasons that will become clear in the final part of the dissertation, during my fieldwork in 1999-2000 the Yshiro leaders gave me the task of mediating between different Yshiro factions. The first step I took, was to talk to several Yshiro individuals in order to understand how they saw their differences in relation to other Yshiro. The second step was to promote in these individuals a critical re-evaluation of their differences so that unity could emerge between them. Based on my previous training I linked their explanations of their differences to larger economic, political and cultural contexts and processes. In other words, I explained their explanations within my own 'academically informed' frame of reference. This framing (based on a Cartesian epistemology) meant that I saw my communication strategies circumscribed to a couple of possibilities. One was to 'raise awareness' in my interlocutors by 'explaining to them' how their differences were produced 'in reality,' that is, according to my framework of reference. The other possibility was, and given the difficulties (and visible arrogance) of 'explaining to them' how things 'really worked,' to use 'their own understandings' to produce those critical re-evaluations of differences and to reserve 'my explanations' for academic audiences.

I must confess that I stumbled uncomfortably between these two strategies, feeling again trapped by a problem that, while not new to me, I could not see exactly where its root was located or the way to solve it. This came to an end in July 1999 when Don Veneto, the *konsaha*, told me that I was alive and working with the Yshiro because he had saved me from a disease that would have killed me a few years before. This had occurred in a time-space of which I only had reference through the explanations of the *konsaha*. Don Veneto talked to me of a reality that had little felt relevance for me. Yet I knew from Don Veneto's explanations that his actions on my behalf meant that I had certain obligations towards him and the networks of reciprocity in which he was enmeshed. However, to respond to these obligations in all honesty, I had to accept his 'explanations' of how things worked in 'reality.' Soon I realized that the whole situation was very similar to the one in which I had put other Yshiro interlocutors: for them to act upon or think of their differences according to 'my explanations' they have to embrace my explanations as theirs.

As I further pondered on this 'realization,' it dawned on me that this similarity was only apparent because there was a central difference between these two situations. As

should be clear from my previous discussion of the *indigenista* field, the anthropologist's explanations of the 'Other' have enormous effects on those 'Others' (in the most obvious way through a chain that links academic production to policy production). The same does not happen with the same intensity the other way around. It was not until my conversation with Don Veneto that I began to understand truly that their explanations and my explanations were significantly different because of our unequal position in a field of power (see Haraway 1991:160-161). Given that the field of power in which we (my Yshiro interlocutors and myself) interacted was intertwined with the field of power in which Yshiro people produced and explained their 'internal' differences, it became clear that I could not engage in a critical re-evaluation of 'their differences' if I did not engage in a critical re-evaluation of 'our differences.' Thus, I found myself facing a pressing dilemma: should I explain the differences between my explanations and theirs within mine or their framework? In order to decide this, should not I evaluate the differences existing between one framework and the other? But, what 'significant differences' were there between them? From within whose framework would I explain those differences? In short, the dilemma expressed itself as an ever expanding loop.

As I said in the Introduction (page 22-23), my aim is to find ways to account for politically relevant differences without relying on frameworks that might end up reinforcing those differences at another level. Thus, through experiences such as the one that I had with Don Veneto, my 'political' commitment changed and what had started as a combination of academic demands and vague political imperatives to 'help' a hypothetical cause has become a more complex involvement. In this involvement the unhindered performance of the relational moral logic implicit in many of the Yshiro storytelling and actions, is critically important. Let me briefly explain what I mean by this.

In trying to shed the profoundly embodied dualist ontology dominant in the socio-cultural milieu where I have been raised and educated, I have come to appreciate the epistemological and political possibilities of the relational moral logic implicit in some Yshiro intellectuals' discourses and conduct. A feature of this moral logic is that it tends to focus on whether relations have positive or negative effects.²³ As the positive or negative statuses of given relations are dependent on the specific context and circumstances of evaluation, morality does not provide closure or forever-established norms of conduct, only the unending responsibility of using *eiwo* (the capacity for distinction-making) to weave a meaningful universe and forestall the negative aspects of the *wozosh* (the force that pulls Being back into indistinction) released in the process of meaning making. From this perspective, moral ideals and actions do not begin with the assumption that entities/things are going to tell us how we must relate to them but from

²³This feature is evident in the events connected to the split in Ynishta and in the relations established by Don Veneto with the *ukurb 'deio* (see Chapter Three).

the question, what kinds of relations are producing these entities/things? Are these entities positive or negative according to the present circumstances? Do we need to tell a story (or some other form of performance) in order to make these entities more propitious to sustain Being? Which performances would be best?

These sorts of question have helped me to resolve what I felt as an implicit contradiction in my situation as a 'participant observer' and have allowed me to understand the writing of ethnography as a performance, among several others, that collaborates in bringing into Being that of which it speaks. I have come to conceive my involvement in the politics that affect the Yshiro and my analysis and writing about these politics as moments of a single performance. There is some resemblance between this way of conceiving my work and *antropología social de apoyo*'s idea that the value of knowledge depends on its results or effects. But this is only a distant resemblance because in contrast to the idea of *antropología social de apoyo* that the task of the anthropologists is to help Indigenous peoples to uncover a hidden reality, I see my task as concerned with performing a different reality along with some Yshiro and non-Yshiro intellectuals that have influenced me. Of course, paraphrasing the old Marxist dictum, these performances are only possible to the extent allowed by conditions that are not of our choosing. This means that not just any reality can be performed. Recall that an actant/imagination coagulates into reality the more and the better it is performed or fabricated, and this depends on how we deal with those conditions that are not of our choosing (see Latour 1999).

You are probably wondering what this reality looks like. This is a question that I cannot answer because it is not as much a definite vision of how the world should be as it is an intention to open up spaces to the modes of seeing and performing the world that I have discussed under the banner of relational moral logic. I am aware that my anthropological praxis emerges from a situated morality in which several actants/imaginings intersect (i.e., the relational moral logic, changing dominant disciplinary paradigms, funding networks, and interlocutor's demands). This particular conjunction of actants has been enabling in that I have had the space and opportunity to wilfully let myself be transformed by my relations with Yshiro intellectuals.²⁴ However, as the Yshiro historical experience shows, for an openness to dialogue to emerge between people who perform different moral logics, asymmetries between them must be reduced.

²⁴ 'Will' is certainly a black-boxed actant composed by a whole series of circumstances which, this not being a confessional, I prefer to leave undiscussed. However, I must stress that, in relation to self-awareness, constraining circumstances usually become visible only after they have changed. As the zen saying goes, a knife does not cut itself, let alone pretend that it will do it well: In this sense, the reader will understand that in the actant-will are included enabling and constraining circumstances which I do not see.

Thus, my commitment is geared to collaborate with some Yshiro leaders and intellectuals in opening spaces for the relational moral logic to operate and expand. This is a guiding moral commitment based on the conviction that this moral logic provides a better ground for politics to occur because it remains open-ended and thus can embrace heterogeneity without taming it.

Conclusions: New Authorized Imaginations

As we have moved from traditionalism into some of the networks that contributed to shaping it, it has become clear that the events in Ynishta were quickly translated into the dominant Cartesian moral logic, which takes reified categories of indigenouness as the anchor point around which proper relations with Indigenous peoples are established. I showed that, as a result of their transnational networking, movements struggling against the effects of state-driven development contributed to dis-authorize the imaginations that grounded this expression of modern governmentality. In the same process, they contributed to authorize new imaginations such as Indigenous peoples, the environment, and sustainability. These imaginations co-emerged with what, from the perspective of Cartesian dualism, appears as independent moral statements, that is, imaginations expressed as answers to the question: what is the right thing to do with these new imaginations? Thus, state-driven development, which was aimed at integrating the Indians into society and nature into the market, was displaced by sustainable development, which incorporated within itself the new imaginations Indigenous peoples and the environment alongside their associated moralities of respect for cultural differences and environmental protection.

Sustainable development, as an answer to the question of what a government should do in relation to the new imaginations, marks the transformation of 'restricted governance.' There no longer exists 'something' that falls outside the liberal problematic of government.²⁵ Nowadays, all these new imaginations and their associated moralities populate the 'universe of the undiscussed' or doxa (see Bourdieu 1977:167-171), at least in the rhetoric of Paraguayan *indigenismo*, development and governmental institutions. In relation to the environment there might be questions about the how but the idea that it must be somehow respected in its integrity and protected from human impact is commonly accepted. In relation to Indigenous peoples, discussions might proceed on whether or not they fit established criteria of indigenouness; or controversies may arise about the consequences of those criteria in terms of the most appropriate legislation or

²⁵Recall that the liberal problematic of government posed the question of the legitimacy of rule in connection to the idea that the relation of rule was established between two independent terms (ruler and ruled). The question was then, the degree of respect that should be granted to the autonomy of the ruled subject (see page 42)

forms of development but, as with nature, the dominant position is that their 'otherness' must be respected or at least not transformed by force. In any case, it is important to keep in mind that although respect for difference and environmental protection have become doxa in official rhetoric, this does not mean that the same happens with concrete practices, as we will see in the upcoming chapters.

Experts may value traits of indigenouness in different ways according to their situated moralities, yet most of them concur with the idea that indigenouness is defined by traits that give substance to difference. In this sense, the shift from an integrationist paradigm to one of respect for cultural differences paradoxically has not corresponded with the recognition that other moral logics can be at work in many Indigenous peoples' actions. Rather, this 'difference' has been tamed into the reified categories with which the Cartesian moral logic can operate. Nevertheless, the discursive shift is much more than mere rhetoric for it signals a change in the Cartesian dichotomy modern/savage and all its connected opposing pairs, including nature/society.

There are two remarkable aspects of the processes I have discussed in this chapter. The responses that diverse actants gave to state-driven development provoked the emergence of radical critiques of the modern ontology from within modern institutions such as the academy and pushed an ensuing change of the modern dichotomies to the centre of governmental decision-making. Indeed, in the process of lobbying and networking, Indigenous peoples, their advocates, human rights and environmental activists became more tightly connected to governments and development institutions thereby transforming perceptions and forms of acting within them. But these transformations are again better understood as translations in which something gets communicated at the price of being transformed. As we will see in the next chapter, the new moral imagination sustainable development does not necessarily mean the same within Indigenous rights or environmental movements as it does within governmental and development institutions. Within these latter institutions, sustainable development acquires sense as a moral imagination (a statement of what is the right thing to do) mainly in relation to other imaginations that, together, shape neoliberal governmentality.

CHAPTER FIVE: EXPANDED GOVERNANCE AND NEOLIBERAL GOVERNMENTALITY

The emergence of sustainable development as the a new authorized (moral) imagination marks the end of restricted governance. In effect, by providing an answer to the moral question posed in relation to imaginations such as Indigenous peoples, the environment, and sustainability, sustainable development did not leave anything outside the liberal democratic problematic of government. The question of the autonomy of nature and Indians (now the environment and Indigenous peoples respectively) and how to grapple with them became part of the governmental concerns. In effect, as we saw throughout Part I, the very complex ways in which the relations between the state and society have been conceived within the liberal democratic tradition, contrast sharply to the relatively unproblematic conception of “modern man’s” rule over nature and Indians. Only when the environmental and Indigenous rights movements pushed their critique of anthropocentrism and Eurocentrism to centre stage, did the question of the legitimacy of the rule of ‘modern man’ over nature and Indians begin to be addressed with similar complexity (see Hajer 1995:74-94; MacKenzie 1997:7).

I must be clear on this point regarding nature. I do not claim that the environment did not constitute a preoccupation of liberal democratic governments before the 1960s and 1970s, rather I claim that these governments did not conceive of the rule *over* nature in the same way as they conceived the rule *of* society, that is, as a murky epistemological and ethical problem. Of course, there were disagreements about how to intervene in nature, yet these were on whether ‘man’ could do it without any regard for nature’s laws or not (see Grove 1995:168-263; Drayton 2000:221-268); that ‘man’ was entitled to intervene in it was unquestionable. It is also clear that concerns about the effects that human activities have on nature have been articulated in ethical terms before the 1960s. However, the particularity of the mid 20th century environmental critique of anthropocentrism is that it pushed to the most powerful centres of decision-making, and on a scale not seen before, the question of whether and under what conditions the rule of humankind over the environment was legitimate.

Similarly, Indians had constituted a governmental preoccupation before. Yet until the 1960s there was little governmental concern about their autonomy. The dominant view was that they had to be integrated into modernity. As with nature, there were voices raised against this assumption. However, the point is that these voices had little impact in governmental action before the 1960s.

Once governments with liberal democratic traditions, like those of Western Europe, were pushed to grapple with the autonomy of nature and Indigenous peoples, they used the same ‘technical means’ that they had used to govern the autonomy of society: expertise and democratic participation. As we saw before (see page 68-69) two conditions have to be met for rule to be legitimate in liberal democratic terms. One of

these conditions is that the activity of rule must intrude as little as possible into the autonomy of the object of government. The other condition is that the gap between the governing subject and the object of government must tend to be more and more narrow. Thus, liberal democratic rule claims legitimacy for itself on the basis that, as a system of government, its goal is to have the ruler govern by respecting the 'free will' or 'inner natural laws' of the object of government; and, through representation, to have the object of government rule itself in some degree (see Kukathas 1989; Rose 1996). The 'technical' means used to achieve this goal have been to call upon experts (who decipher 'the inner natural laws' of the object of government), and to grant ever wider franchises that integrate 'everybody' into the system of representative democracy (which allows for the expression of 'free will') (see Rose 1996:47).

Democracy and state interventions guided by experts were the earliest instruments used by Western European countries to manage the 'expanded problematic of government.' These were the typical technologies of government of the liberal welfare state or social democracy. However by the late 1970s and early 1980s, in the context of economic stagnation, fiscal deficits, growing awareness of environmental problems, among other 'crises,' both the left and the right throughout Western Europe began to attack the welfare state for its economic, political, social, and environmental failures (Rose 1996:50-53). When in the late 1970s the neo-conservatives reached power in the US and Britain, they began to address the 'failures' of state-driven development and welfarism in a multitude of particular domains. These micro-interventions were gradually rationalized by reference to a set of statements that prescribed market dynamics as the basic pattern upon which modern society should organize in order to enjoy wealth and freedom. In other words, this neoliberal prescription started to operate as a point of reference for a heterogeneous set of governmental discourses and practices. Soon this way of rationalizing the activity of government spread throughout most of Western Europe. I must stress that I do not consider this prescription to constitute neoliberal governmentality *per se*. It is neither its origin nor its most important expression.

Neoliberal governmentality is the network of discourses and practices which have this prescription as a common point of reference.

While the exact process by which neoliberal governmentality reached dominance in Western Europe varied according to each national context, in general it involved the slow but steady transformation of the terms of political debate (see contributors to Jobert 1994). This transformation was not only the product of public debates over political ideologies and models of society but it was also the product of what Jobert (1994:16-17) calls 'managerial neoliberalism': a pragmatic know-how that presented itself as a novel recipe to fulfill established values such as freedom, wealth of the nation, environmental soundness and the like. Thus, pursuing established values through policies inspired by the neoliberal idea that the market is the most efficient mechanism to deliver goods and services, managerial neoliberalism transformed the political landscape of Western European governmental institutions at a capillary level.

Networks of expertise played a fundamental role in producing this transformation as they contributed to frame the problems and their solutions in a process by which claims to truth translated into policies. In this chapter I will argue that the shift towards a neoliberal governmentality can be correlated to a change in the ontology that has been at the core of modern governmentality and the production of expert knowledge. In effect, sustainable development is an expression of a governmental rationality that has to grapple with two constitutive imaginations of the modern ontology which had been previously not included in the problematic of government. In addition, the third constitutive imagination of the modern ontology, progress (or development), seems to have been displaced by risk, which, as I will argue below, is often embodied in the imagination-sustainability. These transformations alter both the terms under which the absolute certainty demanded by the Cartesian moral logic can be pursued, and the governmentality that followed from this demand.

Risk and Uncertainty: The End of Progress

Let us compare two passages from documents that are emblematic of two moments in the history of development that correspond with my distinction between before and after the end of the hegemonic coincidence in Paraguay. The first comes from President Harry Truman's inaugural discourse, in what has been regarded as the launching of the 'development era' (Esteva 1992:6) in the sense that the word development came at that moment to be at the forefront of the discourses and practices of institutions that were specifically created to pursue it. In his discourse Truman stated that:

For the first time in history humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of [the poor of the world] . . . Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge" (Truman [1949] cited in Escobar 1995:3).

The second passage comes from the World Commission on Environment and Development's (WECD) report, *Our Common Future*, which is considered to be a ground setting statement for sustainable development (see Conca *et al* 1995:208). In it the authors argue that:

humanity's inability to fit its doings into [the natural cycles of the globe] is changing planetary systems, fundamentally. Many such changes are accompanied by life-threatening hazards. This new reality, from which there is no escape, must be recognized - and managed (WCED 1987:1).

Comparing the first to the second passage, we can see a clear shift of attitude. Truman's statement is full of certainty and trust in human capacities; fundamentally in science and technology. It is an aggressive and self-confident stance against the maladies afflicting humanity. The WCED's statement, in contrast is ominous, cautiously hopeful

but definitely defensive against the effects of human action.¹ The first statement is imbued by the spirit of progress and development, the second by the presence of risk. How did this change of perspective occur? In the previous chapter I have shown some aspects of the process involved in this change when I discussed the networking done by social movements and activists struggling against the effects of state-driven development. What interests me now is to discuss how these changes have been explained from what in the Introduction I called periodization perspectives. This is important because the ways in which these changes are imagined by experts implicitly or explicitly prescribe 'what is the right thing to do' in facing them. These prescriptions become, in some cases, the point of reference around which different policies are rationalized.

Here I will discuss two narratives of the present moment which use the periodization perspective: Becks' theory of reflexive modernization and Hayek's theory of the market society.² I will argue that these authors' discourses are two emergents of a network imbued by the Cartesian moral logic and although their arguments may seem very different, they are part of common discursive formation which situates the moral question in a context of radical uncertainty and impending risks (Foucault 1991b).

¹It is true that later in the report its authors go on arguing that humans can fit in the 'natural cycles' by modifying their technologies and social organization and, thus, they still see development or progress as achievable. However, the point is that this vision is less assertive than Truman's and that risk not progress is the primary background against which sustainable development acquires its meaning. It is in this sense that I argue that the imagination-sustainability embodies the notion of risk.

²I have chosen these two narratives because they represent two mutually contending yet dominant views in European governmental circles. Hayek's theory is part of the constellation of neoliberal ideas that I already said have become dominant in Western Europe. I chose him in particular because he was the first to articulate the idea of the market society and he profoundly impacted the subsequent developments of neoliberal thinking and its concrete applications in policy-making (see Gamble 1996:9-10; Peters 2001:113-135). In turn, the prescriptions derived from Beck's theory of reflexive modernization are kindred to the social democratic ideas that neoliberalism displaced. Yet they never completely left governmental circles and lately there have been indications that they may be making a return as the politics of the Third Way. In any case Beck's are part of a wider constellation of social democratic ideas. I selected him because of the relevance he gives to the 'environmental crisis' and to social movements in his narration of the present moment. In this sense there are several points of contact with my own narrative that I find important to highlight.

Reflexive modernization

The change from a period of confidence in human knowledge and progress to one of uncertainty and risk has been theorized by Beck (1992, 1994, 1999), among others, in the terms of 'reflexive modernization.'³ According to this theory, the primary product of the process of modernization, particularly industrialization on the basis of technoscience, are no longer 'goods' but risks which are all pervasive and incalculable. The most prominent risks are environmental, but economic risks (such as the crash of financial systems) are also very present in peoples' minds. In addition, the role that experts play in (inadvertently) producing risks as well as their mutually contradictory claims about the nature of the risks being faced erode their credibility and authority. The combination of risks and the loss of authority by experts sweeps away the certainties that sustained the previous phase of modernization (simple modernity, in Beck's terms), specially the belief in progress. Thus, in contrast to simple modernization, whose main ontological dynamic (i.e., progress) was represented in the mastery of nature, the stamp of reflexive modernization is society's concern with managing itself and its main product, risks. Hence the labelling of 'risk society' that this new reality receives in Beck's formulation.

According to Beck the concept of risk society "combines *what once was mutually exclusive* - society and nature, social sciences and material sciences, the discursive construction of risk and the materiality of threats" (1999:4. Emphasis added). The current situation, Beck argues, has superseded the separate concepts of nature and society. For example using nature (or 'the world out there') as a standard to indicate what is the right thing to do rests on 'a naturalistic misunderstanding' because:

the nature invoked is *no longer* there . . . What is there, and what creates such political stir, are different forms of socialization and different symbolic mediations of nature (and the destruction of nature)" (Beck 1999:21. Emphasis added).

These different 'cultural concepts of nature' are behind experts and lay-people's disputes about risk (Beck 1999:21). Thus, for Beck, risks are not strictly problems of 'the world out there' but a deep institutional crisis of simple modernity (Beck 1999:33).

The crisis described by Beck is fundamentally one of knowing what is the right thing to do in a context in which both the ontological dualism nature/society and the ontological dynamic of progress on which modern knowledge and certainties were based have been radically transformed (Beck 1992:166, 223; 1994:33). The incapacity of simple modernity's institutions to address this crisis, promotes the emergence of 'subpolitics,' that is, "politics outside and beyond the representative institutions of the political system of nation-states" (Beck 1999:39). Subpolitics imply individual and collective participation

³Reflexive modernization has also been theorized by Anthony Giddens (1990, 1994, and see also Giddens and Pierson 1998) and Scott Lash (1994).

(through social movements and NGOs) in political decisions, including those decisions that before were the exclusive concern of experts. According to Beck, as the whole world shares this basic challenge (i.e., how one might know what is the right thing to do in a context of radical uncertainty and incalculable risks), reflexive modernity promotes collective mobilization in an unprecedented scale and, thus, contains the promise of a truly cosmopolitan democracy (Beck 1999:13-18).

Beck considers that the utopia of a cosmopolitan democracy can be constructed if a global dialogue, whose 'object is the goals, values and structures of a cosmopolitan society,' is promoted. Who could be the architect of this global dialogue? 'Freedom's children,' the younger generations of 'modern Western Society' who have experienced the loss of authority of and confidence in hierarchical institutions, who can accept the premise that there is **no longer** an ontological cement to the structure of society, and therefore, that they have to make choices on their own, and who understand that "to create a new sense of social cohesion has to start from the recognition that individualization, diversity and scepticism are *written into our culture*" (Beck 1999:9-15. Emphasis added).

It is evident that this narration of the present moment has several points of contact with the processes that I have been describing such as the expansion of networks of activism to face the consequences of state-driven development (Beck's subpolitics) and the inclusion of nature and Indians into the problematic of government (Beck's fusion of nature and society). However I have also been emphasizing some terms and turns of his argument that signal a critical difference between his approach and mine: in contrast to my understanding, he sees the changes undergone in 'society' as an ontological change not as a change within a particular ontology, that is, in the myth of modernity. Because for Beck this is an ontological change, it involves the whole world irrespective of cultural differences and irrespective of whether other places/cultures conceive themselves within the framework of different ontologies. Once the 'fact' that we (the whole world) have lost our ontological basis is established, the accompanying prescription follows: we can only deal with this new situation through a cosmopolitan (social) democracy that takes this 'fact' as its starting point, the common reference that will allow communication across our differences.⁴ Yet only those who recognize this 'fact' are in a position to help build this cosmopolitan democracy.

The Market Society

The background of Hayek's theory of the market society is a metahistory of

⁴I speak of cosmopolitan social democracy because Beck (1999:13) considers a basic assured income as a *sine qua non* of his cosmopolitan democracy. Symptomatically, one of Giddens books is titled *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*.

evolutionary progress.⁵ He argues that the market society, or the modern Western capitalist society, has emerged through an evolutionary process in which societies obeying certain social rules have prevailed and expanded. These rules were not consciously chosen yet the groups who unconsciously observed them were more successful in increasing their numbers than those who did not (Hayek 1973:251; see also Tomlinson 1990:43-44). The central feature of these rules has been the suppression of two moral instincts ingrained in human nature: solidarity and altruism. These moral instincts were useful at other stages in the evolution of society but they now threaten the harsh but ultimately more adaptive order of the market society (see Gamble 1996:27-31). The market society does not only ensure the life of larger populations but also liberty for its members. Liberty can be seen as a value itself but in Hayek's formulation it is a central element that ensures the survival of the market society. In effect, he sees liberty as freedom from restraint regarding how we go about achieving our ends and welfare. Why is this freedom critical to the order of the market? Because humans cannot know with certainty what is the right thing to do in order to achieve their objectives and welfare. Yet if in their ignorance individuals go about their own business without trying to impose their visions on others, the aggregate result is that the more adaptive order, i.e., the market, continually re-emerges (see Tomlinson 1990:17-66; Gamble 1996:41-44).

Although the market society is the peak of social evolution, its order is threatened when the two moral instincts, altruism and solidarity, are let free and they make their way into the state's policy. This occurs when some people become convinced that human reasoning capacities can grasp the complexity of society. Then, they begin to dictate a direction to human affairs (redistribution, for example) through state intervention. This unavoidably involves the violation of individual freedom and ultimately leads to the demise of the market society and the benefits it produces. Consequently, Hayek proposes a programme of action to manage this risk: making market dynamics the overarching rationale which subsumes all other rationales informing social relations (Hayek 1973; see also Kukathas 1989:1-19). According to Hayek (1973) the spontaneous benefit that the order of market offers to humans is precisely that it does not establish a priori criteria of what is worthwhile and what is not, that is, it does not tell us 'what to do.' In this way, it allows each individual to follow their own criteria. In short, market dynamics provide an abstract system that does not have a purpose of its own and, in this way, is able to contain all purposes, granted that none of these give a purpose (for example redistribution) to the market society.

The question might be raised as to why do I call this theory a narrative of the present moment and compare it to Beck's? Although it does not address the latest events

⁵I must note that Hayek's main works about the market society started to be published in the 1940s. After I discuss his theory I will explain why in spite of these time difference his theory is relevant for the processes I am discussing here.

of our 'globalized' world as Beck's does, Hayek's theory does tell us where 'our' modern market society is situated in relation to past stages in an evolutionary path. According to his view, this is a point in time where society has reached the peak of evolution yet, if it does not do something about it, it runs the risk of losing all what have been achieved. Once the 'facts' that humans have no ontological basis on which to know with certainty, and that the market society is the product of this uncertainty are recognized, the accompanying prescription follows: we can only deal with the risks posed to us by our own ontological uncertainty through a social order that takes these 'facts' as its starting point. These facts will provide the common framework within which the variety of ways in which individuals go about their own objectives can be pursued. Yet only those who recognize these 'facts' can see that this is the right thing to do.

Now, why is Hayek's particular narrative of the present time relevant when processes such as the increasing omnipresence of risk, started to take their contemporary shape several decades after he articulated some of his ideas? In effect, his book *The Road to Serfdom*, that can be considered as a statement of the risks faced by the market society, was published in 1944, long before the emergence of the movements and events that, in Beck's account, brought risk to the forefront of contemporary thought. However, the important point is that Hayek's ideas did not begin to be used as a reference point for programmatic agendas until the 1970s. This is important because as Jobert (1994:20) has pointed out, the rise of neoliberalism was connected to perceived constraints to economic growth. Although I do not intend to pursue this here, it can be argued that this perception is linked to the awareness of environmental risks, as the famous report *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al 1974) attests. In short, Hayek's narrative of the present moment provides, as much as Beck's does, an explanation and a prescription for the crisis that 'society' (in singular) started to perceive in the 1970s. But, as we will see, the commonalities between these narratives of the present moment go beyond the point that they both provide prescriptions for the present moment.

Knowing What is the Right Thing to Do Under Radical Uncertainty

I pointed out above that Beck's theory describes a crisis that can be posed in these terms: how can one know what is the right thing to do in a context of radical uncertainty and impending risks? Somehow, both the reflexive modernization and the market society theories describe our present situation as one in which we are facing this dilemma. As we will see, they both give strikingly similar answers, that is, procedural answers.

Szerszynski (1996:110) has argued that in modernity the moral problem is articulated as an epistemological problem: "how can the human subject, now conceived as an autonomous observer of reality, rather than as implicated in that reality, obtain moral knowledge?" Embodying ontological dualism as it does, this question can be more clearly stated as: how can truth, or the correspondence between reality and representation, be achieved? (see Szerszynski 1996:108-109). Following Crook, Szerszynski (1996:110)

indicates two ways in which modern knowledge pursues this correspondence. The first is by making substantive claims, that is, claiming that a given statement closely matches reality out there. Reality is then, the origin of truth and the 'good.' The second, is by claiming that a given statement is the autonomous result of laws internal to itself and removed from other influences such as material interests or contingent circumstances. The first way of claiming truth is what Beck calls 'a naturalistic misunderstanding.' The second is what I call a 'procedural answer.'

Both, Beck's and Hayek's theories prescribe procedural answers to the problem that uncertainty and risks pose to 'society.' These 'procedural answers' apparently make no substantive claims about reality, rather they establish a dynamic or procedure to sort out competing claims. In effect, Beck prescribes the subpolitics of a cosmopolitan democracy as a procedure to sort out the contending claims of a (necessarily) multicultural global society with different 'cultural concepts.' Hayek, in turn, prescribes market dynamics as a procedure to sort out the contending claims of a society with different individual conceptions of a good life. Neither of these prescriptions say anything about the truth or the 'good' of competing claims, rather uncertainty about these issues is taken to be ontological. Yet it is implicit that the truth and 'the good' is whatever comes out of the prescribed procedures (see Szerszynski 1996:114-117).

The claim that procedural answers do not make substantive claims, that is, claims about the truth and the good which are anchored to reality, is only appearance. This appearance rests in a contradiction and in this contradiction rests the truth-power of procedural answers.

The contradiction of which I am talking about is typically modern and is already evident in the critical philosophy of the Enlightenment. This critical philosophy attempted to solve disagreements between different statements or claims to know by inquiring at a meta-level about the conditions (the limits and constraints) that made those statements possible. But, somehow these second-level statements or meta-narratives were assumed to be free from the limitations and constraints that operated at the first level. It was assumed that this meta-level provided a neutral standpoint in relation to the statements of the first level (see Peters 2001:27-28). We can find this contradiction in both Beck's and Hayek's arguments.

For all his claims that the entire world is operating upon an ontological terrain profoundly transformed, Beck's narrative of the present moment remains solidly anchored in this modern contradiction. Beck tells us that modernization has eroded its own ontological basis, the basis on which certainty and progress rested. Whether we recognize it or not, uncertainty and risks are nowadays the ontological basis upon which we all carry on with our lives. This meta-narrative explains what goes on in the 'first level,' where a variety of competing 'cultural concepts' of risk are contributing to erode the certainties of an earlier phase of modernity. From this meta-narrative Beck derives conclusions in the form of a prescription: cosmopolitan democracy. But, one wonders, on what basis can Beck claim to know this is the right prescription when the ontological basis for certainty

no longer exist? Through this self-reflexive inconsistency Beck reinstates, at a higher level, the ontological divide between nature and society (or reality and representation) which reflexive modernization is supposed to cancel. Implicitly he claims access to a reality that he already claimed was inaccessible given the current ontological conditions, in order to say that cosmopolitan democracy (defined in his own terms) is the only way to deal with risks.

Hayek's argument follows the same pattern. He claims that human intervention in the dynamics of the market society will produce enormous afflictions because humans cannot know with certainty. Thus, he prescribes putting market dynamics above the always misinformed human decisions and intentions. Yet one wonders, how can he know this? Is not human knowledge always misinformed? Or only some human knowledge is misinformed but not his? As we can see, Hayek also claims access to a reality he already claimed was inaccessible because of the human condition.

Reflexive modernization and market society theories promote different 'procedures,' (cosmopolitan democracy and market dynamics) to sort out claims in a context of radical uncertainty and impending risks. Yet as statements of knowledge they reveal a similar structure: first, both take radical uncertainty as a starting point for their prescriptions; second, both frame these prescriptions as procedural answers to the question what is the right thing to do; and third, both consider themselves to be insulated from the logical consequence of their assertion that radical uncertainty is an ontological condition.⁶ The way in which they do this, as we saw, is by situating themselves as metanarratives. In this way Beck and Hayek retain the 'ghostly presence' of a reality out there (see Szerszynski 1996:117). A reality that grounds substantive claims that they disguise as procedural answers to the moral question.

Procedural answers prescribe certain actions as the right thing to do on the basis of a 'ghostly' reality. Yet reality can provide answers or prescriptions only in the context of a moral theory explaining the connection between prescriptions and reality (for this point applied to Hayek see Kukathas 1989:200). This connection is provided by the Cartesian moral logic according to which reality speaks for itself and moral conduct can automatically be derived from it. In other words the truth-power of these prescriptions emerges from a regime of truth operating according to the Cartesian moral logic. And since according to this regime of truth the 'knowing subject' must be autonomous from the reality/morality being described/prescribed, she or he is typically absent from her or his own description/prescription. Which is the case of both Beck and Hayek who never discuss what conditions make possible their statements of 'facts' in the midst of uncertainty. The consequences of this absence is the negation of politics as the opportunity to dispute and negotiate over fundamental moral claims.

⁶Stanley Fish (1997) has shown that the same pattern applies to liberal theories of multiculturalism.

According to these 'expert narratives' of the present moment, the ontological grounds on which knowledge is produced have changed radically (Beck) or are radically different from what most people have thought (Hayek). However, I have shown that these narratives are themselves the proof that this is not the case. In these narratives modern ontology does not appear exactly as it was (or was thought to be) before, but the difference is not as radical as Beck would claim. In effect, as we saw in Beck's theory the ontological divide between nature and society is replaced by their mutual fusion at the 'first level,' yet it is reinstated at a meta level. This slightly changed ontology has the effect of making the knowing/governing subject appear further removed from the known/governed object.⁷ This, as we will see, affects the technologies of government. But before, we enter into that discussion let us see how the neoliberal prescription has dominated over the cosmopolitan or social democratic prescription.

Ruling Market

Although the outcome remains an open question, both the proponents of cosmopolitan democracy and the proponents of a market centred society have tried to frame each other. An example is the much spoken about 'Third Way,' a program of government related to reflexive modernization theory in which market dynamics appear subordinated to the needs of cosmopolitan (social) democracy. Yet so far it is democracy what appears to be subordinated to market dynamics. This does not mean that democracy disappears from the horizon of politics but it appears subsumed within the wider framework set up by the market society. This is evident in what Edwards and Hulme (1996a) call the New Policy Agenda (NPA) dominant since the late 1980s in institutions related to development cooperation. The NPA is organized around elements of the neoliberal prescription and elements of the social democratic prescription (see Edwards and Hulme 1996a; see also Peet and Watts 1996), yet the relation between these poles is not symmetrical. Rather, as we will see, social democratic 'preoccupations' with environmental sustainability, human rights, cultural diversity, and democracy are rationalized in terms that make them equivalent to free market. The way in which ecological modernization was rationalized in these terms will give us an idea of how this is done through what Jobert (1994) calls managerial neoliberalism.

Ecological Modernization

Ecological modernization emerged as a programme of government of the

⁷In consideration of those who have theorized this change, I will call this ontology, the ontology of reflexive modernity to distinguish it from the strictly modern ontology.

environment when European governments began to take up the demands of the environmental movement (see Hajer 1995; Rutherford 1999:109-111). Although a large sector of this movement in the late 1960s advocated a profound transformation of modern society (Dalton 1994:35-41), the programme of ecological modernization that emerged from their interactions with governments assumed that modern institutions such as representative democracy (through Green parties or NGOs), nation-states, and particularly science could address environmental problems. However, from the 1970s onwards, ecological modernization has increasingly moved from an approach heavily reliant on state interventions guided by experts to an approach in which the market appears as the privileged instrument to address environmental problems (see Szerszynski 1996:112-116).

For example, Michelle Cini (2000) has pointed out that when the European Union Directorate General (DG) on the environment was created in the late 1960s, it was staffed with environmentalists.⁸ Thus, other DGs saw the environmental DG as being dominated by 'ecological freaks' who produced regulations that were unworkable. Business and industrial interest groups, who had strong influence within other more powerful DGs in the Commission, blocked, or at least watered-down, the implementation of the policies that the environmental DG advocated (see Cini 2000; for lobbying groups in the EU see Mazey and Richardson 1996). In view of how ineffective the environmental DG was, the European Commission engineered a top-down overhaul of the DG's 'culture' in order that it would produce policies that were more acceptable for other DGs. The change was "centred on a concerted effort to turn environmental constraints into environmental opportunities" (Cini 2000:84). One may ask, opportunities for what and for whom? According to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee (ESC), an EU consultative committee of 'independent experts,' environmental problems provide the opportunity to give the environment a price:

The Economic and Social Committee feels that a freer world trade serves economic efficiency, offers the consumer more possibility of choice at lower prices and as such can contribute towards sustainable development through a more efficient use of raw materials and natural resources. The primary cause of environmental problems is not liberalized trade but the failure of markets and governments to *price the environment appropriately* (ESC 1997: 0.1. *Emphasis added*).

Committees like the ESC are forums of 'experts' who are expected to produce a convergence or compromise of interests that facilitates policy-making (see Van

⁸Although their areas of interest are narrower, Directorate Generales are more or less equivalent to ministries within the European Commission, which is the executive body of the European Union. For an overview of European Union institutions and their policy-making processes see Peterson and Bomberg (1999).

Schendelen 1998). The ESC supposedly represents Europe's organised civil society within the EU steering institutions (the European Commission and the Council of Europe)⁹ and its members are drawn from economic and social interest groups. But, they are nominated by national governments and appointed by the Council of the European Union! Thus, although the 'opinion' of the ESC appears as a convergence of views among so called 'independent experts,' in reality these views echo the policies promoted from within the European Commission with regards to the relation between environment and development (see EC 1999).¹⁰ In these policies, diverse mechanisms (ranging from 'pollution taxes' to regular consulting with and funding of NGOs) are used to make environmental protection a 'positive-sum game' that does not hinder economic growth.

In addition to top-down 'overhauls' of the organizational culture of DGs, which usually involves sorting out claims of expertise, the petty politics of careerism also played a role in how policies began to be rationalized in reference to neoliberal postulates. For example an ex-EC official who decided to leave the European Commission to work in an environmental NGO described to me in 1999 the everyday process of drafting policy documents on development cooperation in these terms:

Democracy, sustainability, human rights and all those things are good for business . . . or so they [those who draft official documents] say. Who do you think they are trying to convince? Not me, not you, not the public. They are trying to convince the guys who will decide if those written words deserve another destiny than the garbage can. These guys are their bosses, the committees, the head of unit, the General Director and all the way up. It may take some time but not much for a person working there to realize that whatever you propose or suggest, if it is not good for business or at least not harmful to it, it is very unlikely to move ahead . . . What I mean is that if democracy and sustainability are good for business, great! But if pushing for them begins to hamper trade, investment and business opportunities, in less than a day you will have some lobbyists in your boss' neck and him in yours. After a few years there, you know how to avoid problems.

Through these glimpses into how environmental critiques and demands were translated into ecological modernization and how this in turn became rationalized as part

⁹For an overview of ESC visit its web page <http://www.esc.eu.int/index800.htm> (Accessed February 25, 2003).

¹⁰It is remarkable for a body of 68 'independent experts' that not a single one opposed the opinion on the 'pricing of the environment' quoted above, and that only three of them abstained from voting (see ESC 1997).

of neoliberal governmentality, we can appreciate that these changes took place as a consequence of a multiplicity of intricately connected struggles. These were waged in different fields ranging from the grand debates on alternative models of society to the politics of the workplace in governmental institutions. The case of human rights in the context of development is another example of this kind of translation, and one that is very important because it has been key in allowing the world-wide spread of neoliberal governmentality.

The Double-edged Sword of Activism: Human Rights and Development

As the respect for cultural differences and Indigenous rights came to form part of the constellation of human rights, they have also been translated and rationalized in terms of the neoliberal postulates. As I suggested in the previous chapter, the incorporation of Indians into the problematic of government was not only connected to issues of human rights but also to environmental issues. Yet the Indians posed their own dilemmas: how to integrate the (human) 'others' into the represented body-politic while at the same time respecting their differences. The liberal democratic response has been multiculturalism, a 'technique' that consists in carving out a space for difference within society. In this way, (human) 'others' are incorporated within the body-politic supposedly without having to be transformed in order to fit. For example, amidst an overwhelming set of policies that assume that development is dependent upon the integration of every country to the market economy, the EC states in its framework document about development cooperation and Indigenous peoples that many "indigenous economies are oriented towards subsistence rather than the market economy," and that given the pressures that are making these economies harder to sustain, development cooperation should "support indigenous peoples in their efforts to consolidate their economies" (EC 1998:5). Moreover, Indigenous development "should be based on their own diverse values, visions and priorities, bringing out the full potential of indigenous culture" (EC 1998:2).

Thus, the liberal democratic idea of integration into 'the benefits' of (global) society, which is implicit in development, apparently no longer requires that the 'other' be disciplined and transformed into the 'same.' Rather, it is implicitly asserted that the 'global society' can welcome difference and heterogeneity within itself. Yet let me indicate that the space carved out for the display of difference is framed by a larger logic which is not up for negotiation. We will see in later chapters that the economic systems, values, visions and priorities of 'indigenous cultures' are tolerated as long as they do not disrupt the wider logic of the market promoted by neoliberalism as the founding pillar of 'modern society.' But before I move let me present a brief example of how the respect for cultural differences is conceived within EU institutions. According to the Committee on the Regions (an EU consultative body):

different cultures can have an enriching effect on each other and help to create an innovative atmosphere in which entrepreneurship can also

flourish. Cultural exchanges can be seen as the subject of financial transactions, in the same way as material goods . . . In a truly multicultural society, the skills and expertise of minority groups can be put to good use in cross-border cooperation. It is seldom realized just how beneficial knowledge of other cultures can be for the economy (COR 1998:63).

These kinds of rationalizations of policy in terms of market dynamics have been possible in part by the opportunities extended by human rights activism. As I showed in the previous chapter, it was partly through the pressures and networking done by human rights and environmental activists that the human and environmental consequences of state-centred development were 'learned' by development institutions and governments. In this sense, there is a genealogical connection between the practice of making 'development cooperation' conditional upon the 'good governance' practices of recipient countries and the activities of human rights advocates in the 1970s. This connection reveals the reversibility of power struggles (Foucault 1990:92-93) and how the meanings attached by some social movements to struggles against the effects of state-driven development were translated into something else when they were rationalized in terms of neoliberal postulates.¹¹ By contributing to make development aid conditional upon the human rights' record of recipient countries, human rights activists set the precedent for the idea that not only economic considerations but also political considerations should direct the cooperation policy of lending institutions such as the World Bank or the IMF.¹² Yet as 'political considerations' were rationalized in terms of the neoliberal postulates, they were reformulated to mean the good order required for a positive investment climate and the efficient use of resources (see Arce 2000:35-36).

This narrow conception of politics has reduced political and human rights to something akin to consumers' rights. This is clear if one traces the implicit connections that exist throughout and across policy documents. In the mid 1990s, the EU defined the scope of its development cooperation policy by stating that it "shall be directed towards development centred on man [sic], the main protagonist and beneficiary of development, which thus entails respect for and promotion of human rights" (cited in Arts 1999). In more recent policy documents it is assumed that the enjoyment of those human rights can only occur if 'human development' is achieved. According to those who coined the concept, "human development is a process of enlarging people's choices" (UNDP 1990:10), for the EU, human empowerment - a dimension of human development -

¹¹Arce and Long (2000:1-31) speak of 'counter-works' to refer to these 'translations.'

¹²I must make clear that I am not suggesting that political considerations were not part of the actual decision making processes of these institutions. My point is that these considerations were not explicit in the policy frameworks of these institutions.

“means increasing the range of human choice” (CE 1996). Finally, in recent EU policy, human development is seen as achievable only in the context of democratic societies which are fully integrated into the world economy and enjoying the ‘benefits of globalization’ (EC 2001, see also CE/EC 1999). In short then, human rights are better promoted in market-like conditions.

A New Policy Agenda

Through the kinds of translations I discussed above, Western European governments and the EU have increasingly embraced the idea that market dynamics provide the best framework to meet the demands of human rights, Indigenous peoples and environmental movements.¹³ This idea has also become dominant in multilateral institutions like the World Bank and IMF and has been extended to the Southern Cone of South America and other parts of the world. In effect, implementing these policies have become a condition ‘Third World’ countries have to meet in order to receive aid credits and loans from the governments of ‘developed countries’ and multilateral institutions (see Gana 1996; Gill 1997:8).¹⁴

In most cases the first overarching condition placed on development cooperation responds to the neoliberal ‘proccupations’ of the NPA and involves structural adjustment in the form of downscaling the state, reducing fiscal expenditure and lowering trade barriers. These steps are seen as critical for the functioning of a healthy market, which is considered to be the ultimate engine of development. This is clearly stated in a European Commission and Council of Europe’s joint document:

the main objective of Community development policy must be to reduce and, eventually, to eradicate poverty . . . [S]ustained growth, although not sufficient in itself, is an essential prerequisite for poverty reduction. The integration of the developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, into the world economy is a precondition for their growth”

¹³For some analysts the EU has come to represent a glimpse of what a neoliberal state would look like, not a political institution but an administrative and entrepreneurial one designed to ensure that the market suffers no political interferences (see Shore 2000:84-85; Majone 1994).

¹⁴However, to be more precise in the case of some countries in the Southern Cone like Argentina and Chile, neoliberal policies began to be imposed by military dictatorships during the 1970s. As Dezalay and Garth (2002) argue, neoliberal policies were applied early in these countries in part because a group of economists who had been trained in the Chicago school of neoliberal thought (the infamous ‘Chicago boys’) had become dominant among the ‘experts’ consulted by the military governments.

(CE/EC 1999).

In other words, poverty can only be eliminated through market integration. Economic globalization (understood in the EU governmental circles as the integration of the world economy) signals the end of a way of conceiving development as something that had to be moulded by states, and the 'return' to the liberal roots that postulate the self-regulating market (now on a global scale) as the engine of 'the wealth of nations.' According to this logic, all that needs to be done is to lift the constraints holding back the 'natural' dynamics of the market (Rist 1997:223-226).

Yet the second overarching condition for development cooperation is linked to the social democratic preoccupations of the NPA:

Poverty reduction, the main objective of the European Community's development policy, will only be sustainably achieved where there are functioning participatory democracies and accountable governments. Corrupt and autocratic governments are likely to misuse development assistance either to maintain repression or for private enrichment at the expense of their populations . . . The process of globalisation is a potential force for freedom and justice as well as for prosperity. . . There is a danger that globalisation will have a negative effect on the welfare of the world's poorest and most vulnerable groups, that not all countries and populations will be able to reap its potential benefits . . . The European Union has a role to play in providing positive answers to those concerns. *Through its human rights and democratisation policy*, it can contribute to making globalisation a truly inclusive process (EC 2001:4. Emphasis added).

Once the 'natural forces' of economic globalization are let loose the following step is to prepare certain sectors of the global society so that they can reap the benefits of these processes and not suffer negative effects. The way to do this is by promoting human rights and democracy. This means that while globalization will take care of economic development, governmental interventions through development cooperation must be redirected toward civil society. This is because, as Edwards and Hulme (1996a:2) argue, in the NPA, civil society and its non-governmental organizations are seen as the guarantor of democracy which in turn is seen as essential to the good functioning of the market.

We can see that the imagination-sustainable development has been rationalized in terms of neoliberal postulates just as several of the actants that compose it (e.g., respect for difference, environmental protection, democracy and the like) have been partially delinked from social democratic postulates. Now, what do these rationalizations mean in terms of governmental actions? In other words, how do governments deploy this rationality? These questions bring us to the issue of technologies of government.

Technologies of Government

As I said, both prescriptions, market society and cosmopolitan democracy, are present in the NPA yet while free market appears as the necessary condition for development, democracy appears as a necessary condition for the *sustainability* of (market) development. This is a small but relevant difference. How can democracy help the sustainability of market development? According to the liberal democratic tradition, a democratic government respects the autonomy of the object of government. And autonomy, understood as the relative lack of external constraints is, according to market society theory, a fundamental element of market dynamics because it provides the ground for unconstrained choice.

The work of a group of scholars building on Foucault's studies of governmentality shows that the protection and promotion of autonomy is related to the centrality that risk and uncertainty have in contemporary governmentality.¹⁵ They have pointed out that the importance of risk in modern liberal societies is not new (see Ewald 1991; Defert 1991), however, what is peculiar to the neoliberal governmentality is that the management of risks is increasingly left in the hands of autonomous units. According to these perspectives, in neoliberal models of society the role of the state is to create an adequate environment that promotes the participation of non-state collective and individual actors in the management of risks, or more generally the possible future outcomes of their lives (see Barry *et al* 1996; Szerszynski, Lash and Wynne 1996). Here, the analysis touches upon reflexive modernization theory. In effect, this theory argues that in reflexive modernization individuals are freed from previous social structures and placed into the situation of having to make choices on their own. Thus, new forms of organizational solidarity emerge that rely on higher degrees of autonomy. All of this brings to the fore an 'existential' dimension of risk which is the uncertainty generated by not having social institutions to back up the decisions made by individuals, which in turn means that individuals are compelled to manage risks on their own by choosing (see Beck *et al* 1994).

I would argue that neoliberal prescriptions promote criteria of efficiency (a cost/benefit relation) as an apparently value-free way to make decisions in conditions of uncertainty. In the context of a problematic of government framed in terms of the centrality of 'autonomous choice,' uncertainty about experts' claims to truth, and the

¹⁵ Although these endeavours were inspiring for my own work, I found them limited in three respects which I have tried to address in this work: they are usually limited to processes taking place within the boundaries of nation-states; their discussion do not account for the processes by which risk and uncertainty have become dominant imaginations in contemporary governmental rationality; and, related with this, they do not account for how their own framework of analysis relates to those processes.

overwhelming presence of risks, neoliberal prescriptions indicate the creation of market-like environments as the overarching frame within which these problems can be addressed. This is because only in this way can autonomous entities become engaged in their own government through 'choices' that will not threaten the overarching market dynamics. Now, the creation of market-like environments is undertaken through a process of 'degovernmentalization of the state' and 'de-statization of the practices of government' which leads to a governmentality that operates "through shaping the powers and wills of autonomous entities" (Rose 1996:54-60) by means of indirect interventions. These are interventions that, by involving the participation of the object of government, apparently do not violate the liberal democratic interdiction to intervene on its autonomy.

Technologies of government that respond to the logic of indirect interventions are proliferating in multiple domains and have been described under, among others, the labels of post-disciplinary technologies of control (Castel 1991; Donzelot 1991); technologies of "command-control-communication-intelligence" (Haraway 1991:164-165); 'cultural control' (Nader 1997); 'control of the surroundings' (Virilio 1999); distantiated relations of control (Rose 1996:53-57); and actuarialism (O'Malley 1996). What these different technologies hold in common is that they seem to respect the autonomous 'free will' or 'natural laws' of the object of intervention. In other words, they are interventions that appear as non-interventions. One of the ways in which this is done is through framing. This is what I described above as the shifting of the knowing/governing subject from a first level, in which certain rules apply (democratic decision making for example), to a second meta-level, in which those rules do not operate. In this meta-level the knowing/governing subject lays down undisputed assertions about reality which will serve as the rationale to organize the procedure or frame within which competing claims will be sorted out in the first level. In this way, no matter the particular outcome, this will always be contained within the frame set up in the meta-level. Because the knowing/governing subject who frames the way in which the sorting out of competing claims will proceed is absent, it appears as if the outcome of a given process is autonomous from the subject having framed it.

A very schematic example of framing would be participatory methodologies used in rural development projects. Usually a development project is designed by experts who prepare a proposal in relation to the policy framework of a donor. With the general objectives set, experts in rural development visit the 'target' communities and set up participatory workshops to discuss what the community would like to do . . . within the framework of the objectives already set. Yet because the general objectives of the donor (the absent 'knowing subject') were never discussed, whatever comes out of the workshop seems to be an autonomous choice of the 'target' community which has been arrived at without the intervention of the donor. In Chapter Seven I will discuss this kind of intervention in more detail.

Framing can be done not only at the circumscribed level of a workshop. Indeed, in my example the community was framed by the objectives of the project, which in turn

was framed by the objectives of the donor, which in turn might have been framed by the neoliberal prescriptions. The role that NGOs have come to play in sustainable development is a good example of how the erasure of the knowing/governing subject also operates to create an appearance of autonomy in policy discourse. For example, in *Agenda 21*, the blueprint for sustainable development agreed by several governments, including the EU, during the UN Earth Summit in 1992, NGOs are described in the following terms:

Non-governmental organizations play a vital role in the shaping and implementation of participatory democracy. Their credibility lies in the responsible and constructive role they play in society . . . independence is a major attribute of non-governmental organizations and is the precondition of real participation . . . Non-governmental organizations . . . possess well-established and diverse experience, expertise and capacity in fields which will be of particular importance to the implementation and review of environmentally sound and socially responsible sustainable development [. . .] The community of non-governmental organizations, therefore, offers a global network that should be tapped, enabled and strengthened in support of efforts to achieve these common goals (Chapter 27).

Here we have a statement where NGOs are praised for their independence and autonomy and then immediately the talk shifts to intervening in them. Yet note that who is to do the tapping, enabling and strengthening is not stated, if it were, how could NGOs be touted as independent? By erasing the acting subject the idea is left implicit that it is a generic 'we,' the whole global society who is going to intervene.¹⁶ Nevertheless, because since the mid 1980s development institutions began to channel an important part of their aid through NGOs doubts about their autonomy have been created.¹⁷ Indeed, with official funding NGOs started to perform governmental tasks such as taking care of the services that the state was abandoning as structural adjustment advanced; setting limits to state abuse and inefficiency; and providing a vehicle for democratic participation of civil society (Eade 2000; Edwards and Hulme 1996b; Hudock 1999). The close connections

¹⁶ Eade (2000:10) points out that in reading contemporary development policy it is hard not to conclude that NGOs and civil society are equivalent. This is in part a result of the ambivalent use made in these documents of the concept of civil society. In effect, taking it at times as a normative (what ought to be) and at times as a descriptive (what it is) concept, civil society appears as something that can be engineered through NGOs or as that which NGOs express (see Pearce 2000:33-34).

¹⁷ Particularly the EU's aid directed towards the strengthening of Latin American civil society has been preferentially channelled through European NGOs forming networks with local grassroots organizations (Freres 1998; Grugel 2000).

that some NGOs established with governments and their high levels of dependency on official funding have raised the question of whether NGOs are an expression of autonomy or instruments in the hands of governments (see contributors to Hulme and Edwards 1997).

The complexity of the networks in which NGOs, social movements, communities, governments and development institutions are entangled make arguments of the co-optation of NGOs too simplistic.¹⁸ Yet as Dean (1999:191-192) has pointed out, if the expansion of civil activism, NGOs and social movements is something like Beck's subpolitics, this must be understood not as processes that are the spontaneous product of the story of modernity but as processes that are "in a complex reciprocity with diverse forms of political authority deploying the rationalities and technologies of government" characteristic of neoliberal governmentality.

Conclusions: Moral Regimes

One morning in February 1999, I was in down-town Brussels on my way to a meeting with a staff member of the EU who had accepted to be interviewed. To my surprise, the streets were totally deserted except for police forces who were in full assault gear. As I approached the building where I was to have my interview, I could see that there was a public demonstration further down the street. After passing some police controls I arrived to my meeting with Mr. Zizeck (pseudonym). A man in his mid fifties, he introduced himself by confessing that in his youth he had been in several demonstrations like the one that was going on outside. After I commented on what I had seen outside, he said "I have been in the streets to ban nuclear plants, pesticides and American bases." As the interview progressed, he frequently returned to the subject of the demonstration which seemed to upset him very much, although from his office we could hear or see nothing of it. In trying to explain the overall view of development held by the EU, he said at a certain point during the conversation:

There are two ways to look at the problem of development. One is to look at the historical causes of underdevelopment. In that case you will see colonialism, cold war, established economic structures, etc. The other way is to look at the causes of underdevelopment in the future. For example, I have members of my family in this demonstration. My brother and my cousins. I come from a family of farmers in . . . and I understand perfectly their position and their angst but they have to understand that we must look to the future in a context of a globalized economy. I explained to them many times that it is not known if tomorrow the World Trade

¹⁸The same can be said of arguments that see NGOs (especially grassroots) as unmistakably resisting those agendas (for a discussion of this issue, see Fisher 1997).

Organization will lift this or that barrier . . . and there are economic sectors, in this case agriculture, that will be hurt. Unfortunately they do not understand that for their own good we cannot continue to subsidize their lack of competitiveness. That's an example of how we are seeing the problem of development, we are preventing the causes of future underdevelopment by preparing the people to face the challenges of the future.

This comment contains some of the central assumptions that characterize the neoliberal governmentality which I have argued arose with the attempts to address an expanded problematic of government. Implicit in Mr. Zizeck's comments is the NPA idea that society has to be helped to adapt to the process of economic globalization. It is also evident that the legitimacy of this prescription is based on its avowed capacity to prevent the risk of economic demise. Interestingly enough, Mr. Zizeck describes this risk as stemming from the fact that 'it is not known if tomorrow the World Trade Organization will lift this or that barrier.' Risk and uncertainty are at the root of the prescription. Yet as I have argued, this prescription follows from a (ghostly) reality to which only those who prescribe seem to have access. I have argued that this (ghostly) reality points out to a transformed ontology, an ontology of reflexive modernity, but not to an ontological transformation. Producing true knowledge in conditions of risk and uncertainty implies some differences but not as radical as Beck would argue. In effect the production of knowledge in these conditions is still framed within the modern regime of truth and its Cartesian moral logic, not of an autonomous and alternative sub-politics.

But Mr. Zizeck's comment is also revealing in that he felt compelled to stress the 'accuracy' of the neoliberal prescription by showing that, at least for him, it overrode even family loyalties. I would argue that, in this, one can see the shadow of a subordinated moral logic that underlines mutual interconnections and the responsibilities inherent in family and social bonds. And this brings me full circle to the analysis of the conflict of moralities which served as the starting point of this part of my ethnography. For it makes clear that Cartesian and relational moral logics are not exclusively 'Western' and 'non-Western.' They constitute moral regimes that exist in connection to each other and in varying arrangements (dominance of one over the other, mutual indifference). And this can occur under different circumstances and with diverse consequences.

As I showed throughout these three chapters, situated moralities associated with these moral logics informed struggles around state-driven development. These struggles involved the creation of a network that now connects the Yshiro communities and the European Union, for example. Yet precisely because of the situatedness of the moralities informing them, the meaning of these struggles changed as new actants were added to this network and as I shifted my focus of analysis from one actant to another. Thus, a dispute in the Yshiro communities about responsibilities toward relatives became, among *indigenistas*, a dispute between authentic and non-authentic Indigenous peoples. In turn, the moral imaginations (or prescriptions) associated with authentic Indigenous peoples

(and/or nature) that emerged from the struggles against state driven-development were translated or rationalized within development institutions and governments in terms of the neoliberal postulates.

Through this analysis I have shown that neoliberal governmentality arises from a combination of struggles/processes and the way in which some experts interpret them. As we saw experts with influence in governmental circles interpret the present moment as one which is ontologically different from previous ones, or at least different from what has been understood before. These interpretations, in which uncertainty and risk are central, contribute to shape neoliberal governmentality. However, as I have shown, the production of knowledge in these narratives of the present moment remain tied to what is fundamentally a modern regime of truth. Neoliberal governmentality is far from having escaped the epistemological and ethical contradictions inherent in the modern problematic of government. Indeed, I would argue that neoliberal governmentality is a specific form of a more general pattern of rationalities that might emerge under conditions of expanded governance. In brief, these conditions involve a slightly changed modern ontology, one in which uncertainty has become central.

Although they might be 'slight,' changes in the modern ontology have effects that translate into new technologies of government. As I will show in coming chapters, indirect interventions are far more insidious than previous technologies of control. Yet they still have to show that they cannot be taken as instances of reversal or at least deviation from intended goals. What we must not ignore is that in the same way as the demands of social movements were translated by experts and politicians into a neoliberal programme of action, this programme can and is, in turn, translated by other actants according to their own agendas, their own moralities and, last but not least, their room for manoeuvre.¹⁹ Thus, translation emerges as a key process to understand how actants located at different points of a network can hold mutually contesting views without necessarily disrupting the very same network that connects and constitutes them. This is because translation provides the relays by means of which universes that are spatially, temporally or conceptually distant sustain the relations that constitute them. In Part III, I turn to analyse how neoliberal governmentality is translated and transformed as it is deployed through the network connecting the Yshiro communities and the EU's centres of decision-making.

¹⁹As I mentioned, Arce and Long (2000:1-31) refer to these transformations as counter-works. In the next chapters it will become evident why I prefer the concept of translation.

PART III

AZLE/TRANSLATIONS

... asymmetries, inequities, relations of domination and dependence exist in every act of translating, of putting the translated in the service of the translating culture . . . For translation looms large among the cultural practices that at once join and separate us.
(Venuti 1998:4-7)

The manifestation and sign of truth are to be found in evident and distinct perception. It is the task of words to translate that truth if they can; but they no longer have the right to be considered a mark of it. Language has withdrawn from the midst of beings themselves and has entered a period of transparency and neutrality.
(Foucault 1970:56)

As Liu (1999:20) has pointed out, in its common usage it is assumed that translation involves the transfer of the 'transcendental signified' from one language to another. This 'myth of the transcendental signified,' solidly rooted in the Cartesian dichotomy, upholds the notion that translation boils down to the establishment of equivalent meanings for different signs. For example, the relation between the English word 'car' and the thing I drive is deemed to be equivalent to the relation between the Spanish word *automóvil* and the thing I drive. This equivalence is predicated on the presence of a third, independent term that operates as the measure stick against which the disparate words 'car' and *automóvil* can be compared as equivalents. This third term is the 'thing I drive,' the transcendental signified that words just represent. The transcendental signified is taken to be the world perceived through 'evident and distinct perception.'

From the perspective of a theory of signs based on representation, translation involves two movements: a 'vertical' movement or representation, which links the world to the sign producing meaning; and a horizontal movement or translation, which allows the circulation of meaning across signs. However, if we situate our analysis from the perspective of 'circulating reference' it becomes evident that the relation between the 'transcendental signified' and the words that signify it also involves translation. Recalling from the Introduction (see page 35), circulating reference is the collective attribute of a chain of actants that produce meaning through a circulation that flows by short jumps and small transformations. In this case equivalences are not predicated in relation to a totally

independent third term (the transcendental signified), rather they are predicated in relation to a relatively independent third term, another actant. This can be better understood if we look into the semiotician's idea that the relation between sign and referent is arbitrary. By this they mean that potentially any sign could be attached to any given aspect of the world (Beveniste 1971). However, it is clear that actually only some relations are meaningful, and this is because of conventions. Conventions are a state of affairs between actants that, within a given field, are engaged in relations of contestation and negotiation. The more stable and regular the results of those contestations and negotiations become, the more the 'conventions' produced by them can be black-boxed and turned into independent entities that exist by themselves and not by virtue of the relations that sustain them. In other words, these conventions can be turned into reality out there.

From the perspective of circulating reference there is no reason to assume different operations in the translation from world to word and from one language to another. This is because translation is more of a process of linking one actant to another than it is of the passing on of some constant substance (i.e. meaning). Within the Cartesian perspective, this linking process takes the form of a claim that between two actants/imaginings there exists a relation of equivalence predicated on a third actant/imagination, usually referred to as reality or external object (for example, the 'thing' that the words *car* and *automóvil* represent) which operates as a mediation. However, from my analytical perspective, a mediation has the same status that the terms which it mediates, they are all actants.

I use the term translation to refer to the process by which a particular actant/imagination is linked to another. Strictly speaking, translations do not establish equivalences in the sense that they make disparate actants commensurate, rather they articulate them. Still, the distance (the difference) between the actants to be mediated and the mediation must not be so large as to make claims of equivalence implausible. Otherwise the whole circulation in which a mediations is incorporated could be radically altered by prompting a thorough reaccommodation of all the intervening actants. As I pointed out in the introduction, reality can be conceived as a network of actants that are more (corpo)real than others. Now, since actants only become (corpo)real through their mutual links, and these links are established through what I call translations, then translation constitutes one of the basic mechanisms by which reality is performed. Hence, the other title of this part is *Azle*, the dimension where humans strive to bring Being from indistinction, or in other words, where they strive to produce (corpo)realities.

Having made clear that translation is the establishment of articulations between disparate actants, what remains to be investigated is how translations are performed and how the articulations that they establish weave together reality. This is what I intend to do in this Part. In the remaining chapters of this thesis I will focus on three different aspects of translation as I analyse the deployment of neoliberal governmentality through a sustainable development project in the Paraguayan Chaco.

In Chapter Six, I will analyse this development project, called Prodechaco, as a

circulation. I mentioned above that translation does not imply the passing on of some substance rather it implies the linkage between diverse actants. However, it is clear that 'something' gets communicated through these linkages, although this 'something' is less than a thing. Since this 'less than a thing' takes on different forms as it circulates and is translated, I will call it simply 'circulation' and will attach nouns to it in order to indicate the specific form that it takes at a given moment.

If, as Povinelli (2001a:320) points out, "incommensurable phenomena (or worlds) cannot be compared to a third without producing serious distortion," and commensuration between two different things can only occur by relation to a third, then it is clear that translation always implies a degree of transformation of the actants being translated/articulated into/with each other. However, as we will see in Chapter Seven, in many cases, actants struggle to remain unchanged through the process of translation. I will show that once it came into being as an institution, the development project known as Prodechaco, actively tried to manipulate the shape of other mediators which it brought into the circulation/chain of which it was itself a link. In this way, Prodechaco attempted to keep the circulation/chain, and therefore itself, relatively undisturbed. Yet, as I will show in Chapter Eight, the shaping of mediators can be a highly contested process with the potential to subvert the entire circulation in unpredictable ways. I will show how the Yshiro leaders tapped into Prodechaco's designs in order to produce their own mediator in the form of a pan-Yshiro organization.

Although translation necessarily involves at least two actants, this does not mean that the relation between these is one of mutual symmetry, rather asymmetries seem to be the norm. These asymmetries contribute to give the circulation a more or less stable character, to sustain a reality. Thus, shaping mediators also involves struggles to defend or contest asymmetries between actants. In Chapter Nine, I analyse these struggles in order to evaluate the conditions required for, and the prospects of, contesting the reality in which the Yshiro are immersed. I show that now as a hundred years ago, violence or the threat of it still constitutes a key element in curtailing such contestations. Yet I also show that this violence can only be activated through the sanctions provided by authorized imaginations.

CHAPTER SIX: CIRCULATING DEVELOPMENT

In a telling coincidence, the fall of the Berlin wall which signalled the end of the cold war and the unchecked spread of neoliberal programmes of government occurred in the same year that Paraguay saw the end of the longest lasting anti-communist regime in the Southern Cone. In the early days of February 1989, General Stroessner was ousted by a military putsch after 34 years in power. General Rodriguez, the leading officer of the rebellion acted upon the increasing perception held by a sector of the armed forces and the ruling Colorado party that a change was necessary to assure their privileges and benefits in a rapidly changing national and international context.

Through the late 1970s and the 1980s some important changes took place in the geopolitics of the Southern Cone. US development and military aid towards these countries, which the Carter administration had withheld based on their bad human rights's records, was never quite resumed by the following administrations.¹ In the context of the Cold War, the Southern Cone was 'safe' under right wing military dictatorships and, thus, lost importance as part of the US's strategic preoccupations. By 1977, US military and economic aid to Paraguay had become tightly constrained. Later, disagreements on drug trafficking and the unwillingness of the Stroessner regime to follow the Southern Cone region's path towards structural reforms and democratization meant that US cooperation with Paraguay was reduced to a negligible volume (Carothers 1991: 163-166; Hanratty and Meditz 1990:155,196-199; Lambert 1996:102-103; Roett and Sacks 1991:67, 148).

Although the US influence at the minute level of internal politics of the region decreased with its withdrawing of 'aid,' the debt crisis of the early eighties showed that the US could exercise effective influence through its leverage in multilateral lending institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF (cf. Muñoz 2001). By 1989, privatization schemes and structural reforms of the state had become almost an automatic condition that 'developing countries' had to meet in order to receive loans from these institutions. For the Stroessner regime, accepting these conditions could be lethal since it depended on the state's discretionary use of economic resources to remain in power, yet the lack of external financial aid made those resources dwindle dangerously as well. In addition, Brazil and Argentina had entered into a process of economic integration that threatened the regime's important revenues obtained from smuggling between these two

¹There was an attempt of 'rapprochement' in this direction when the Reagan administration took over, but soon the Malvinas/Falklands' War and the debt crisis interrupted it (Carothers 1991:120-132).

countries.² And last, but not least, by the time of the coup all of Paraguay's neighbouring countries had turned to democratic systems contributing to a general climate of repudiation towards authoritarian regimes, which ultimately increased the isolation of Paraguay in international arenas.

All of these factors acted in synergy with internal processes such as: the economic stagnation that followed the end of the flow of international funding for development projects; the increasing demands for democratization from civil society organizations with transnational support; and the fights within the power structure formed by the Armed Forces, the Colorado Party and the Government for the succession of an aging dictator.

Its leaders presented the coup as a step into a **transition** that would make Paraguay a modern democratic society, fully inserted into the world economy and patterned after the model of 'advanced democracies.' Free elections were promised soon, a national assembly was called to draft a new constitution, and, in 1991, Paraguay joined Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay in the creation of a regional economic bloc: what is today known as Mercosur.

Several Western European countries individually or through the European Union (EU) became involved with the democratization and economic integration processes undertaken in the Mercosur countries. This encouraged the creation of close ties between both blocs (EU and Mercosur) in the governmental, non-governmental and private sectors. As a result the EU, and some member-countries on their own, soon became the main extra-regional market, the largest external investor, and the main bilateral aid donor for Mercosur countries, all of which gave the EU important leverage to influence the direction of the 'transitions' in these countries (see Freres 1998, 2000; Muñoz 2001). In 1992, Paraguay and the EU signed a 'Framework agreement for cooperation' in which the latter expressed its readiness to help the former in addressing the economic and social problems associated with the return to democracy. The areas of cooperation included the usual targets of neoliberal governmentality, i.e., state rationalization, economic liberalization, decentralisation, democratization, environmental protection and the like (see EU 1992).³

As we saw in Chapter Five, the shift from the social democratic or liberal welfare state to the neoliberal model in Western Europe took place through struggles waged in a wide spectrum of fields. The translation and circulation of neoliberal prescriptions into Paraguay has also been characterized by struggles waged in a wide spectrum of fields,

²In 1988, the World Bank estimated that contraband was equal or larger than registered trade (see Nickson 1997:26).

³During the period 1993-2000 EU co-operation in Paraguay amounted to 87 million Euro, making the EU, Paraguay's biggest aid donor. See http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/paraguay/intro/index.htm.

from the national political scene to the more circumscribed politics of the *indigenista* field.⁴ These struggles are what have been termed 'the transition.'

Richer (1993) has pointed out that in spite of their publicly stated intentions, the leaders of the coup that toppled Stroessner had three aims: to prevent the medium and long term consequences that increasing popular mobilisation could have on the position of the ruling groups; to terminate an increasingly obvious process of infighting that, with unpredictable consequences, was taking place among the dominant sectors of society; and to create the conditions that would allow Paraguay's economy to insert itself in the changing structure of the world economy. However, the coup was not able to accomplish any of those aims. As a result, the so called 'transition' towards a society patterned after the neoliberal model promoted by the 'developed' countries has become not a 'moment' but the national 'state of being.'

By saying that the transition has become the country's 'state of being,' I mean to highlight an issue that is central to this chapter: the practical effects of the assumed gap between visions of how the world is or should be (as inscribed in treatises, manifestos, constitutional norms, laws, policy documents and development projects) and the enactment of those visions, or reality. Attending to this gap one might feel tempted to speak of 'existing neoliberalism' on the model of talk about 'existing socialism.' In this way one could highlight the divergence between the utopias dreamt up by theoreticians, intellectuals and politicians and the actual regimes claiming either to be the realization of those utopias or to be working in this direction. However, I will argue that critically scrutinizing this distinction between visions/models and enactments/realities is more fruitful than taking it for granted in order to understand how neoliberal governmentality is articulated through transnational networks.

To speak of the real as opposed to the model already assumes a gap, one which is itself based on the gap between representation and reality. In general, it is assumed that such discontinuity can only be bridged, if at all, through the perfect equivalence between them. This sets up a dynamics in which the validity of the model and the value of the real are permanently referred to each other. Models are changed because they are not realistic and realities are changed because they are not ideal. In this way the chain through which these 'purified' actants (model and reality) are connected through translations and sustain each other is lost from sight. My intention in this chapter is precisely to make visible this chain of translations. I do this by analysing how the 'neoliberal model' was deployed throughout the networks connecting the EU with the Paraguayan *indigenista* field. In analysing this deployment I will show how neoliberal postulates were translated into a particular development project. With this analysis I also intend to show in which sense a particular development project can be seen as an expression of neoliberal

⁴I will use 'neoliberal model' as a synonym for the neoliberal postulates that see the market to be the model after which society must be structured.

governmentality.

In the next section of this chapter, I document contending visions of development that were circulating in the Paraguayan *indigenista* field by the time the 'transition' started. In the following section I describe the process by which a specific development project emerged from the encounter between the Paraguayan *indigenistas*' visions of development with the EU's 'neoliberal' vision of development. Then I discuss how once the 'project' became a seemingly autonomous actant (an institution), it had to operate within the constraints of the Paraguayan 'transition.' Finally I analyse the processes described in terms of the idea of circulation/translation.

Visions of development

The Paraguayan 'transition' has been characterized by recurrent crises along fault lines created by two contradictory tendencies among the dominant groups, one pushing for state reform by means of privatization, decentralisation and downsizing of the state, and the other resisting this agenda that would take away their privileges and discretionary access to the resources of the state. In a context in which 9% of the total working force was composed, in 1989, of public employees affiliated to the ruling Colorado party, neoliberal economic reforms have had a hard time to get support. Public resistance to economic reforms is usually manipulated by dominant groups to block democratic reforms and populist authoritarian forces accept to support democratic reforms (mostly in the form of law-making but seldom in law enforcement) to block economic reforms. Moreover, established parties and their visible figures do not express these tendencies and counter-tendencies in any clear manner, usually shifting positions, discourses and alliances. With these ingredients, the Paraguayan transition has constituted a bewildering and volatile process that, since the democratic election of a civilian president in 1993, has been marked by two attempted coups, the assassination of a vice-president, the impeachment of one president, a massacre of protesters, virtually uncountable scandals of governmental corruption, and lack of juridical stability.⁵

Many of these tensions and countercurrents were inscribed in the new national constitution drafted and approved in 1992. Some elements of what by then constituted a neoliberal agenda were incorporated into the constitution, although not necessarily in a way that clearly linked those elements to neoliberal postulates. Among these elements was the idea of multiculturalism. In effect, as was the case with many other Latin American's constitutions born from 'transition' processes, the Paraguayan included a

⁵For detailed discussions of the end of the Stroessner regime and the Paraguayan transition see Carter (1992); Richer (1993); Abente (1999); Flecha (1994); Valenzuela (1997); Lambert and Nickson (1997); Nieto Neibuhr and Wall Enns (1998); Rivarola (2001).

chapter on Indigenous rights (see Assies *et al* 2000; Van Cott 2000). The debates about the Quincentenary had given high visibility to Indigenous issues among the public and this allowed some Indigenous leaders, with the support of critical *indigenista* organizations, to instill into the drafting of the chapter the idea of respect for their ethnic difference. Moreover, the text of the constitution clearly linked the recognition of Indigenous peoples' right to their ethnic difference with their rights to land. In effect, the constitution stated that the amount of land that the state should procure for Indigenous communities had to be enough to make sure that their culturally diverse ways of securing subsistence could be maintained (Horst 1998:397-407; CNP 1992:chap.5).

As I mentioned in Chapter Two, the promotion of Indigenous rights to the rank of constitutional rights acted as a catalyst that clearly distinguished different visions of development of the Chaco. The major landowners's vision and that of the critical *indigenistas* are the most contrasting. The state, in turn, kept with the Stroessner's tradition of granting in writing (laws, decrees, etc.) what was denied in action.⁶ As we will see soon, this 'tradition' has historically opened loopholes and spaces of uncertainty in the government machinery which have been skilfully used by Indigenous peoples and their supporters to advance their claims. But before we discuss this we need to make clear the different visions of development that were being fought over in the Paraguayan *indigenista* field by the time the transition started.

From the early 1990s, the 'hunter-gatherer paradigm,' dominant among Paraguayan *indigenistas*, began to provide some general guidelines for imagining a form of development which would be culturally appropriate for Indigenous peoples of the Chaco. Perhaps the most clearly articulated vision of how this model would work has been sketched by Georg Grunberg (1997) who builds on the ideas that the Chaco's Indigenous peoples are averse to transform nature; that they keep a distributive and egalitarian economy entailing the search for quick returns; and that their patterns of mobility depend on the availability of resources. The key to a sustainable development project adapted to these culturally specific circumstances is a diversified economy that combines 'traditional' hunting-gathering activities in the forest with 'modern gathering' activities such as working for development projects, ecotourism or the custody of protected areas (Grunberg 1997:171). Depending on the particular circumstances of each group (i.e., the relative predominance of 'traditional' or 'modern' hunting-gathering activities) the inescapable condition for this kind of project is to make sure that lands are large enough to provide resources to sustain their characteristically Indigenous ways of life (see also Von Bremen 1994a,b,c; Kidd 1995b; Alvarez 1995; Grunberg 1997). With this vision of development in mind, Indigenous leaders and critical *indigenistas* lobbied

⁶Several critical *indigenistas* told me that the constitutional chapter on Indigenous peoples was a gesture of the political class towards the international public, made in the certainty that its actual application could be thwarted at every step.

in 1992 for the constitutional assembly to draft an article explicitly linking the way of life of particular Indigenous communities to the amount of land to which they were entitled.

For major landowners in the Chaco the constitutional standing given to Indigenous rights appeared as a threat to their interests. Before, there were a few 'annoying' legal procedures that interfered with the landowners' business operations. For example, General Rodriguez had introduced modifications to a law that Stroessner passed in 1988 under pressures from the World Bank. This modifications to the law made it possible for Indigenous peoples and their advocates to obtain a judicial injunction in order to stop landowners from selling, clear cutting or wire-fencing lands claimed by Indigenous communities until a final decision about the land claim had been made by the judiciary (Prieto and Bragayrac 1995:59-64). By 1990, 160,000 hectares of privately owned land were being claimed by the Enthlet people alone in the southern part of the Chaco where there is more concentrated cattle ranching activity (Kidd 1995a:57). This certainly created difficulties for major landowners' speculative operations with the land. However, the landowners at least averted the risk of expropriation by claiming that expropriation on the basis of law 904/81 violated their constitutional rights to private property which were of a higher status (Prieto and Bragayrac 1995:66). The new constitution of 1992 changed this situation completely. Now expropriation was a more palpable threat to major landowners. As the new Constitution was approved, the main lobbying organization of the landowners, *Asociación Rural del Paraguay* (ARP) began a campaign against Indigenous peoples' land claims arguing that "a programme of anti-progress [was] being dealt with to destroy all that the daring pioneers ha[d] conquered in the Chaco [sic]" (quoted in Kidd 1995a:72).

The main strategy of the campaign was to attack both arguments, that the amount of land requested by Indigenous peoples was connected to their ways of life, and that these ways of life were more suitable for environmental protection. ARP argued that Indigenous peoples were no longer hunter-gatherers and that they were fully integrated into the national society. According to ARP this was evident in Indigenous peoples' claims for schools, hospital and jobs; and in the depletion of natural resources on the lands that they already possessed (see ARP 1994). ARP used the hunter-gatherer paradigm to show that 'real' Indigenous peoples of the Chaco did not measure up to it. On this basis, they argued for a conventional scheme of development to solve the 'lack of development' of the area: more private investment, more production, more jobs and everybody would be happy. In short, for the landowners the solutions to the problems of the Chaco were not to be found in the provision of lands but in economic development understood as greater integration of the Chaco into the national economy. How did constitutionally granted 'rights to difference' articulate with this vision? ARP made clear that, in their view, the protection of cultural differences was mostly rhetoric. Yet, even if programmes for cultural protection were to be pursued, these would need the financial resources that only economic development (in the form previously described) could provide (ARP 1994:106-108).

As we will see next, these visions of development entered into direct collision as the EU cooperation in the Paraguayan 'transition' began to take shape in a specific project.⁷

The Birth of a Sustainable Development Project

While the constitutional assembly was discussing the inclusion of Indigenous rights that would upset the landowners, the Paraguayan government began to receive signals from EU's representatives in the country that the EU would be very receptive to requests for cooperation in some sort of comprehensive program of development in the Chaco region.⁸ In parallel with each other, the Paraguayan government and EU personnel in Paraguay began to take the first steps to set up such program. In May 1992, the Paraguayan government created a commission that was to draft a proposal for the sustainable development of the Paraguayan Chaco. According to the decree that created the Paraguayan commission, the project was needed because the Paraguayan Chaco "environment, flora and wildlife are in danger of being damaged if measures are not taken to impede a process of generalized depredation" and because "the Chaco represents for [Paraguay] an important economic reserve given the potential of its natural resources" (GP 1992). No mention was made in this document of the Indigenous peoples of the Chaco. Around the same time, the local EU personnel prepared the 'terms of reference' for an EU technical mission which was to evaluate the feasibility of the project that was to be proposed by the Paraguayan commission just created and to produce a joint proposal to be sent to the EC for study and eventually approval.⁹ The terms of reference did mention Indigenous peoples. Indeed, it established that "the purpose of the project [was] to execute simultaneously two interacting actions: protect the forest habitat of Indigenous peoples and consequently protect their way of life" (SETA 1992:A1-1). The justification

⁷There is another model of development promoted by *Asociación de Servicios de Cooperación Indígena-Mennonita* (ASCIM). I do not discuss it because it did not have a direct impact on the processes that I discuss in this chapter. Nevertheless, let me indicate that, in this model of development, the idea that hunter-gatherers' main characteristic is their adaptability is used in order to argue that respecting this adaptability means helping Indigenous peoples to adapt to more conventional schemes of development (Stahl 1993).

⁸According to Paraguayan governmental staff with whom I had the opportunity to talk, it was an European diplomat who owned a ranch in the Chaco who had raised interest for the area among some staff members in the European Commission (EC).

⁹In the jargon of the 'development industry' the 'terms of reference' set the framework within which a consultant or staff has to carry out an objective.

of the project was that the Chaco was under “excessive and irrational exploitation of natural resources” incurred mainly by “the big agro-industrial enterprises and multinationals whose main objective is to maximize production” and which are in “total contradiction with the Indigenous culture still existing, essentially a [culture of] forest-dwellers and agriculturalists (*sylvicole et agraire*)” (SETA 1992:A1-2).

From these two documents we can see that from its inception the would-be project was besieged by the potentially contradictory views of what the Paraguayan government and the EU intended to do in the Chaco. I will describe how this tension evolved as it came to be played out in the Paraguayan *indigenista* field. For clarity I will focus on three moments of this process which are heralded by three consecutive textual inscriptions of the project. Each one of these inscriptions provides a picture of a given situation of the relations of force in a Paraguayan *indigenista* field which extended its struggles beyond the national borders.

The SETA Proposal

In July 1992, the EU technical mission composed of a team of experts from a Spanish consulting firm, SETA, arrived to Asunción. As the terms of reference of their contract indicated, SETA had a month to evaluate the proposals made by the Paraguayan commission, visit the Chaco region, collect information on its population and geography and interview other interested parties beyond the government. The Paraguayan commission presented a total of 42 small projects to SETA, a majority of which clearly had as their main objective obtaining funds to purchase office equipment and the payment of salaries.

SETA rejected most of these projects and pointed out that the Paraguayan commission's work did not reflect a global policy of development adequate to the Chaco's reality (SETA 1992:II-18-20). However, the Paraguayan counterpart did have a global vision of what they wanted to do in the Chaco, although this did not coincide with the views expressed in the EU's terms of reference. In the context of growing trade in the Mercosur, the Paraguayan government's intention was to “effectively incorporate the Chaco, a national patrimony with a productive potential little exploited, into the economic and social development of the country” (SETA 1992:II-1).

Although the technical mission incorporated the Paraguayan government's intention in its own proposal, SETA pointed out that economic liberalization was one of the causes of the increasing deterioration of the Chaco's environment. Moreover, SETA warned that the existing model of growth, based on the expansion of the agricultural frontier to increase outputs for export, was reaching its limit (SETA 1992:I-2).

During SETA's visit to Paraguay, its members came across several critical *indigenista* NGOs who were able to transmit the idea that the land issue was central for any projects involving Indigenous peoples in the Chaco. When the consulting firm drafted its own counter-proposal to be presented to the EC, the first objective they set for the

would-be project was to support the settlement of Indigenous peoples and landless peasants on their own lands (SETA 1992:III-2). Furthermore, in April of 1993, two representatives of critical *indigenista* NGOs visited the person in charge of processing SETA's proposal within the EC in Brussels and insisted on the idea that the land issue had to remain a central aspect of the project.

That same year, engineer Juan Carlos Wasmosy became the first civilian to become the President of Paraguay in more than four decades. He came to power amid the tensions of the transition that I mentioned above and tried to advance some neoliberal reforms based on a very delicate 'governability pact' with opposition forces both within and outside his Colorado Party.¹⁰ Many of the leading figures of those forces were landowners whose properties were being claimed by Indigenous peoples or who were legal advisors representing landowners in their struggles against Indigenous peoples' claims.¹¹

The critical NGOs saw the close connections between landowners and the new administration as a potential blockage to Indigenous peoples' land claims, and thought that they could use the EU financed would-be project as a leverage to remove this blockage. Thus, they asked the EU to establish as a precondition that in order to give the Paraguayan government any funding for the development of the Chaco, this government first would have to solve all standing Indigenous peoples' land claims. Simultaneously, they demanded from the Paraguayan government the allocation of financial resources from the national budget in order to pay for purchases and expropriations of lands for Indigenous peoples.¹²

The First EC Draft Proposal

The argument that the critical NGOs raised in order to justify the need for the land claims to be settled echoed the terms of reference drafted by EU personnel in 1992. In effect, the critical *indigenistas* re-stated the idea that sustainability of the environment was predicated on a form of land use that was characteristic of Indigenous peoples' ways

¹⁰Note that the Colorado party did not leave office either after Stroessner's demise or the first 'clean' election.

¹¹For example, several of the persons listed by Kidd (1995a:71) as being involved in controversies over land claims with Indigenous peoples, either as landowners or as their lawyers, were also listed by Richer (1993:14) as being involved in the 'governability pact' between Wasmosy and the opposition forces.

¹²The new constitution established that expropriation could proceed only after compensation had been paid in full by the state.

of life, which in turn could only be preserved if Indigenous peoples had enough land. Furthermore, the critical NGOs kept pointing out that this was part of the Indigenous rights granted by the constitution (Anonymous 1994).

In early 1994, the critical *indigenista* NGOs sent letters to different EU institutions asking them to make the resolution of land claims a precondition of the would be project. IWGIA and Survival International, two European based NGOs forming part of the international Indigenous right network, operated as local links in the EU for the Paraguayan critical *indigenistas*. These NGOs advised the Paraguayans to lobby the EC through representatives of the member states in the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. The EC was preparing, on the basis of the SETA proposal, its own proposal that had to be approved by the Council of Europe (CE) and the Paraguayan government.

In July 1994, these NGO's efforts bore some fruits: the Asia and Latin America (ALA) committee took notice of some of the issues they had raised. The ALA committee, whose authority came from the CE and was formed by representatives of the member states, was in charge of overseeing the European Commission's management of development projects in Asia and Latin America. As such it had the power to modify or suspend specific projects. In this role, the ALA Committee ordered the EC to incorporate as a precondition of its proposal that the Paraguayan government should allocate a portion of its national budget for the expropriation and purchase of lands on behalf of Indigenous peoples.

Around the same time a draft of the EC's proposal began to circulate. In this version much of the language and diagnostic of the SETA proposal had been kept. Thus, the draft included the idea that economic liberalization was at the basis of the environmental degradation of the Paraguayan Chaco. Moreover, it pointed out that in order to prevent further environmental degradation it was critical to preserve the way of life of the Indigenous population of the area (EC 1994). In a meeting of the ALA Committee in September 1994, its members adhered to the proposal but asked that a further precondition be added to the draft: that Indigenous peoples be consulted regarding their development needs. The draft proposal stated that the project would be executed in three phases: the experts who were to be in charge of carrying out the project would use the first eighteen months in a 'consultive phase' which would be devoted to consult and involve Indigenous peoples in the design of a Global Operative Plan (GOP). The 'consultive phase' was also meant to give the Paraguayan government time to settle the Indigenous peoples' land claims. Total funding for the project would be the equivalent to 15 million US dollars, yet disbursements at the 'consultive phase' were to be minimal and no further disbursement was to be done until the land issue was resolved.¹³ The GOP designed during the 'consultive phase' would guide the actions of the 'operational phase'

¹³Letter dated September 28, 1994 from Mr. Woodham, representative of the UK in that meeting, to Stephen Kidd. Copy in possession of author.

which will last through the following four years. The final year of the project would be a 'transference phase' in which the European personnel would transfer the management of the process of development to the 'target population.'

The Final Proposal

The wording of the draft proposal and the EU's implicit pressure on the Paraguayan government to solve the land claims infuriated the landowners. ARP created an *indigenista* institution, *Comision de Asuntos Indigenas - ARP* (Commission on Indigenous Affairs) which began a campaign to 'inform the public opinion' about the 'reality of the Chaco.' This reality was described in a document produced in 1994 entitled *Tierras del Chaco para Indigenas y Campesinos* (Lands in the Chaco for Indigenous peoples and Peasants). This document made public the ARP's vision of development of the Chaco which I discussed above. In the document it was argued that the land claims had 'paralysed' the economy of the Chaco, that they were unrealistic, and that they responded to the designs of anthropologists and foreigners who wanted to convert the Chaco in an 'anthropological exhibit of hunter-gatherers.' ARP echoed the argument that had been raised during the Earth Summit in Rio (1992) by some governments of developing countries, that is, that environmental concerns were used by developed countries to lay claims over natural resources that they had depleted at home but which were still abundant in underdeveloped countries. For example ARP claimed that the EU supported the campaigns for lands carried out by 'anthropologists and foreigners' because by "forcing the developing nations to convert their [sic] Indigenous peoples into hunter-gatherers, they [Europeans] save themselves from the ecological dangers that they have created" (ARP 1994:110).

As a solution, ARP proposed the creation of a special commission that would be in charge of steering the development of Indigenous peoples in the Chaco. This commission was to be composed of integrationist *indigenista* institutions such as the state INDI (representing Indigenous peoples' interests), ARP, ASCIM (the Mennonite agency for Indigenous development), and some institutions related to the Anglican and Catholic Churches. Of course, Indigenous peoples would be consulted but the most important thing was "not to leave Indigenous development at the whim of the theories sustained by anthropologists hired by NGOs and some religious orders" (ARP 1994:309).

At the beginning of 1995, the Foreign Minister of Paraguay declared to the press, while at the World Economic Forum in Davos, that solving the total outstanding land claims (around 900,000 hectares by that time) was "a complete fantasy" (Huggins 1995). In the same meeting, President Wasmosy said that the NGOs "talk about ecology and rights . . . but say things that are not really true" (Huggins 1995). The same press report commented that these declarations had caused dismay among the EC officials working on the project, who declared: "No land, no project." The critical NGOs decided to ensure that this was the position of the European Commission and asked for an official

clarification. To the consternation of the critical NGOs, the EC responded that the Paraguayan government did not need to solve all land claims but only those that would allow the settlement of nine Indigenous communities on a surface of land large enough for the execution of the program.¹⁴

Immediately the NGOs began a campaign to force the EC to accept the criteria that **all the outstanding land claims** had to be solved in order to consider the preconditions satisfied. Prompted by the coalition of Paraguayan and European NGOs, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) exerted pressure on the EC. An Enthlet leader also travelled to Europe to exert pressure on the EC. However, the EC staff evaded the questions from the MEPs and told the visiting Enthlet leader that land claims were an internal issue of Paraguay.¹⁵

Finally, just before the proposal was officially endorsed by the Paraguayan Government and the EU in December 1995, a final version of it was circulated. The language and intent of Prodechaco, as the proposal-come-project was to be known from then on, confirmed the critical NGOs fears and more. Not only did the issue of the land precondition remain unclear but the very language of the proposal unashamedly reflected the intervention of ARP in its final drafting. In effect, if one analyses side by side the earlier EC draft of the proposal, the document with which ARP responded to that proposal, and the final proposal, it is clear that the latter was meant to appease ARP's lobby.

For example, the first EC's draft proposal stated that the project expected, "on the basis of the active participation of the autochthonous population, to create productive activities without prejudice to the natural environment and respecting the rights of the Indigenous population" (EC 1994). To this ARP responded that "natives of the Chaco are those inhabitants that have lived in the area for several generations . . . Indigenous, non-indigenous, Mennonites, etc. A group [of inhabitants] must not be benefited at the expense of another who has been in the area for fewer generations" (ARP 1994:117). Thus, the final official version of the project was amended in the following manner:

. . . on the basis of the active participation of *all the sectors* of the autochthonous population to create productive activities without prejudice to the natural environment *with an special focus on the Indigenous population, taking into account the rights of all inhabitants of the Chaco* (EC/GP 1995. Emphasis added).

¹⁴See Written Question E-563/95 by R. Howitt to the Commission and its answer (Official Journal of the Communities No C 179/36 13.7.95).

¹⁵See Lohman (1995) and various MEP Written Questions to the Commission and their answers (Official Journal of the Communities No C 66/13 P-2470/95; No C 340/31 E-23333/95; No C 9/30 E-2334/95; No C40/31 E-2463/95)

Similarly, when discussing who should steer the project, the EC's initial draft proposed to form an advisory committee that "will be composed of governmental institutions [ministries], the target population and *indigenistas* institutions not dependent on the government [i.e., NGOs]" (EC 1994). However, as indicated above, for ARP it was critical "not to leave Indigenous development at the whim of the theories sustained by anthropologists hired by NGOs and some religious orders" (ARP 1994:309). In the final proposal it was stated that the advisory committee was to be composed "of governmental institutions [ministries] and the target population" (EC/GP 1995). No NGOs.

Yet the most appalling aspect of the changes adopted by the EC in its last proposal was the language that emerged at different points of the document. This language was so blatant in its ethnocentrism that one cannot avoid thinking that the actual document of the final proposal must have been written by some member of ARP. In effect, in the 1994 EC's initial draft the need for the project was justified in the following terms:

The activities of hunting, fishing and gathering . . . and a rudimentary agriculture were well adapted to the natural environment. [However] since the beginning of the century . . . almost all the land of the Chaco had been given away to benefit foreign and national entrepreneurs (loggers and ranchers). An important part of the Indigenous population was exterminated and the survivors, expelled by the new proprietors, find themselves in a very precarious situation and without land (EC 1994).

To this kind of diagnostic of the situation of Indigenous peoples, ARP responded that:

It is a beautiful myth to believe that Indigenous peoples do not abuse nature . . . [The idea] of a 'minimalist economy of an egalitarian society' [citing anthropologist Kidd's words] fiddles with absurdity when man [sic] has no longer the dexterity of the hunter . . . This expresses our thinking about relations with Indigenous peoples: We share the same moral convictions about how backward races must be treated . . . our civilization must not step over traditional cultures but respect for these must not be an excuse to keep these peoples apart from change and progress (ARP 1994:107,143).

Echoing this thinking the EC final proposal reads:

The activities of hunting, fishing and gathering . . . and an *extremely* rudimentary agriculture were well adapted [to a situation in which] *the population was minimal, but demographic growth makes it unviable*

nowadays. These [Indigenous] populations nevertheless are characterized by extremely precarious conditions in terms of health, housing and education. All this impedes their integration into the living conditions minimally guaranteed by the National Constitution. [Thus] they must be integrated into civilization (EC/GP 1995. Emphasis added)

When the final EC proposal was agreed upon by the EU and the Paraguayan government, the critical NGOs were uncertain about whether the ALA Committee had seen the last version of the project or not. They suspected that the EC had obtained approval for the first draft of the proposal from the ALA Committee and then had sent a different (final) version to be signed by the representatives of the EU and the Paraguayan Government. This was never confirmed or denied by the EC, the ALA Committee, or any other EU body. Yet the fact remains that no official attempts were made by the ALA Committee to modify or question the appalling language with which the official document creating the project was finally drafted.

In spite of the changes introduced to the last version of the proposal, the critical *indigenistas* remained hopeful because the precondition that the Paraguayan government had to settle Indigenous peoples land claims was still part of it. It is true that nowhere in the proposal was it clearly stated how much of the land claims had to be settled, however, the critical NGOs were confident that they could convince the ALA Committee to adopt the position that settling land claims meant all of them. The critical NGOs expected that Prodechaco (the project soon-to-be-an-institution) would provide the information about the land claims to the ALA Committee at the end of the eighteen months of the consultive phase. With this information the ALA Committee would decide whether the project should continue or should be suspended.

Land and Participation . . . But Only a Little

In April 1996, the first seismic movement generated by the unsolved tensions of the transition was felt when General Oviedo, another leading figure in the coup against Stroessner, attempted to topple Wasmosy's government. The attempted coup was a turf war between Oviedo and Wasmosy in which the former used all the available populist rhetorical ammunition to gather public support. For a population who had lived 34 years under an extremely pervasive clientelistic system, the perspective of a shrinking state and privatization schemes were frightening. Based on a populist discourse and by attacking the plans for privatization that Wasmosy was trying to implement, Oviedo gathered significant support from sectors of the population directly or indirectly dependent on the state for their livelihood and, in particular, he capitalized on the discomfort that lower ranking political *patrones* felt because of the shrinking resources circulating in the patronage networks. Nevertheless, the strong external support that Wasmosy received from the US, EU and especially the Mercosur governments, proved effective in

disarticulating the alliance that Oviedo had formed with some sectors of the Paraguayan dominant groups. This support ultimately deactivated the coup, although without resolving the tensions that generated it (see Costa and Ayala 1996; Oviedo 1997; Wasmosy 1998; Narvaez Arza 1998). These events helped to make Wasmosy appear as a guarantee that democracy and economic reforms would continue in Paraguay.

This was the political situation in Paraguay when the first two European experts of Prodechaco arrived in November 1996.¹⁶ These experts were hired by the UK based consortium, formed by the Natural Resources Institute (NRI) and Halcrow Rural Management (HRM), which had won the contract to execute the project. Staff from the consortium had visited Paraguay in December 1995 in order to elaborate a proposal to win the contract. Now, the first task of the team members was to execute the 'consultive phase.' Recall that during this eighteen-month period the team members were supposed to prepare the GOP with the participation of Indigenous peoples and local NGOs with expertise on Indigenous affairs. In parallel to this action by the team members, the Paraguayan government was supposed to settle land claims, although it was not clearly stated how many of them. Both tasks were supposed to be reported back by the team members to the Paraguayan Government, the EC and the ALA Committee in the document describing the GOP. Thus, the GOP had to include an analysis of the situation of the Chaco's Indigenous peoples and had to prescribe a plan of actions to improve it. Of necessity, the analysis of the situation would have to include the land tenure situation. If the report and its proposed plan of action were deemed satisfactory by all the parties, the project would continue to its second phase. Let us see how Prodechaco went about preparing the GOP.

Prodechaco and the GOP

One of the two Prodechaco experts that arrived in November 1996 was Georg Grunberg, an anthropologist with extensive experience in Paraguay. He had been one of the signatories of the Barbados Declaration and for the critical *indigenistas*, who knew Grunberg well, this was very auspicious since it was known that he shared their views on development. However, hope lasted very briefly. The new year of 1997 had barely begun when Grunberg was fired by the consortium who hired him at the request of the EC who, in turn, claimed that the Paraguayan government had made this request.

¹⁶According to the project proposal, the EU technical assistance included a European Co-director, an anthropologist, a forester and an expert in participatory methodologies. Each one of these specialists would have a Paraguayan counter-part. The European personnel would report back to the South American Unit in the EC while the Paraguayans would report back to the Paraguayan ministry of agriculture (see EC/GP 1995).

The justifications that the Paraguayan government and the EC gave could not disguise that Grunberg was fired because members of these institutions were concerned that he would create problems when the GOP were sent for review by the ALA Committee. In effect, to the uproar raised by the critical *indigenistas*, the Paraguayan government responded with a public campaign arguing that Grunberg was never officially designated for the position and that he had confused his role as a technical advisor with that of an advocate for Indigenous peoples land claims (see several Paraguayan national newspapers March 15, 1997).¹⁷ The EC, in turn, stated in a communication with the European NGO *Gesellschaft fur Bedrohte Volker* that the “Paraguayan counterpart [i.e., government]. . . was also upset with Dr. Grunberg’s activities which rather focussed on certain ethnical [sic] groups [NGOs?] sharing his views than on the Indigenous population as a whole.”¹⁸ The same communication insisted that for the EC not all the land claims had to be solved during the first phase of the project.

It is important to keep in mind that from the perspective of the members of the Paraguayan government and the EC most interested in the project (the Ministry of Agriculture and the South American Unit respectively) the position that the ALA Committee was to adopt regarding the land claims was still uncertain. If the European staff of Prodechaco sent a bad report regarding the land claims, there was the possibility that the ALA Committee would suspend the project. The actions of Grunberg seem to have worried the Paraguayan government and the EC staff enough to preemptively fire him.

Soon after Grunberg left Paraguay the remaining Paraguayan and European staff of Prodechaco began the preparatory meetings for the elaboration of the GOP.¹⁹ The critical NGOs were invited to participate in several workshops but they demanded that first Prodechaco should clearly state its position regarding the land precondition: did Prodechaco agree that the precondition meant that all land claims had to be settled by the Paraguayan government? Was Prodechaco to inform the ALA Committee if the

¹⁷Critical *indigenistas* published their doubts and fears about the meaning of the firing in newspapers (*Ultima Hora* 9/3/97) and journals (*Accion* 03/97) and wrote letters of protest to President Wasmosy, the EU and Catholic Church authorities (copies of these are in possession of the author).

¹⁸Copy of communication attached to a letter dated 19/3/97 from Damian Hernandez (DG1b) to Mark Kent representative of the UK to the EU.

¹⁹Actually until around May 1998 Prodechaco only had the co-directors and some secretarial aids as permanent staff. For the elaboration of the GOP they relied on consultants contracted for short terms, some of whom later became permanent staff.

Paraguayan government did not fulfill this precondition?²⁰ Prodechaco responded to these questions with claims that it was only a 'technical project' without the authority to evaluate the performance of the Paraguayan government regarding the land claims.

The critical NGOs knew that Prodechaco was carrying out a study of the land tenure situation but, given the answer to their questions, they suspected that it would downplay how many of the land claims were not solved. Thus, the NGOs thought that they had to ask the ALA Committee to order an independent evaluation of the performance of the Paraguayan government regarding the land claims. They had reasons to think that without this independent review the ALA Committee would consider that the Paraguayan government had actually fulfilled the precondition on land claims. These reasons included the likely biased view of Prodechaco but also the fact that the Paraguayan government had bought a large amount of land for Indigenous peoples. In effect, responding to the original pressures from the EU, since 1995 the Paraguayan government had allocated a line in the national budget to buy land for Indigenous peoples and INDI had bought 400,000 hectares of land for Indigenous peoples. The problem was that, as research by Stephen Kidd (1997b) showed, those purchases were part of fraudulent operations organized by landowners, staff from the state INDI, and Indigenous individuals.²¹ Thus, around 67% of those lands were not claimed by Indigenous communities and, worse, they were the leftovers that landowners did not want, poor in quality, away from water sources or subject to floods.

As the critical NGOs were not sure to have the ALA Committee agreeing to order an independent evaluation of the land situation, they prepared their own evaluations and publicly circulated several documents showing that the land precondition had not been met (see Kidd 1997; FEPI 1997; Lackner 1998). When early in 1998 Prodechaco circulated its own report on the land tenure situation, the critical NGOs noted that it lumped together lands that were in process of being bought, lands that were already bought but not titled in the name of Indigenous communities, and many lands that were bought through fraudulent operations and which Indigenous communities were unlikely

²⁰Copy of several letters between Prodechaco and diverse Paraguayan NGOs dated between March and June 1997.

²¹The most common fraudulent operation consisted in a very simple mechanism: a staff member from INDI would give money to an Indigenous individual for whom they obtained the status of legal leader. The false, but legal, leader would claim land owned by another 'associate' to the scam. The landowner would arrange with the partner in INDI for an exorbitant price the state institution was to pay for the land and, then, they would divide the benefits. To give an idea of the magnitude of the scam, some land was bought at 700% over the market price! (see Kidd 1997b).

to ever occupy.²² A central critique was that Prodechaco had adopted a narrow view of the Indigenous peoples land needs.²³ Prodechaco had calculated the amount of land that landless Indigenous communities needed only on the basis of the minimum amount of land (100 hectares per family) that the law said a community should receive for each family composing it. However, Prodechaco had not even considered if this amount of land would allow for the sustenance of the 'ways of life' of those communities (see Lackner 1998:18).

As the end of the consultive phase and the evaluation of the preconditions was approaching in mid 1998, the critical NGOs began to say that neither they nor Indigenous communities had been given nearly enough participation in the elaboration of the GOP. In the eighteen months of this phase only four meetings, lasting one day each, had been organized with Indigenous peoples. These meetings were held in different areas of the Chaco, thus most Indigenous communities met with Prodechaco only once, if at all. In this single encounter it was assumed that Indigenous participants would understand the aim of the project and be able to articulate their 'development needs' in relation to those aims. In addition, once the GOP was drafted in early 1998, no one outside Prodechaco was allowed to see it. Responding to requests from the NGOs, Prodechaco informed them that once it was approved by the Paraguayan Government and the EC, the plan would be distributed for consultation in "order to establish cooperation criteria and lines of participatory action for its execution."²⁴ In other words, participation was needed only to implement in the 'operative phase' the plan that had been designed behind closed doors

²²Copy of letter dated April 21, 1998 from several NGOs to Prodechaco.

²³It is useful to explain the relation between 'land claims' and 'land needs.' Throughout the years that it took for Prodechaco to take shape, Indigenous communities kept making new land claims. Thus, the number of land claims permanently changed. In addition to this, some communities had some land but not enough. These communities could appear as having land claims settled but might actually be in process of initiating a new claim. The critical NGOs started to use the criteria of 'land needs' in order to establish an approximate figure for the total amount of land the Paraguayan state had to secure for Indigenous peoples. The total land needs were roughly calculated in relation to the number of existing Indigenous families. The critical *indigenistas* permanently highlighted that this figure was the minimum required and that the actual amount of land had to be calculated in relation to the specific way of life of each community. When Prodechaco started to gather information about the land tenure situation it also used the criteria of 'land needs' to compare with the actual amount of land granted by the Paraguayan government.

²⁴Copy letter dated March 24, 1998 from Prodechaco to several NGOs.

in the 'consultive phase.'

Considering this lack of participation and the land situation, the critical NGOs asked the ALA Committee not to approve the commencement of the second phase.²⁵ In July 1998, the ALA Committee was persuaded by the EC that the beginning of the second 'operational phase' should not be delayed, although under pressure by the UK delegation it was accepted that an independent report on the land situation should be provided.²⁶ This meant that final approval for the GOP was put on hold while Prodechaco was allowed to move ahead with the actions proposed in it.

In September 1998, John Palmer, an anthropologist hired by the EC to carry out the independent evaluation of the land claims situation arrived to Paraguay. His report, presented in April 1999, arrived at conclusions similar to those that had been published by the critical NGOs: the amount of land reported by Prodechaco as the property of Indigenous peoples was inflated and the calculation was done in a way that ran against the spirit of the project:

If it does not take into account the communities' land claims as opposed to bureaucratic calculations based on doubtful data, it must be supposed that Prodechaco's interest in relation to Indigenous peoples territorial rights does not go beyond securing for itself a minimal space required for agricultural development projects - in this way excluding the [traditional] economy of the Indigenous peoples (Palmer 1999).

In July 1999, the ALA Committee members met the EC representative and asked a lot of questions about the project that this person could not answer, allegedly because the person directly in charge of the 'Paraguayan desk' was on vacations. The committee members decided to put their questions in writing and sent them to Prodechaco's co-directors who would have to respond them in person in the following meeting of September 1999.²⁷

The Final Showdown

In September 1999, Prodechaco's co-directors went to Brussels to meet with the ALA Committee knowing that if the GOP was finally approved this would be their final

²⁵Copy letter dated April 21, 1998 from several NGOs to ALA Committee.

²⁶Copy of electronic mail dated July 29, 1998 between Survival International and a Paraguayan NGO.

²⁷Copy of electronic mails dated May 24 and July 16, 1999 from Survival International to a Paraguayan NGO.

showdown with the critical NGOs lobby and the survival of Prodechaco would be assured. The critical NGOs had been able to get the ALA Committee members to raise a series of questions that contested the extent to which both preconditions, the land situation and participation in the design of the GOP, had been fulfilled.

Regarding the critical *indigenistas* claims that the land precondition had not been met, Prodechaco's response was that eleven land claims outstanding at 1994 were still unresolved due to three causes. First, the landowners' refusal to sell, combined with supporting NGOs' refusal to accept alternative acquisitions. Second, expropriation involved a lengthy administrative process. And third, the inefficiency and irregularities of INDI's past administrations had delayed the purchases (Prodechaco 1999a). The differences existing between Prodechaco's and other reports about the amount of lands necessary for Indigenous peoples' development were explained on the basis that other reports had tried to include the issue of land quality. However, Prodechaco argued that these reports did not specify what they meant by quality of land. That is, the quality of land could be measured only in relation to specific purposes such as hunting-gathering, livestock farming or agriculture. As there was no research done about which one of these activities was the 'chosen developmental strategy of each community,' the criteria of quality was preposterous (Prodechaco 1999a).

In contrast to the critical NGOs claims, Prodechaco argued that NGOs were participating in the project and gave the example of ASCIM (the Mennonite agency dealing with Indigenous peoples). According to Prodechaco NGOs like the European Survival International and their Paraguayan partners did not want to have working relations with the project because they were "opposed to development projects for Indigenous Peoples . . . [for] radical philosophical reasons" (Prodechaco 1999a). Other Paraguayans NGOs did not want to work with Prodechaco "in the clear hope that the project funds could be re-channelled through the NGO sector" (Prodechaco 1999a). Another point raised by Prodechaco was that a distinction had to be made between *indigenistas* and Indigenous organizations, and it argued that in contrast to the former, the project had always had good and fluid relations with Indigenous organizations (Prodechaco 1999a).

As is evident, Prodechaco presented the Indigenous land problem not as a systemic problem (the unofficial but actual policy of the Paraguayan state) but as a contingent one. In effect, it blamed the lack of resolution of land claims on lengthy bureaucratic procedures, the idiosyncrasies of landowners and NGOs supporting Indigenous peoples, and specific acts of corruption within INDI, but not on the Paraguayan government lack of political will to overcome this problems. Prodechaco also undermined the value of the critical NGOs as valid interlocutors for the sort of issue that the committee was evaluating. In effect, implicitly it asserted that the critical NGOs would be unhappy regardless of what Prodechaco could do because they were against the very idea behind the project, that is, development. Of course, no mention was made that the critical NGOs were talking of alternative forms of development.

It is surprising that Prodechaco could present what clearly amounted to a failure of participation as an argument to undermine the claims made by the critical NGOs. In effect, by arguing that the amounts of lands demanded by critical *indigenistas* was preposterous because nobody knew which developmental strategy was the one Indigenous communities had chosen, Prodechaco was recognizing that the action plan it was proposing in the GOP was not the result of consultations with the Indigenous communities. Yet with this feeble response, the ALA Committee considered the preconditions fulfilled and gave its blessing for the continuation of the project as the GOP prescribed.

Models and Realities? An Analysis of Development as Circulation²⁸

The events described can be analysed as a circulation that took shape as new mediators were incorporated into a chain or network of actants. Drawing from the example of the *puruhle* narratives, from the very beginning I talk of the circulation-development although this 'entity' will only become fully visible after I finish my analysis. Thus, I will be speaking of the circulation-development to refer to a very circumscribed chain of actants formed through translations which connects the 'neoliberal model' and the 'development project' known as Prodechaco. I must be clear that this will entail a great deal of simplification as it will be necessary to disregard many other circulations that connect the neoliberal model and Prodechaco. However, I hope that with this simplification the reader will get a relatively clear picture of how circulation/translation works.

Nested Fields and Inscriptions

As it might be remembered from my discussion in the introduction to Part III, when I talk of 'circulation' I am also talking of translation/transformation or, what is the same, the processes by which actants are articulated. In this sense, each actant forming the chain of translations connecting the neoliberal model and Prodechaco can be seen, depending on our focus, as different moments/forms of the circulation-development or as circulations in themselves.²⁹ I will call these actants 'nested fields' and 'inscriptions.' Let me turn to Figure 1 in the following page, to explain the meaning of these terms. In the figure there is a double line that goes in both directions and traverses two elliptic shapes

²⁸The analysis in this section is heavily indebted to Latour's (1999:80-173) analysis of the production of scientific 'facts.'

²⁹Since the actants that compose the circulation-development are themselves circulations, what is said about the dynamics of the latter apply to the former as well.

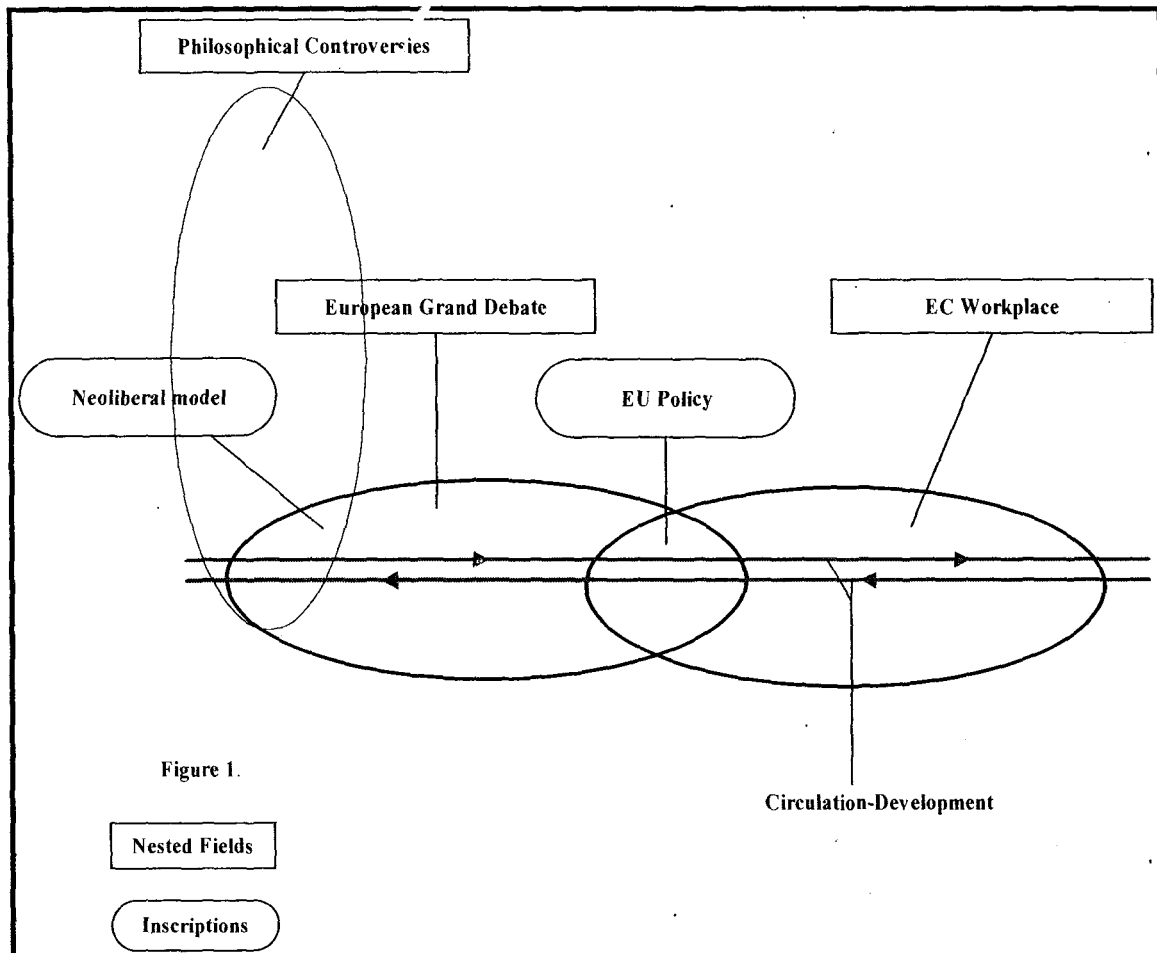


Figure 1 Circulations, Fields and Inscriptions

that are overlapped. The line represents the circulation-development, the elliptic shapes represent two different nested fields and their intersections represent inscriptions.

Fields are moments/forms of the circulation-development characterized by contention and negotiation. The two fields in the figure, 'European Grand Debates' and 'EC Workplace,' draw upon my discussion in Chapter Five on the wide spectrum of fields in which the struggles around neoliberal governmentality took place. I argued that rationalizations of policy in terms of the neoliberal postulates were not established solely in the field of grand debates but also in the field of the politics of the workplace within the EU institutions. This is because fields are thoroughly interconnected with each other; they are nested into each other. Indeed, the diagram shows two disassembled fields in order to provide a simpler picture of how circulation works. The fields in the diagram not only intersect with each other but are also contained in and contain other intersecting networks/fields that extend beyond the 'field of vision' that my present interest in the

circulation-development delineates. For example, the nested field 'European Grand Debates' almost certainly nests another field that we could call 'Philosophical Controversies' (the elliptic figure with a finer border) concerning the value of neoliberal models of society. Although I recognize that this field may have had an impact on the circulation-development, here I am interested in those fields that, following my previous narration, more visibly intervened in giving it shape.

Nested fields often materialize into inscriptions. Latour (1999:306) defines inscription as "all types of transformations through which an entity becomes materialized into a sign, an archive, a document, a piece of paper, a trace." Nested fields may 'materialize' in oral texts and protocols as well. Inscriptions and fields can be seen as the extremes along a continuum of states an actant can adopt, from more stable (inscriptions) to less stable (nested fields). Exactly where an actant falls in this continuum depends on whether the conflicts and negotiations from which they arose have been relatively settled or are ferociously active. In other words, it depends on whether the actant has been black-boxed or not. More precisely then, what becomes materialized is a given, more or less stable relation of forces within the fields. For example, the relation of forces existing since the 1980s in the field 'European Grand Debates' has been inscribed into a dominant 'Neoliberal Model' (see Figure 1).³⁰ Evidence of this is that, in governmental circles, it has become tacit knowledge that market dynamics are fundamental to organize society. However, the black-boxing of the 'Neoliberal Model' has not gone as far as to make it rock-solid reality.

The stability of inscriptions depends on the number of articulations they establish with other actants (inscriptions and fields) and how stable those actants are prior to their articulation. For example, the inscriptions 'EU Policy' and 'Neoliberal Model' are articulated by the circulation-development through (i.e., mediating) the field 'European Grand Debate' (see Figure 1).³¹ The inscription 'Neoliberal Model' obtains part of its stability from its articulation with 'EU Policy,' which is assumed to be the 'model' in action (i.e., made reality). Conversely, 'EU Policy' obtains stability from its articulation with the 'Neoliberal Model,' which is assumed to accurately represent reality.

Mediations/Articulations

³⁰For simplicity, in this discussion I will treat a whole set of inscriptions (that may include academic treatises, political manifestos, constitutions, policy documents, laws, tacit knowledge, practices, etc.) as a single inscription. In doing this I implicitly assume that the relations between these diverse inscriptions have been relatively stabilized.

³¹Other unexplored circulations connect these inscriptions through other fields. For example, a circulation-expertise might link 'EU Policy' to 'Neoliberal Model' passing through the field 'Academic Debate.'

From the perspective of circulating reference, an accurate representation is an actant that has become more (corpo)real by becoming a mediator between two moments in a circulation. For example, the inscription 'Neoliberal Model' articulates the fields 'European Grand Debates' and 'Paraguayan Transition' (see Figure 2) in the circulation-development. Recall that the Paraguayan transition began in part prompted by the effects of a given 'settlement' in the field 'European Grand Debate.' This settlement allowed the inscription 'Neoliberal Model' to reach dominance. The articulation between 'European

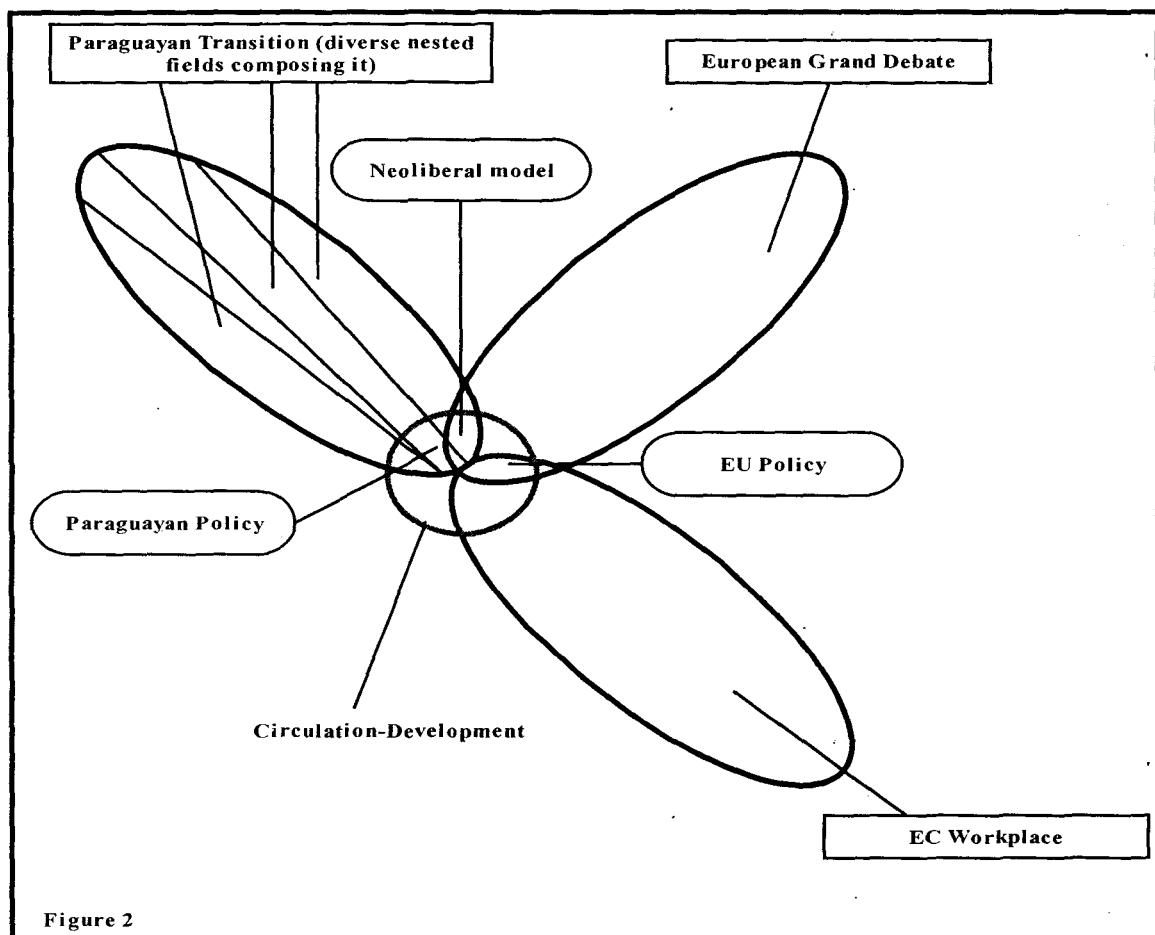


Figure 2 Mediations/Articulations

Grand Debate' and 'Paraguayan Transition' means that the whole chain of translations that each of them nests into themselves become articulated. For example, the 'EU Policy' on development cooperation established that countries wishing to receive aid from the EU would have to apply prescriptions of the 'Neoliberal Model,' such as privatization, democratization, environmental protection and promotion of human rights (see CE 1992). This was a condition that impacted the 'Paraguayan Transition' as this field

materialized into the Paraguayan constitution of 1992, which incorporated, albeit in different ways, these prescriptions (for example, through the promotion of a decentralized state, the creation of environmental rights, and the granting of rights to Indigenous peoples). The agreement for cooperation between Paraguay and the EU, which forms part of both inscriptions, the 'Paraguayan Policy' and the 'EU Policy,' is an even more clear example of how the 'Neoliberal Model' articulates both moments. As I said, this agreement addressed the usual themes of neoliberal governmentality (see EU 1992).

The Paraguayan transition was, however, not only a product of 'external' factors (i.e., its connections to 'European Grand Debate'). As we saw, among the 'internal' factors was the ruling groups' needs to appease popular mobilization and hold down their mutual disagreements in order to sustain the *statu quo*. Each one of these factors can be understood as fields in turn nested within the field 'Paraguayan Transition.' Opening the field 'Paraguayan Transition' (see Figure 2), we can visualize that the constitution of 1992 (as 'Paraguayan Policy' in general) also materialized different relations of force within and between these fields.

In order to better understand the circulation-development, it is convenient to

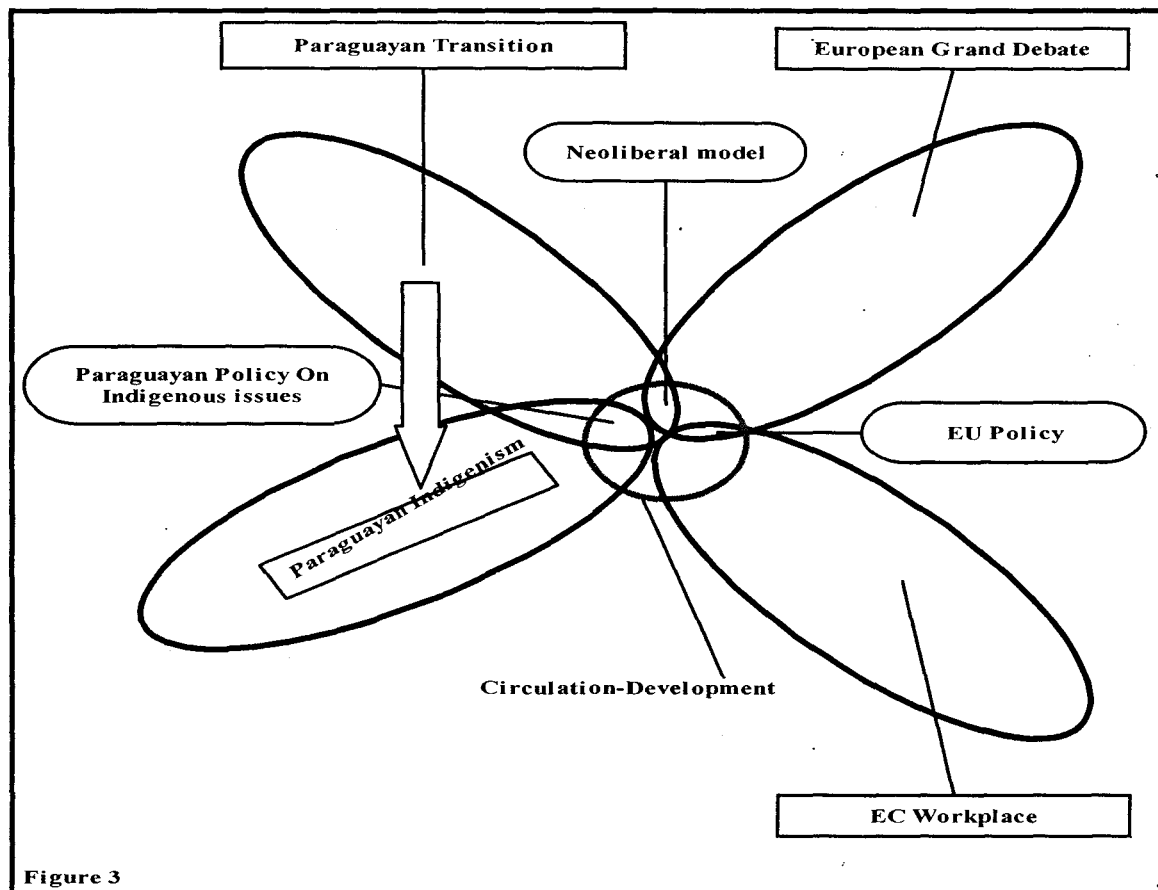


Figure 3 Circulation-Development before SETA mission

disassemble the field 'Paraguayan *Indigenismo*' from the maze of fields that compose the 'Paraguayan Transition.' Figure 3 shows the situation immediately previous to the arrival of the EU technical mission. Up to that moment the circulation that we are observing only indirectly involved the field 'Paraguayan *Indigenismo*.' In effect, the first step towards the creation of Prodechaco involved the production of the terms of reference (corresponding to the 'EU Policy') and the Paraguayan commission's proposal (corresponding to the 'Paraguayan Policy') without much involvement from *indigenista* institutions with the exception of INDI. The task of SETA was to establish an equivalence between the EU and Paraguayan government's goals for cooperation. Yet when it took advice from the critical *indigenista* organizations to produce its own proposal for a 'Development Project,' it introduced the field 'Paraguayan *Indigenismo*' within the circulation-development. Given that SETA's proposal was to be analysed and re-worked by EC staff, the proposal articulated 'Paraguayan *Indigenismo*' more directly with the 'EC Workplace'

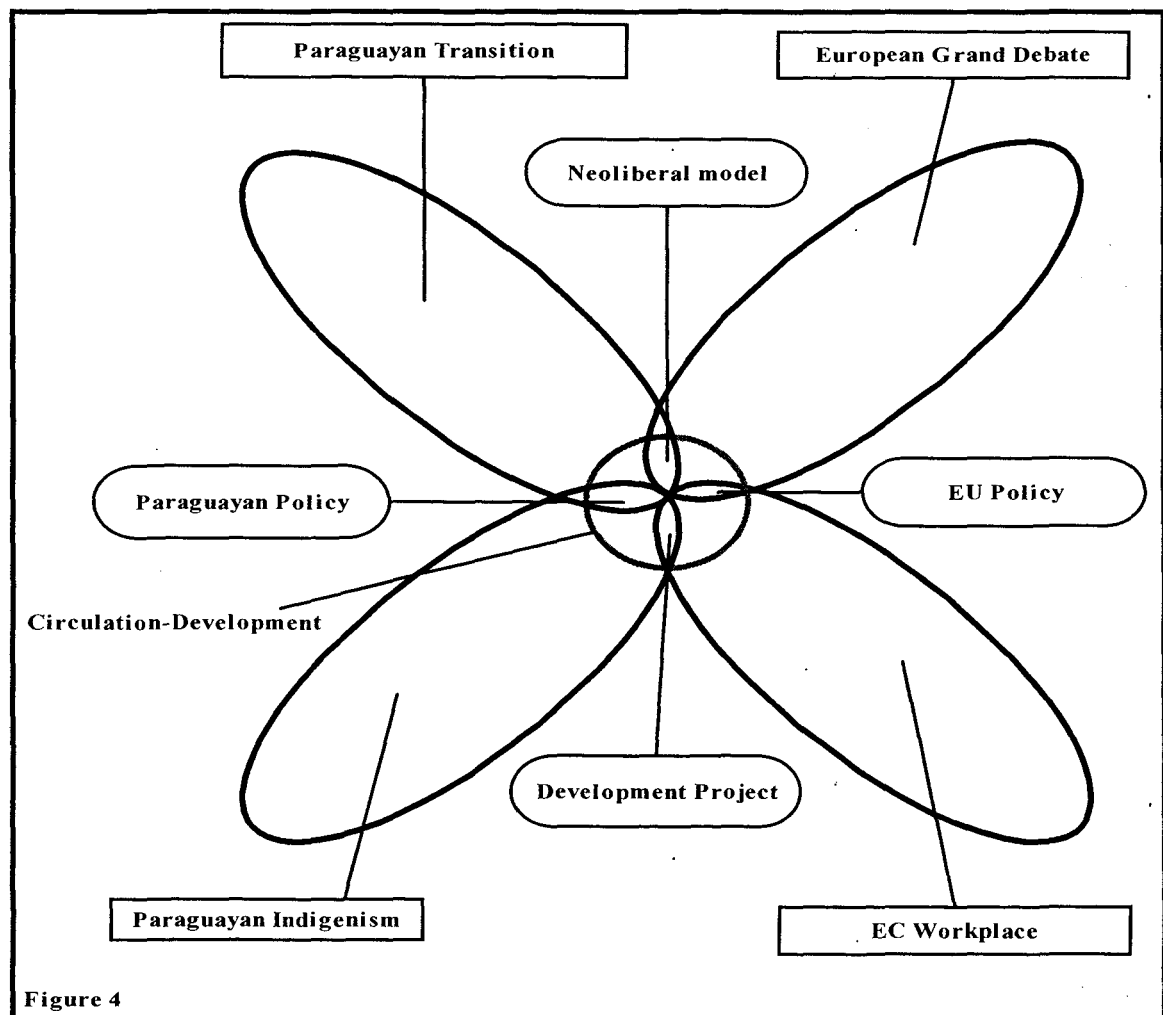


Figure 4 Circulation-Development

(see Figure 4). This articulation connected the previously existing moments of the circulation-development in contact through a new link/mediator and thus the whole character of the circulation was modified. From then on, the circulation-development would not flow without being impacted by the controversies over different visions of development held in the field 'Paraguayan *Indigenismo*' and vice versa.

Circulation and Equivalences

What followed after the SETA proposal connected 'Paraguayan *Indigenismo*' and the 'EC Workplace' was a struggle between different actants to stabilize the inscription 'Development Project.' The stabilization of 'Development Project' was sought by claiming and contesting the equivalence between competing visions of development and two sets of inscriptions: on the one hand, actants such as the critical *indigenistas* and ARP claimed that their respective visions of development were based on an accurate assessment of the 'real situation of Indigenous peoples;' and, on the other hand, they claimed either that these visions were equivalent to the 'Paraguayan Policy' and the 'EU Policy,' or that the latter inscriptions were not realistic. I will analyse the claim of equivalence with 'the real situation of Indigenous peoples' in the next chapter. In what follows, I will concentrate on the claims and disputes over the equivalence of competing visions of development with 'EU Policy' and 'Paraguayan Policy.'

As we saw, critical *indigenistas* and ARP struggled to make their imaginations reality by getting the EC to embrace them. Both the ARP and the critical NGOs' documents claimed either that their visions of development were equivalent to the 'Paraguayan Policy' and the 'EU Policy,' or disputed their 'realism.' ARP for example made reference to minimal living conditions that were guaranteed by the Paraguayan constitution in order to back their idea that development had to be achieved through a better integration of the Chaco into the market economy. ARP also pointed out to the EU's 'hidden' reasons (i.e., the environmental disasters Europeans had produced) for being heavy-handed with agro-industrial enterprises and for supporting land claims that would take away a lot of land from the market system. The critical *indigenistas*, in turn, underlined the idea contained in the original terms of reference of Prodechaco: that environmental protection was associated with the protection of Indigenous ways of life. In this way, they highlighted the equivalence between this policy document and the visions of development based on the hunter-gatherer paradigm. They also made constant references to the Indigenous rights contained in the Paraguayan constitution.

This struggle entered into the 'EC Workplace' from two directions. More immediately through the lobby made by the critical *indigenistas* and their European allies who interviewed EC officials and obtained some support from MEPs. According to the first draft of the project, this lobby appears to have been relatively successful. However, this success prompted the reaction of ARP who, as revealed by the positions of President Wasmosy and the Paraguayan minister of external affairs in Davos, began to lobby the

'EC Workplace' with the intermediation of the Paraguayan government from the other direction.

In this way some aspects of the 'Paraguayan Transition' other than the disputes in the field of 'Paraguayan *Indigenismo*' were brought into the process by which 'Development Project' was taking shape. These aspects were the processes of economic integration, including privatization, prescribed by the 'Neoliberal Model' and implicitly or explicitly required by the 'EU Policy' on cooperation. Indeed, as the introductory remarks to their cooperation agreement made clear (see EU 1992), the EU took a greater interest than before in how the Paraguayan transition would be engineered in the context of the establishment of Mercosur and the reforms that this plan of economic integration required. The economic aspects of the transition were a point of interest for European investors with capacity to influence EU policy. The Paraguayan government was even more obvious in its openness to the influences of powerful interest groups like the landowners, some of whom were key players in the governability pact built by President Wasmosy. For the landowners, Paraguay's integration into Mercosur opened bright opportunities to accommodate an increased agro-industrial output. From this point of view, the 'little exploited' Chaco was seen as an area that could be developed with the co-operation of the EU.

As environmental sustainability by means of protecting Indigenous peoples ways of life became an issue of contention in the relations between Paraguayan and powerful European interest groups, this objective and the means to achieve it began to be left aside by the EC. In effect, for these powerful interest groups there were loftier negotiations to be carried out regarding large investments in infrastructure and the privatization of state-owned services such as the telephones, postal services, electricity, and the like. The earlier goals of Prodechaco constituted a nuisance for the smooth negotiation of these 'substantive' issues. If we recall the comments of one of my interviewee who had worked in the EC (page 156) about the tacit understanding in the EC workplace that drafting policy involves avoiding damage to business interests, it is easy to see how the EC staff in the South American Unit ended up embracing the vision of development pushed forward by ARP and siding with the Paraguayan government and Prodechaco staff in their disputes with the critical *indigenistas* regarding the Grunberg affair and the status of the land claims among other issues.

Although I did not have the opportunity to interview members of the ALA Committee or any person who could give me an insider's view of how things worked there, it is logical to think that decisions within it involved much more than just an evaluation of the virtues and deficiencies of the project. It is likely that decisions were made under pressures similar to those made in the EC (claims of expertise, careerism, lobbying and so on). The ALA Committee was clearly accessible to the critical NGOs through the representatives of the member states. That the ALA Committee never raised questions about the appalling language of the final draft of the project and that it finally approved the GOP in spite of its evident weaknesses indicates that probably the

landowner and the Paraguayan government also had access with the Committee, most likely through the EC staff.

Prodechaco came into being as an inscription of this relation of forces. The very existence of Prodechaco depended on the circulation-development flowing through this array of forces. Thus, independently of the personal views of its staff, Prodechaco had little room to manoeuvre without risking its own existence. The events surrounding Grunberg's firing, and the subsequent dispute between Prodechaco and the critical NGOs about the fulfilment of the land precondition, show that Prodechaco was operating in very unstable relations of force, at least until the POG was finally approved. The smooth flow of the circulation-development required that Prodechaco kept at arms length from the land issue. When Grunberg showed his intention to give attention to the land issue he was fired and from then on Prodechaco not only tried to avoid being put in the situation of judging the Paraguayan government's performance regarding land claims but, when pushed, it actively argued that the preconditions had been met.

Once we have the picture of the whole circulation it is possible to see that at each jump between inscriptions a relatively successful claim of equivalence is established. From the 'Neoliberal Model' towards the 'Development Project,' both clockwise and counterclockwise (see Figure 4) the claim of equivalence is expressed in the terms of a movement from model to reality. That is, at each jump the model is supposedly brought closer to reality or, what is the same, to its material realization through a chain of translations that go from model to policy to specific project to concrete intervention.

For the relation between the model and reality to remain stable each one of the links connecting them must remain stable, in both directions. For example, the first version of the proposal drafted by the 'experts' of SETA included the assertion that the environmental problems of Paraguay resulted from economic liberalization. If that assertion would have been upheld as it went through the 'EC Workplace,' it could have become a catalyst to challenge and even change the 'EU Policy' and the 'Neoliberal Model.'

If that would have happened, from a 'representationist' perspective this change would have been described as the model (i.e., representation) being accommodated to agree with reality. However, in the present case, it was the reality reported by the experts that was changed to fit the model. A change introduced to the final version of the EC proposal attests directly to this: the degradation of the environment, and the consequent need for the project, was blamed on the 'protectionism of the industrialized countries and the subsidies to agricultural products' (see EC/GP 1995) and not on economic liberalization and agro-industries as the experts from SETA had earlier diagnosed.

How can these changes in the proposal be explained? From the perspective of representation it would appear as though there is a vertical linkage that grounds an inscription to concrete material reality independently from its 'horizontal' translations into other inscriptions. Let me explain this in more detail. For its supporters, the 'Neoliberal Model' is an accurate representation of reality (vertical linkage) and the

experts diagnostic of a given situation of reality must be equivalent to it (horizontal translation). If this diagnostic does not represent the same reality as does the 'Neoliberal Model,' then it follows that the diagnostic must be inaccurate.³² Conversely, critics of the 'Neoliberal Model' would say that the experts views accurately represents reality and, thus, the 'Neoliberal Model' is wrong and must be abandoned.

From the perspective of circulating references, inscriptions are transformed or not depending on the degree of stability that the circulations from which they arise give to them. One element that gives stability to an inscription is the number of circulations and successfully black-boxed actants that shape it. The larger the number, the stabler the inscription is. Thus, an inscription that arises from a large number of circulations is harder to transform by the addition of a single dissonant circulation. Rather its is more likely that the dissonant circulation will be transformed by its connection with a very stable inscription. For example, the 'Neoliberal Model' can stand in spite of the experts negative view of the environmental effects of free trade because its claim to accurately represent reality do not depend solely or mainly on the relatively circumscribed circulation-development; although the latter adds (or subtracts) its own degree of stability to (or from) the 'Neoliberal Model'. Thus, even if the circulation-development were to operate on the basis of another 'Model' and thus introduce some instability to the 'Neoliberal Model,' this would not be enough to profoundly modify the status of the latter. This is because the 'Neoliberal Model' operates as a mediator to a larger number of circulations.

Although the SETA proposal was modified in order to make it a good mediator between the (more stable inscription) Neoliberal Model and reality, articulating a new actant into an existing circulation can have very uncertain consequences for the whole chain. In effect, there is no guarantee that as new mediations are produced these will be perfectly equivalent to previously existing actans/imaginings of a given circulation. Yet the very (corpo)reality of the chain (and each of its component actants) depends on the proliferation of these articulations. In the next chapter we will see how the need to produce new articulations, and the instability introduced by this process into the circulation-development, were addressed by Prodechaco.

Conclusions: Mediations

By speaking of the circulation-development and by highlighting its connection to the neoliberal model I have shown how a particular development project can be considered an expression of neoliberal governmentality, that is, how it can be rationalized in terms of the neoliberal postulates. Yet I have also shown that, in the process of being

³²It does no matter that supposedly, seen from the perspective of a chain of translation from model to concrete interventions, a specific and circumscribed analysis of reality must be more accurate than a theory with a wider scope.

translated into a development project, the neoliberal model is transformed at each step. Thus, neoliberal governmentality can be seen as a circulation that appears in different forms depending on which one of the actants/imaginings/circulations that integrate it we focus upon. In this chapter, I isolated one of these circulations, the circulation-development in order to take a closer look into the process by which circulations are articulated.

As we have seen, articulations/translations are actively produced in the midst of struggles between heterogenous actants that come into contact with each other and form networks. Indeed, as I argued in Chapter Four (page 127) we are talking here of a single heterogenous transnational network formed by actants that have contrasting and even antagonistic positions. For example, many of the critical NGOs that were opposing the shape that the ARP and their allies in the EC wanted to give the development project, were dependent of funding allocated by the EC through European NGOs. And this is only one of the most obvious non-antagonistic connections between what superficially may seem as two distinct networks. Focussing on how particular interfaces of a single network operate in a given moment is more helpful than determining where one network ends and another begins because it allows us to see governmentality as emerging from unstable relations of force between actants in struggle.

In effect, because circulations have to be articulated across fields of contention, it is important to visualize neoliberal governmentality (as any other imagination/circulation) as the result of more or less stable relations of force. For example, the actants involved in the processes I narrated, at a certain moment reached a form of standoff in their struggles and the circulation-development became relatively stabilized as an inscription: Prodechaco. This process of stabilization is visible in the changes of language people used to refer to the circulation-development at different moments: from terms of reference to proposal to project to Prodechaco, the institution. The last stage marks the moment in which this inscription starts to be seen as an autonomous entity endowed with agency, that is, an authorized imagination. Yet in order to remain 'solid' Prodechaco had to exercise its agency with care so that the linkages through which the circulation that gave it life were not severed. Here, I concentrated on seeing how Prodechaco took care of this in relation to its linkages to other inscriptions, the Paraguayan and the EU policy and, more distantly, the neoliberal model. Yet Prodechaco could sustain its 'being' only if it provided those inscriptions with a mediation or vertical linkages towards a reality out there. In the following chapter we turn to see how Prodechaco self-fashioned itself as a mediator with reality by actively trying to shape new mediators between itself and reality.

CHAPTER SEVEN: MAKING MEDIATORS THROUGH INDIRECT INTERVENTIONS

In the previous chapter, I pointed out that the contending sectors of Paraguayan *indigenismo* struggled to give the inscription 'Development Project' the shape of their own visions of development. Key to this struggle was the establishment of two sets of articulations: horizontal articulations between their visions of development and EU and Paraguayan policy, and vertical articulations between those visions of development and reality. Briefly, each contending sector claimed that their own vision of development was based on the most accurate understanding (or representation) of the 'real situation of Indigenous peoples of the Chaco.' The vertical links were these claims.

Once the textual inscription 'Development Project' became Prodechaco, the institution, this had to produce its own vision of development in the form of the Global Operative Plan (GOP). In the previous chapter we saw how Prodechaco successfully claimed an equivalence and thus established a horizontal articulation between the GOP and the EC document that set up the preconditions. In other words, Prodechaco argued that the information contained in the GOP, about the participation of Indigenous peoples and NGOs and the situation of the land claims, was equivalent to what had been demanded in the preconditions. Yet for the GOP to become an authorized imagination it also had to establish itself as a vertical articulation to reality. That is, according to the logic of representation the GOP had to appear as an accurate representation of the 'real situation of Indigenous peoples of the Chaco.'

However, Prodechaco did not produce the GOP only according to the logic of representation. Indeed, prodechaco was also constrained by the logic of indirect intervention implicit in the idea of participation. In effect, according to one of the preconditions, the GOP had to show that Indigenous peoples had participated in representing their situation and designing the plan of actions proposed to address it. Thus, the GOP was produced in the intersection of two logics. On the one hand, the logic of representation according to which the GOP had to accurately represent (i.e., be equivalent to) the reality of the Indigenous peoples situation. And, on the other hand, the logic of indirect interventions, according to which for this representation to legitimately inform interventions it had to be produced with the participation of the object of government, which in this case were Indigenous peoples.¹

As we will see, given the particular conditions of the Paraguayan *indigenista* field,

¹Recall that indirect interventions are part of governmental technologies which, by involving the participation of the object of government, apparently do not violate the liberal democratic interdiction to intervene on its autonomy (see page 161-164).

it was very difficult for Prodechaco to produce the vitally important vertical articulation with the reality of Indigenous peoples within the parameters set by the logic of representation and the logic of indirect intervention. In this chapter, I will focus on how, in spite of these complications, Prodechaco created those vertical articulations/mediators and, thus, claimed that the GOP accurately represented reality. But before I enter into that discussion I must address some changes that took place in the Yshiro area during the 1990s. These changes and their effects are a fundamental piece of information needed in order to understand how indirect interventions, in the form of participation, were used by Prodechaco in an attempt to make the Yshiro communities mediators. These mediators, it was hoped, would then enable the circulation-development to flow without endangering the existence of Prodechaco.²

Levelling Hierarchies

Many things changed in the Yshiro area as the Paraguayan transition advanced and the integration of Paraguay into Mercosur deepened. In effect, new economic enterprises began to emerge alongside new socio-political dynamics. One such transformation was the growth of an economy built on low-capital commercial fishing. In 1990, and as fishing stocks dwindled in the southern parts of the Paraguay river, Paraguayan fishermen began to appear in greater numbers in the area of Alto Paraguay. These fishermen were soon followed by intermediaries who saw a better profit in dealing directly with the Yshiro.³ As the presence of these intermediaries increased the demand for fish, more Yshiro turned to this activity as their main source of cash. Parallel to the growth of the 'fishing economy,' an increasing number of Brazilian entrepreneurs began to buy lands in the area. In contrast to the previous owners who had the lands for real estate speculation, these entrepreneurs clear-cut the forest for cattle ranching. The new owners were far less tolerant than the old ones were with Yshiro individuals who went

²When I talk of the threats to Prodechaco's existence I am referring to the existence of this specific actant, the product of a very specific network of actants and of a very specific relation of forces among them. Altering the circulation-development might have meant, depending on the degree of the fluctuation, anything from a change of personnel to the suspension of the contract with the consortium in charge of the project to the suspension of the project. In any case, the point is that, once a settlement (however unstable) between the relations of force was reached and Prodechaco emerged from it, several of the actants composing it took great care to not alter this settlement. This was particularly the case with Prodechaco staff who wanted to retain their employment.

³I call intermediaries people who bought fish from the fishermen, froze or cooled it, stored and transported it to urban markets.

hunting on their properties. In 1996, some of these entrepreneurs and local Paraguayan *patrones* became partners in order to build a small factory in Bahia Negra where palms hearts would be canned for export to Brazil. People from the neighbouring Yshiro settlements were encouraged to cut palm trees from their own community lands in exchange for a small financial return.

These processes were accompanied by important changes in the patronage networks that I described in previous chapters. Although in the 'fishing economy' the old debt-bondage practice continued to some extent, some critical differences were introduced. As the activity did not require large amounts of capital, a thorough knowledge of the area, or complex connections with local and national authorities, there were myriads of 'fishing *patrones*' coming upstream from southern towns in their small boats. These new *patrones* competed with the old local *patrones* in order to have the largest number of Yshiro individuals working on their behalf. In the early 1990s, it was common for a Paraguayan overseer to stay temporarily in a community in order to supervise the work and control the storage of fish in large-sized coolers. However, soon some Yshiro individuals displaced the Paraguayan overseers and by 1996 a group of them had become fishing-*patrones*. These Yshiro were able to build up their capital to buy their own coolers and eventually a motor-boat to transport the fish to the city of Vallemi (see Map 2). From there, the fish was transported to the Brazilian and Paraguayan markets.⁴

The increasing competition for land and natural resources pushed many Yshiro, especially young women, to migrate to Asunción for employment opportunities which would allow them to send some remittances back to their parents and children. Thus, at the same time, some women also became more independent from patronage networks, or at least from certain forms of it that had a more direct impact on the everyday life of the communities.⁵ Given that migrant workers and fishermen were not dependent on particular *patrones*, by the late 1990s most Yshiro had a higher degree of economic independence in relation to particular Paraguayan *patrones* than ever before. This was even more clear in the three communities, Karcha Bahlut, Ynishta and Pitiantouta, that were located far from Paraguayan towns (see Map 3).

Emerging Yshiro Self-Imaginations

⁴In order to become intermediaries, this group of Yshiro men and women (related by blood and marriage) pooled capital from different sources. However, the steady income of some of the women, who also worked as teachers, constituted the critical flow of cash.

⁵Although usually not as openly coercive as the relations between hunters and their *patrones*, many Yshiro women living in the neighbourhood of Paraguayan towns had *patronas* (female version of *patrones*) who hired them for several kinds of domestic services. In times of need, Yshiro women could come to their *patronas* for 'aid.'

All these changes had important consequences for how the Yshiro imagined themselves, their desires, and the problems they faced.⁶ Many older Yshiro interpreted these changes as being connected to the end of the Stroessner regime and the subsequent diminution of the 'aid' (medicines, food, clothing and the like) circulating in patronage networks. Don Clemente, an Ebitoso man in his late sixties, who used to be well located in these networks because of his connections with the local Colorado party and military authorities in Bahia Negra, ruminated a few months after the attempted coup of General Oviedo in 1996 that:

(s) We Indigenous peoples don't need fancy clothes, bicycles, or luxuries. We just need our lives to be long. That's what we need. We do not need to be millionaires. We need a government that once in a while sends somebody to visit us and see if we need hospitals, or schools or work. That's what we need from a government . . . that's why sometimes we miss General Stroessner . . . he gave us many things, land, clothes, medicines . . . [President] Wasmosy knows very well that we are poor but once he won the election he left the people. Then we do not know who will be fair with us, who can help us. We think that perhaps Oviedo will be like Stroessner (Tape recorded interview 15/06/96)⁷

Much like Don Clemente, many other people, especially those past their forties experienced the loosening of the patronage networks with anxiety and an increased sense of insecurity in terms of their livelihood. Thus, many of them expressed their desire for the government to have a stronger presence in the area. They complained that 'the *seccional* (Colorado party's local cell) does not receive aid on our behalf anymore,' and asked, 'where is the government?' Many of these individuals cherished the memories of a time in which *patrones* were plentiful.

Interestingly this anxiety was not shared by the *cultureros*.⁸ Many of them also spoke of the changes in the patronage networks and the dwindling circulation of aid but

⁶I will not enter into a detailed discussion of the struggles and circulations from which these imaginations emerged. I will do this in the coming chapter. Here, I intend to provide an overview of these imaginations to make evident some of the dynamics involved in making mediators.

⁷Don Clemente was surprised when I told him that in 1988 a group of soldiers under Oviedo's orders chased an Indigenous community in the eastern region off their lands to log all the valuable wood (see Vysokolan 1992:138).

⁸Recall from Chapter Three (page 113 footnote 16) that some of the 'traditionalist' Ebitoso coined this term to refer to themselves.

as Doña Tama, an Ebitoso woman in her late fifties, explained to me: “We are poor, but we always have something to eat. Look at my family, they never go hungry. Those people say ‘we are poor, we have nothing to eat’ because they do not know the bush, they do not know where to look for food.” Tito, her husband, told me in reference to the *cultureros*:

(s) Here everybody knows, *costales y vangelio* [Pentecostals and Evangelists] want to get the children into their church. When the meeting in the church finishes, they come here and tell us we have to leave this [culture]. We say no, if they want to look, look. We are all in our culture. We are always looking for [sustenance] little by little. No fights, no discussions. That’s how we do things. When we meet in the *tobich* we bring the *weterak* [newly initiated] to the bush to look for *mbuzu* [eel], *ñandu* [ostrich], and *carpincho* [capibara]; all together, young and old. Then we return and we sing and stay all night . . . We teach our children. Look at that youngster [pointing to a young male of around fifteen years of age]. He does not know how to look for [subsistence], yet he knows how to fuck. If he goes looking for a woman then his father will have to support them both, and their baby, because the son does not know how to look for food. And if there is something, we share. If I get something, I have to give a little to my neighbour. If he is lucky tomorrow, he will give me [some]. You don’t look for food only for yourself, it is for everybody. That’s what we do. Teach our children. *Weterak* must learn his work. It is not like going to watch TV.⁹ That’s not work. Those young people go watch [TV] and come back late. In the morning they sleep while the father and mother are looking for food. And the children call their father *sham* [brother] and their mother *nam* [sister]. It changes all, they have another understanding. They no longer have respect for their mother and their father. The children do not look for water, do not make fire. The mother has to bring the water, cook their food, wash their clothes. The only thing she does not do is wipe their asses . . . That’s why we want to have our own land, where we can stay without troubles. We can grow some vegetables, go hunting and have our *cultura* (Tape recorded interview 16/05/99).

⁹After 1997, in three out of the five Yshiro communities, Yshiro teachers with a steady income bought TV sets with satellite dishes or VCRs. In Ynishta, where Tito lived at the moment of the interview, the group of people that became intermediaries in the fishing business bought a small electricity generator for freezers they use to freeze the fish. This generator was also the source of electricity for their TV set. In Diana and Ylhirta the electricity is derived from lines set up from the neighbouring Paraguayan towns.

By the mid 1990s, the *cultureros* had come to rely more on hunting, gathering, fishing and gardening for direct consumption. Only occasionally would some of them take up a *changa* (casual labour) in order to obtain money for buying market goods. Thus, they were relatively independent from *patrones*. What allowed this group to maintain their independence from *patrones* was, as Doña Tama and Don Tito explained to me, their *cultura*. *Cultura* is much more than the *dibylylta* (initiation ritual), it is the whole livelihood that *dibylylta* structures. *Debylylta* establishes gender and age distinctions with specific duties and responsibilities and thus it contributes to 'produce' young adults able to fulfill their obligations towards their families and residential group. In addition, the relations that *cultureros* establish with the *ukurb 'deio* (powers) also involve training the younger generations on how to secure their subsistence from the bush and from the river.¹⁰

However, by the late 1990s the *cultureros* had begun to find increasingly difficult to live their *cultura*. As Don Tito's remarks underscore, their neighbours had begun to press them into abandoning their ritual practices and the introduction of mass-media technology was luring their youth away from their responsibilities. In addition, an emerging group of Ebitoso had become much more aggressive towards the *cultureros* and as some of these individuals reached leadership the *cultureros* were threatened with expulsion from the communities where they resided. Thus, from the perspective of Don Tito and other *cultureros* living in Diana and Ynishta to obtain lands for themselves was very important.

The emerging Ebitoso group that had turned very aggressive toward the *cultureros* was made up of Pentecostals and what I call 'small Yshiro entrepreneurs.' A few Pentecostals were also small entrepreneurs. According to some Yshiro commentators, the Pentecostal group emerged after a group of Ebitoso returned from a long foray in Brazil with a Pentecostal pastor. Other versions indicate that some Ebitoso came back from that trip converted. And yet still others indicated that a Paraguayan overseer was the one who introduced the faith among the Ebitoso. In any case it is clear that after 1994 there was a congregation of Ebitoso Pentecostals who acted negatively towards the *cultureros*.

A few Ebitoso were able to gather a little capital to buy cows (grazing them on the lands of the communities), to intervene as intermediaries in the fishing business and to open small stores. Most of these small entrepreneurs obtained their capital on the basis of a steady income either as teachers, as health auxiliaries in the communities, or as state employees in some of the Paraguayan towns neighbouring Diana and Ylhirta. Given their access to financial resources these people became influential individuals in their

¹⁰In Chapter Three (page 115-117) I described how the *konsaha* (shaman) Don Veneto established relations with the *ukurb 'deio* and how, in turn, these relations grounded a network of sharing among humans in which the proper allocation of food from the bush was central.

communities, at times being elected legal leaders. One could say that, to some extent, these people became *patrones* of patronage networks internal to the communities. Yet as usually happened with patronage within the communities, these individuals had limited capacity to resist the pressures to share their wealth with their relatives (see Chapter Four). The limited authority of these individuals, in association with the changes that had affected the wider patronage networks since the end of the Stroessner regime, meant that in the late 1990s legal leaderships based on patronage relations were even weaker than before. I will return to this point later. For now, I want to present two brief vignettes that will illustrate the visions held by some of these small entrepreneurs about themselves, their desires and the problems they faced.

Teresa Payá, a thirty-eight-year old Ebitoso woman, is one of the leaders and a teacher in Diana. Her husband, Gaspar, a forty-year old Ebitoso, is one of the few Yshiro hired on a permanent basis by a nearby ranch. Their steady income had allowed them to purchase a fridge, a TV set, and a VCR. With these technologies they turned their three room-house into a quasi-home theatre where they showed videos rented from a store in Bahia Negra and sold fresh beverages to the public. During a visit in 1999, and as I was preparing my back-pack to return to my home in Karcha Bahlut, a documentary on the Amazon was playing. Those in attendance included Antonina, Teresa's sixty-something year old mother, Gaspar, three of Teresa's children and five or six other visitors. Suddenly, and as I continued to pack my bag from behind the TV, Antonina began to yell out to me: "Mario, Mario come to see this!." "What is it? . . . I have to finish my packing . . .," I answered still concentrated on collecting my things. "You are an anthropologist, come see the Indians!!" I could not avoid the irony and looking at her sitting in the front row I said "What do you think I have been doing since April?" There was a moment of perplexity and then everyone burst into laughter. Gaspar, always ready for jokes, started to scream "uuuuuhh" while beating his mouth mimicking the 'Indians' in the old Hollywood's Western movies that they rented from Bahia Negra. Teresa, who was in the kitchen, said while laughing "what a *totila* (crazy, clown) you are, my mom is talking about Indians *ite* (in Guarani it means accurate, pure, exact, real), *indios atrasados* (backward Indians)."

On another occasion, I met Lamberto on the boat that makes weekly trips between Bahia Negra and Concepción City. In his late forties and one of the first legal leaders of Ynishta, Lamberto was relatively well-off, possessing a couple dozen cows and a small store. As usual, every time we met, we quickly launched into a conversation about the communities. I was telling him of some ideas that current legal leaders were discussing (I will provide details of these ideas in the next chapter) when he interrupted me saying, "do not forget that it is difficult to trust the Indians . . . they just want to get *provista* (goods) today and then they don't want to work. They do not think about planning what they are going to do tomorrow; they just worry for today . . . that's what the anthropologists say." I was struck to hear Lamberto echoing some features of the hunter-gatherer paradigm. I asked whether that was the way he behaved, to which he replied with a "no." "Then,

aren't you an Indigenous person?" I continued. "Perhaps I have become more like a Paraguayan" he concluded with a crooked smile.

In both of these vignettes my interlocutors expressed their sense of a lack of fit between dominant views of Indigenous peoples and their own lived experiences. In effect, the socio-economic and political changes that had taken place in the Yshiro communities made images of Indigenous peoples - as hunter-gatherers, extremely poor, and dependent on Paraguayan *patrones* - not fit the experience that many of these small entrepreneurs had of themselves. For many of these Ebitoso, these dominant images of Indigenous peoples constituted a central problem. For example, Maria, a thirty-six year old teacher, who was also a member of the group that became intermediaries in the fishing business, and the wife of the head leader in Ynishta, was struggling together with Teresa to get rid of a Paraguayan supervisor from Bahia Negra. They resented the fact that because they were Indigenous women, and in spite of the fact they had more training and credentials than their supervisor, the Ministry of Education did not consider them well suited to run their own schools without Paraguayan supervision. But instead of contesting the images of Indigenous peoples as backward their usual attitude was to label other Yshiro as the 'real Indians' and try to situate themselves as far from them as possible. It is not surprising then that they resented the *cultureros* who reinforced the image of the Yshiro as 'backward Indians.' In fact they often complained that the *cultureros* were a 'drag' on progress because they did not send their children to school and they always disputed what the *más letrados* (those with higher levels of literacy) said and did.

Loosening Patronage Networks

As I said before, the changes that have taken place in the last fifteen years have meant for most Yshiro greater economic independence from particular *patrones*. I must make clear that when I refer to the 'loosening patronage networks' and relative independence, I do not mean that patronage networks have disappeared. Rather these networks have become more malleable, open to negotiation and less reliable for both parties (the *patron* and the client). The *cultureros* and the emerging group of small entrepreneurs are just two small segments of the Yshiro population (approximately 20% and 8% respectively)¹¹ whose relative independence from particular Paraguayan *patrones* is based on slightly different foundations than those of the majority. In effect, 'independence' has been mostly obtained because of the characteristic of the fishing economy, in which approximately 47% of the population has been engaged over the last ten years.

In this context, the increasing competition for resources that began to be felt from the mid 1990s onwards did not prompt widespread nostalgia of the kind Don Clement

¹¹See *Censo de las Comunidades Yshiro del Alto Paraguay* (UCINY 1999).

expressed concerning the old *patrones* who provided some degree of economic security. Rather Paraguayan and Brazilian *patrones* started to be seen as competitors after the same resources which the Yshiro needed in order to survive. Given the increased visibility acquired by Indigenous peoples during the constitutional debates in 1992 and the intensification of flows of information between the communities and the capital city, former Paraguayan *patrones* were prevented from using the most blatant forms of coercion that were once at their disposal during the Stroessner regime. Thus, *patrones* had difficulties not only in controlling the Yshiro and keeping them in debt-bondage relations but also in discouraging them from becoming competitors for the same natural resources. This created a resentfulness among Paraguayan *patrones* who often voiced, in the presence of Yshiro individuals, their disagreement with the government giving lands to Indigenous peoples. They argued that this was a waste because Indigenous peoples did not work the land. Modesto Martinez, a close Ebitoso friend of mine who is in his mid-thirties, clearly showed he was aware of these ideas when he told me about how some Yshiro leaders had agreed to give the palm trees hearts to the factory in Bahia Negra:

They [the leaders] did not call for a meeting. They just let those who wanted to cut the trees to do it . . . for nothing. Those trees have a lot of value. You can make handicrafts, hats, baskets, our houses . . . They are worth a lot more than their hearts. But they cut everything. And we must be very careful what we do with the land because the new generations of the Paraguayans will criticize how we use the land and will try to take the land away from us. We must be prepared to face that attack, because the Paraguayans say that the government gives land to the Indigenous peoples for no purpose, that they do not work it. The Paraguayans want to take our land from us so that they can sell it to the Brazilians, and we depend on our land (Tape recorded interview 16/05/99).

Modesto did not only repeat the commentaries expressed by Paraguayans neighbouring the Yshiro communities but unknowingly he also echoed the arguments raised by the ARP in order to deny Indigenous peoples need for more land (see ARP 1994).

For people like Modesto, who had experienced between ten and fifteen years of being able to fend for themselves and their families without depending on strong patronage networks, the increased competition for natural resources had become a central preoccupation. Modesto wondered how to face this situation:

Nowadays people don't care for their community, [they] just care for themselves . . . I have never been a leader, but if I were, I would say that we need to work by ourselves . . . We need to be productive because there are many elders who have nothing and we have no work to give them. And the people don't think and the Paraguayans come to fool us. Not long ago a guy from INDI came and said, 'What do you need? Because I have a

project that will come out in six months . . . I come to take note of your opinions. What do you want?' That's what he said, this Paraguayan by the name of Hugo who came from INDI. He said that in August we will have the project but he never returned. We do not ask for anything. We are just used to the Paraguayans coming and asking: 'what do you want?' And we say: 'We want this or this.' But they say: 'No, no, that's too little.' So somebody asks for an ox-cart, and the other for cows and the Paraguayans say: 'Yes, yes, what else?' So we ask for a motorboat for medical emergencies . . . You see, we are not the ones who ask for projects, they are the ones who come, the politicians too. They all come and ask: 'What do you want?' But all those things are not true. They just come to get our signatures and then they eat all the projects [pocket the funding]. They probably make arrangements with the leaders and they eat all of it. I say, I have not been a leader yet, but I say that we have to do it ourselves. The Paraguayans lie to us. I met that Hugo guy in INDI once. He almost stepped on my foot and did not recognize me. And I gave him a litre of honey because he had come to help us [laughing]. What a fool!! (Tape recorded interview 16/05/99).

As Modesto's comments underscore, demands for state 'aid' did not disappear but cynicism about it was rampant. In contrast to the Stroessner era, the increased flows of people and information between the communities and Asunción had provided many Yshiro with a wider understanding of the state's operations and its so called displays of generosity. This knowledge also fuelled cynicism about the legal leaders role in the networks of patronage.

Internal hierarchies became further flattened as an effect of increased economic independence from patronage networks, making it very hard for any particular group among the Yshiro to press upon another group their own imaginations of themselves, their desires and the problems faced. Thus, the loosening of patronage networks was simultaneously accompanied by an increasing instability of legal leaders who were voted in and out of their positions with astonishing celerity. For a time, the intensification of centrifugal forces which had been operating since the Whites settled the area, seems to have been quite irrelevant for most people in the communities. However, as Modesto's comments imply, by the late 1990s it had become clear to some Yshiro that it would be more difficult to face the emerging challenges to their subsistence base without a common agenda.

In any case, in July 1997, the Yshiro participated in one of the workshops Prodechaco organized in order to consult Indigenous communities regarding their development needs. Apparently, Prodechaco's staff interpreted the levelling tendencies operating in the communities as a lack of clear mechanisms of representation. As we will see next, this 'lack' would become a central concern of Prodechaco.

Searching For The Right Mediators

As I mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the logic of representation and the logic of indirect intervention (i.e., the participation of the object of government on its own government) intertwined in particular ways throughout the first phase, when Prodechaco produced the GOP. However, it is important to note that participation and representation are in themselves closely related concepts. As representation means something standing for something else in a relation of equivalence, obviously the best equivalence would be a thing standing for itself. From this perspective, participation in development projects takes place if the target population represents itself in the development process. Yet the understanding of participation as being purely self-representational was not what Prodechaco's co-directors had in mind when they referred to participation. In an interview with the co-directors, they made this clear to me:

We do not need or have the capacity to know the situation of each particular community. All that we need are participating organizations who can self-manage and act as contacts with the communities. The responsibility for the success or failure of micro-projects will go to them. We will just provide the resources and monitor the organizations to see that they use those efficiently (Field notes, interview with Co-directors, 03/05/1999).

Participation here was conceived as a form of indirect intervention according to which the object of government participates in its own government by operating within the frame or parameters (in this case of efficiency) set up by an apparently removed governing subject (see page 161-164). Yet not any kind of participation is good enough for this kind of interventions. These interventions need a form participation that does not disrupt a given array of elements carefully designed in order to achieve certain goals (see O'Malley 1996:199-202). This kind of participation takes us back to representation.

In effect, the kind of participation envisioned by Prodechaco involves skills and capacities to produce accurate representations. As I mentioned before, an accurate representation is the same as an actant that has been made into a mediator in a given circulation. In this sense, for Indigenous communities to represent themselves and their situation accurately they had to be themselves good mediators who could fit into the carefully designed array of elements through which the circulation-development flowed, ultimately giving life to Prodechaco. In other words Indigenous peoples had to 'represent' themselves in ways that would not disrupt the chains of equivalences that had been established between inscriptions such as the GOP, the Paraguayan and EU policy, and the neoliberal model.

Wrong Mediators

Analysing the early documents and proposals of the project, it is evident that those who drafted them assumed that non-indigenous NGOs had a greater capacity to produce an accurate representation of Indigenous peoples than Indigenous peoples themselves. For example, during the mission carried out by SETA in 1992, there were only four Indigenous individuals out of the one hundred and eighteen individuals interviewed in the process of preparing the first proposal (see SETA 1992:IV/1-IV/6). Later, in the technical proposal made by the consortium who won the contract to carry out the project, it was clearly stated that the involvement of the “marginalised people in the planing stages of intervention . . . would be achieved mainly by using national and international NGOs working with [them]” (HRM/NRI 1995:19). In this sense, non-Indigenous NGOs appeared, in principle, as the perfect mediators who could articulate Prodechaco with the reality of Indigenous peoples.

Although, after the firing of Grunberg, it had become clear that the Paraguayan government would not allow the land issue to be at the core of the project, Prodechaco staff still hoped that by involving critical NGOs in the workshops leading to the GOP, they could save the reputation and legitimacy of the project in front of European observers such as MEPs, the ALA Committee, and European NGOs. However, most of the critical NGOs refused to participate in these workshops unless Prodechaco adopted the position that all the Indigenous peoples’ land claims had to be solved by the Paraguayan government. As I mentioned before, for Prodechaco’s co-directors this was impossible without risking the continuity of this institutional actant. Thus, Prodechaco found itself facing a dilemma: how to legitimize and authorize the GOP while disregarding those organizations who had been foreseen as the mediators that would provide accurate representations and appropriate participation for its making. In other words, Prodechaco had to find the right mediators.

As Prodechaco’s staff became increasingly familiar with the dynamics of the *indigenista* field in Paraguay, they began to develop some arguments to explain why the most prominent Paraguayan *indigenista* NGOs were not participating in the elaboration of the GOP. For example, Prodechaco doubted that Paraguayan critical NGOs properly represented (spoke for and about) Indigenous peoples. Indeed, Prodechaco tried to instill these doubts among the European allies of the critical NGOs:

[T]he consultant in the social area had a meeting with Anti-Slavery International, Survival International and Stephen Kidd to explain the *reality* of the living conditions of the Indigenous communities and to give them *actual information* on the scope and capacity of the Paraguayan NGOs who pretend to work in the area (Prodechaco 1997:10, emphasis added).

With a relatively long history of mutual contacts between the European and critical Paraguayan NGOs the strategy followed by Prodechaco, ultimately a ‘newcomer’ to the field of Paraguayan *indigenismo*, did not work. However, as we have seen,

Prodechaco's strategy of disputing the legitimacy and capacity of critical NGOs to speak for Indigenous peoples did work in the long run among the ALA Committee members in charge of monitoring the project.

In any case, while Prodechaco was preparing the GOP the hunter-gatherer paradigm used by the critical *indigenistas* continued to provide the 'most accurate representation' of Indigenous peoples of the Chaco. For example, consultants contracted by Prodechaco to elaborate the GOP basically restated the main ideas from the hunter-gatherer paradigm (see Prodechaco 1998b). This created a problem for Prodechaco: the more the hunter-gatherer paradigm was legitimized by Prodechaco's own hired experts, the more elements the critical NGOs had to dispute the way the project's commitment to the interests of Indigenous peoples had been delimited. In effect, the critical NGO's (as well as the independent report to the ALA Committee, see page 188) argued that, by trying to downplay Indigenous peoples land needs, Prodechaco was showing lack of interest in preserving their ways of life. Now, given that Prodechaco could not address the land claim issue (at least if its staff did not want to be fired like Grunberg), it found itself compelled to produce alternative representations upon which to base a GOP. The solution came in the form of a new imagination that solved at once the problem of participation and representation.

A New Imagination

In August 1997, some Yshiro went to the only participatory workshop organized by Prodechaco in Alto Paraguay. I was not present at the workshop but later an Yshiro friend who did attend and tape-recorded the meeting let me transcribe it. Based on the transcription, the Paraguayan co-director presented the purpose of the project by using unexplained concepts such as 'target population,' 'Global Operative Plan,' 'Phase 1 or 2,' 'self-management' and 'gender perspectives.' The co-director insisted that Prodechaco was not, at that point in time, designing any concrete project. Rather, Prodechaco wanted to discuss with Indigenous peoples how it could help them in their development. Having given these explanations, the co-directors invited participants to speak. A man was the first to respond: "We want 500 rolls of wire for a fence, and also shovels and drills." Then a woman, apparently reading, said: "Forty rolls of wire, 150 metal plaques for roofing, 55 milking cows and bulls for each family, chairs for the church and two mares." Several other individuals followed suit in the same fashion.

If we analyse this occurrence in relation to Modesto's comments (see above) on how politicians and state agents come to the communities promising development projects, it is not hard to understand why the people responded to Prodechaco's call for participation in this way. Their responses were informed by their previous experiences with development projects. They had nothing to loose in asking for things, especially since there had been a lot of rumours in the area that Prodechaco was really going to deliver what it promised. Later during that workshop, when only one of Prodechaco's

consultants and an observer from an NGO were present, people from the communities started a heated discussion. The topic of the discussion was Prodechaco's decision, without consultations, to hire two former leaders residing in Asunción to carry out a census of the Indigenous communities of Alto Paraguay. Interestingly, the discussion involved followers and detractors of these leaders and the issues that were aired went beyond Prodechaco's decision. In effect, the discussion reflected the flattening of hierarchies within the Yshiro communities. The participants complained that many other people in the communities could have done the job but always the same individuals were hired by projects. Many argued that it would be more fair to allow community members to decide who should take a given task or assignment. Finally they agreed to send a letter to Prodechaco co-directors asking consultations with the communities before taking decisions concerning them.¹²

This kind of experience did not seem to prompt a self-questioning of the process of participation in Prodechaco. Rather, Prodechaco interpreted peoples complaints as an indication that the communities suffered from a lack of 'mechanisms of effective representation and self-management.' Moreover, Prodechaco saw this lack as the "problem beneath all the other perceived problems for the development of Indigenous peoples of the Chaco" (Prodechaco 1998a:104). In addition, Prodechaco made the critical *indigenista* NGOs part of this problem in not so veiled terms. In a section of the GOP titled *Prodechaco - Analysis of The Problems*, it was stated that the Indigenous peoples reputation as hunter-gatherers of projects was the product of the state of poverty in which they were immersed. Poverty did not leave Indigenous peoples other alternatives than taking whatever people of 'good will' gave them. This, the argument followed, only strengthened the relations of dependency that Indigenous peoples had with strangers. Dependency, in turn, impeded the development of a clear structure of leadership and local government able to steer the process of development (Prodechaco 1998a:102-104).

In a separate memorandum attached to the GOP the European co-director of Prodechaco was even more explicit:

Despite the popularity of Prodechaco with the target population, there remains entrenched opposition from some NGOs. Their position is that . . . Indigenous communities still need protection from outside influence . . . [E]xperience has shown that it is exceedingly difficult to 'protect' unsophisticated Indigenous populations from exploitation by both the unscrupulous and the *well intentioned*. In these circumstances, unless the communities themselves are assisted to develop the social, *representational* and technical skills to voice and defend their own interests . . . their continued exploitation . . . is inevitable (Holland 1998).

¹²Letter dated August 17, 1997 from several members of Indigenous communities to Prodechaco co-directors.

Emphasis added).

As we have seen, the hunter-gatherer paradigm was unsuitable to represent Indigenous peoples in the way that Prodechaco needed in order to keep the circulation-development flowing without risking its own existence. Thus, Prodechaco produced an alternative imagination which claimed not only that *indigenistas* did not represent Indigenous peoples accurately but also that they were at the core of the 'development problem' of the Chaco. Prodechaco then concluded that, if 'well-intentioned' NGOs could not represent Indigenous peoples accurately, Indigenous peoples would have to represent themselves.

Yet the problem still remained that Indigenous peoples, for the most part, lacked the 'representational skills' that would make them good mediators in the circulation-development. That is, they could not produce representations of themselves and their situation that were workable for Prodechaco. The solution was to redefine the objective of Prodechaco: now a central objective of the project would be to develop the representational skills of the communities (see the previous quote from Prodechaco). In this way, in a single move, the new 'imagination-Indigenous-peoples-lacking-representational-skills' did away with the NGOs as accurate representatives of Indigenous peoples and gave Prodechaco an objective that circumvented the land issue.

Prodechaco's redefinition of the objectives to be achieved in the operational phase seems to have been more the circumstantial result of its conflicts with the critical NGOs and its pressing needs for mediators than a thorough examination of the patronage relations pervading the Chaco. Underscoring this is the total absence in Prodechaco's documents of a concrete analysis, going beyond a simple statement, about the relations of dependency existing between Indigenous communities and all kinds of *patrones* (not only *indigenistas*). I must make clear that I do not argue that Prodechaco staff developed their 'dependency paradigm' out of nothing and with the sole purpose of gaining the upper-hand with critical NGOs. What I argue is that their understanding of Indigenous peoples situation was strongly influenced by their conflict with the critical NGOs, their need to respond to the logic of indirect interventions, and their need to secure the right mediators.

This is clear if we observe that the 'new objective' of Prodechaco did not foreclose its continuing working relations with non-critical NGOs whose 'representations' of Indigenous peoples' did not disrupt the circulation-development. Further evidence that the new 'imagination-Indigenous-communities-lacking-representational-skills' was a product of these circumstances is provided by Prodechaco's uninterrupted use of the 'discredited' hunter-gatherer paradigm to inform its activities. For example, Prodechaco staff (composed of social scientists, agronomists, veterinarians, foresters, and economists) were informed in an internal workshop that Indigenous peoples of the Chaco maintain a hunter-gatherer mentality that makes them see and behave towards development projects differently from how the staff would understand the project (Prodechaco 1999b). The information was provided not in order to search for ways of

catering to this 'hunter-gatherer mentality,' which was the original intention of the anthropologists who developed the paradigm. On the contrary, the information was given to prevent Prodechaco's staff from encouraging Indigenous peoples understandings of the project as a 'hunting and gathering ground.' Indeed, Prodechaco staff had explicit instructions that they should "resist the temptation" to give in to pressures to distribute goods and rather "concentrate [their] activities on human development and the development of skills with the goal of self-determination" (Prodechaco 1998a:112).

Indirect Interventions

In the GOP, Prodechaco had planned a series of learning stages through which communities should pass in order to become able to represent themselves accurately (ie., to become a mediator). The series began with 'community formation,' which involved the following activities: teaching some community members how to express the problems of the community in the form of plans and projects; and, developing among community members the necessary skills to manage those projects. Supposedly, the exercise of these capacities through planning would promote self-determination, and self-determination in turn would be the 'signal' that would lead Prodechaco to disburse financial resources to be managed by the communities (Prodechaco 1998a:115-116).

The planned stages from formation to self-determination is very clearly linked to my argument that by helping communities to acquire 'representational skills,' Prodechaco intended to make Indigenous communities mediators that would allow the circulation-development to flow with minimal distortion. Prodechaco could not add to the circulation just any mediator, thus it had to give shape to the mediators. This, however, was a big challenge for Prodechaco. On the one hand, according to the logic of representation, Prodechaco had to teach Indigenous communities how to 'represent' themselves accurately. On the other hand, according to the logic of indirect interventions, Prodechaco had to be able to claim with a minimum of plausibility that the "philosophy of the project [was] not to carry out activities that would modify the Indigenous culture" (Prodechaco 1998a:103).

The challenge then was to modify 'Indigenous culture,' so that Indigenous communities could represent themselves accurately, without Prodechaco carrying out activities that would produce such modification. In other words, the challenge was to produce the mediator required by Prodechaco through Indigenous peoples own autonomous decision and participation. How to do this? Through indirect interventions.

When the GOP was under preparation, and during the few workshops Prodechaco organized with Indigenous peoples, the staff of the project invited Indigenous participation. In the workshop organized in Alto Paraguay mentioned above, this invitation was delivered in the following way:

We are here not to distribute goods . . . We just want to facilitate your own development, steered by yourself. Of course you will need skill

development . . . and participation is essential. *If you want to work with the project, well, here we are, but if you have other ideas, so be it . . .* At this moment there is no money for a single concrete project, we are just planning.

This way of inviting participation seen in the context of Prodechaco's plans that communities would have to follow through a series of stages in order to receive concrete projects, reveals a lot about how indirect interventions are deployed through 'participatory development.' In effect, this way of inviting participation disregarded Prodechaco's own view that 'structural poverty' would push Indigenous peoples to accept whatever they were offered; including whatever Prodechaco offered them. In this circumstance, Prodechaco's idea that Indigenous peoples were completely free to accept or not the invitation to participate was willingly blind to the coerciveness of the situation. It is true that participation was enticed with a 'carrot,' that is, the promise of financial disbursements; however, participation was to some extent also coerced by the implication that Prodechaco could 'walk away' and do nothing for Indigenous peoples. This complex mix of coercion and enticements underlines O'Malley's (1996) argument that what I have called indirect interventions can only function in tandem with more direct interventions characteristic of disciplinary and punitive forms of control. In effect, direct interventions would discipline an object of government into certain desired forms or conduct by means of enticements and coercion that are brought to bear for this specific purpose. An example would be the classroom and its system of rewards and punishments aimed at forming specific objects of government. In this case the whole setting of the classroom appears as an external mechanism which is deployed upon the object of government. In contrast, indirect interventions use coercive situations (such as the existing poverty among Indigenous peoples) that are already present as useful elements to discipline the object of government into certain desired forms or conducts. The fact that the already existing conditions are used as the anchor point of these operations further helps the intervention to appear as rather minuscule.

Conclusions: "An Order Functional to the Wider Order of the World"

We saw in the previous chapter how Prodechaco came into life as a mediator between the EC workplace and the Paraguayan *indigenista* field. In principle, the need for vertical articulations to reality made non-indigenous NGOs acceptable as mediators that supposedly would bring increased stability to the circulation-development. They would help to articulate the circulation-development to the 'real situation of Indigenous peoples.' Prodechaco openly used the hunter-gatherer paradigm promoted by the critical NGOs until it was clear that, given the position of the Paraguayan government regarding land claims, this paradigm would not allow the circulation-development to flow smoothly and without risking Prodechaco's existence. Although Prodechaco kept using the hunter-

gatherer paradigm in its internal workshops, it discarded it as an accurate representation that should guide Prodechaco's interventions. Prodechaco, then had to face the challenge of imagining alternative mediators.

At the very beginning Indigenous peoples and their imaginations were not seen as being appropriate to operate as mediators or vertical articulations. However, when it became clear to Prodechaco that the critical NGOs and their conceptions of the hunter-gatherer paradigm were not suitable mediators either, Prodechaco found no other alternative than resorting to Indigenous communities as mediators. Yet Indigenous peoples lacked, according to Prodechaco, the necessary 'representational skills.'

The 'lack of representational skills' was the response that Prodechaco gave to the constraints created by the refusal of the most important NGOs to participate in the project and by its own pressing needs to establish a vertical articulation to the reality of the Indigenous communities. Prodechaco needed this articulation in order to become more stable, otherwise it would appear as just another desk project with no connection to the 'real problems' of the Indigenous peoples, the critique the critical NGOs made of it. However, for many Prodechaco staff the lack of representational skills appeared as a 'real' problem. Thus, developing those skills among Indigenous peoples appeared as a worthwhile objective of the project. In a conversation that I had with one Prodechaco staff member in March 2000, I was told:

I know that what we are doing here is to create a certain order that is functional to the wider order of the world. The best we can accomplish is that this more circumscribed order shelters the communities from the worse impacts of the wider order. And here I am, a guy who loves chaos trying to create order. But the truth is that if the communities do not develop these [representational] skills, they will disappear as distinct communities as globalization advances (Fieldnotes, 04/03/2000).

From this staff member's perspective, the 'autonomy' of the Yshiro communities could only be preserved if the Yshiro became a non-disruptive mediator in the circulation-development. Yet the problem is that if a new mediator has been especially designed to fit in a given circulation, the latter only gains stability. Why is this a problem? Because as I showed in Chapter Six, the circulation-development is an actant in the circulation-neoliberalism, which is in turn an authorized imagination in the circulation-world.

As Diaz Polanco (1997:73-75) has pointed out, there exists an 'ethnicist' or 'Fourth-worldist' agenda, in part promoted by development institutions. This agenda denies all connection between Indigenous struggles and wider social and political agendas, but it is not inimical to claims for autonomy. After all autonomy is one of the pillars of neoliberal governmentality. However, the tolerance for autonomy finds its limits

at the point in which the logic of the market is disrupted.¹³ In this way, the ethnicist agenda not only thwarts any attempt to introduce instability into the circulation-neoliberalism but it also pushes Indigenous communities to discipline themselves in ways that are compatible with (and reinforce) the neoliberal model of society and the current state of the world. This is what Prodechaco was ultimately trying to produce in spite of, or better through, the values that the staff member quoted above expressed. That is, autonomy and the preservation of cultural differences.

However, demands for and promotion of Indigenous autonomy have a doubled-edged character. In the same way that Prodechaco conceived the 'situation' of Indigenous communities as problematic because they could not readily offer themselves as the right vertical mediators to reality, some Yshiro intellectuals have problematised their situation according to their own preoccupations with reality. As we have seen, in the 1990s the levelling of hierarchies and the centrifugal tendencies that resulted from this process was not considered a problem by most Yshiro. However, by that time some of them had already begun to foresee that the diversity of orientations among the Yshiro was going to constitute a problem when the time came and the struggle for resources intensified. Among those who foresaw this was Don Bruno Barras, one of the traditionalist leaders who, when informed of the existence of Prodechaco, began to plot a different goal for it. Shortly after the participatory workshop in Alto Paraguay he contacted me and asked for a 'special favour,' could I do a research about this project? He wanted me to find out all that I could about its functioning, who was in charge of it in Europe, how it could be lobbied, etc. Don Bruno told me, "This time we [the communities] are going to suck a lot of milk from this tit before the Paraguayans finish it all."

¹³Van Cott (1996:23) for example argues that "while economic integration is a good thing, it is currently being done in ways that are destructive to Indigenous communities". Thus, she recommends special arrangements to prevent those impacts upon Indigenous communities, as if it were possible to shield them from the effects that economic integration has had and will keep having on the non-Indigenous populations.

CHAPTER EIGHT: BECOMING THE YSHIRO NATION

While I was in Europe doing research on Prodechaco, another round of seismic movements of the Paraguayan 'transition' took place in Asunción. On March 23, 1999 Paraguayan vice-president Luis Maria Argaña was assassinated. This occurred in the midst of an impeachment process that he had promoted against the recently elected President Raul Cubas Grau for freeing ex-general Lino Oviedo, who had been detained for the attempted coup of 1996. The killing of Argaña unleashed five days of public demonstrations with several demonstrators killed or wounded when police and para-military forces shot over and into the crowds. Oviedo and Cubas Grau's supporters clashed with Argañas' supporters and the country came close to a blood-bath. However, the armed forces were divided regarding the contending sectors and there was strong public opposition to Oviedo. Finally, after the Brazilian governments convinced President Cubas Grau to resign in order to avoid a bloodbath and ex-general Lino Oviedo was granted asylum in Argentina, the head of parliament, Luis Gonzales Macchi, formed a 'government of unity' with the main political parties (see Bergonzi 2001; Abente 1999).

The new government quickly began to change officials in state agencies, including INDI. The parties forming the government of unity strongly disputed with each other for who would retain control of one or another state agency. Thus, the appointments of new officials were very unstable. The first step the new president of INDI took in order to consolidate his position was gathering support from Indigenous leaders. For this, he financed the leaders travel to Asunción in order to participate in an assembly where new authorities for the discredited API would be elected. When I arrived in Asunción in late April 1999, all of the fifteen leaders from the five Yshiro communities were there.

Don Bruno, who visited Canada for a conference I co-organized at McMaster University in November 1998, had clarified for me what he expected to achieve by 'sucking the tit' (i.e., using the resources) of Prodechaco. He expected to put into practice an idea that several Yshiro had been discussing since the mid 1990s: they wanted to organize a pan-Yshiro movement. He wanted to use this opportunity to move forward with this idea. He also told me that the other leaders wanted to meet with me in Asunción in order to hear what I had found out about Prodechaco. Thus, a few days after my arrival in Paraguay, a meeting was arranged at Don Bruno's house in Asunción.¹ With the exception of the leaders from Ynishta and Pitiantuta (Tomaraho), most others attended.

¹Recall from Chapter Three that some Yshiro leaders began to remain for longer periods of time in Asunción in order to develop a good reach into the patronage networks of the *indigenista* field. Several of these leaders, including Don Bruno, had obtained employment with INDI in order to support themselves and their families in the city.

Some youth and elders attended as well, but no women. Don Bruno began by introducing me to those who did not know me personally and then talked about his experiences when he visited Canada, where he had met Cree and Iroquois leaders, and toured through the Six Nations reserve in Southern Ontario:

(y) I went [to Canada] and there were Six Nations and Cree, and an Indigenous woman that was an anthropologist! Look at this, university professor! And at night we went to the university where the Indigenous youth, who are also students, danced their ritual dances. They follow the culture of their elders. They have no shame in it. And all the professors were very grateful to them that they showed their dance to them . . . This is the great mistake of many of us who want to embrace the ways of the Paraguayans and deprecate our own knowledge. Because it is only through our own knowledge, our culture, that we are respected as a people. With this we are granted our rights as Indigenous peoples . . . that's how we got Karcha Bahlut . . . Mario was telling me that it is very difficult to [politically] do anything on your own and I was telling him that perhaps that's the reason why our ancestors always joined in the *tobich* and through it kept united . . . The problem is that we have left these practices, that's why we have so many problems, because each one pulls in their own direction. That's why we have to do as the ancient ones did before. We have to work together (Tape recorded meeting 29/05/1999).

All the leaders and elders made more or less the same kind of argument, locating the root of many contemporary problems in the loss of unity that, they said, had characterized their ancestors. However, when I told them that Prodechaco was not planning to start with 'concrete projects' for Alto Paraguay precisely because they thought that communities lacked solid organizations, the leaders pointed out that most Indigenous communities in the Chaco were in similar situations and that factionalism and unstable leadership were common everywhere. The difference, one leader said, was that excepting the Yshiro, the other Indigenous communities were governed by non-indigenous NGOs. He added, "Prodechaco is following the easiest road. At the beginning Prodechaco said that they wanted to work directly with the communities but now they are working with the Mennonites [ASCIM], the Catholic Church and other NGOs." Later, as I began to meet Prodechaco staff and gain access to their records, I realized that in effect many of the 'concrete projects' that were already being carried out by Prodechaco in the early months of 1999 involved non-indigenous NGOs or government agencies who acted as the right kinds of mediators. That is, as mediators who did not greatly alter the circulation-development described in the previous chapters.

The meeting at Don Bruno's house continued for two days. During this time the leaders grew convinced that a common organization was needed in order to face new challenges. They described how the doors of state agencies were being closed in their

faces; how bans and restrictions were being applied to the use of natural resources; how successive draughts and floods left people in the communities without recourse to gardening; how Brazilian ranchers were clearing the forest, forcing animals to flee; and how the Yshiro were no longer allowed to move throughout the territory to hunt and gather plants, medicinal herbs, materials for their handicrafts and other resources they used to survive.

In short, it was clear that for the leaders these preoccupations, albeit dispersed and scattered among them, began to show one common trait: they could barely be addressed by individual factions or by recourse to the known patronage networks. This visit to Asunción had shown the legal leaders (most of them recently elected) that leadership based on patronage networks were almost terminated. Indeed, none of them were going back to their community with any form of 'aid' to distribute among community members. Few had been received by state officials, and even those ex-leaders who continued to maintain good connections with the patronage machinery of the state and political parties were returning from this trip only with some old clothing to distribute among their closest relatives.

In this context, the possibility of tapping into the resources of Prodechaco to boost their leadership and to mobilize the communities in the direction of unity appeared to the leaders as a great opportunity. However, it was also clear that the only way in which they would obtain some resources from Prodechaco was by addressing this institution's concern with the Yshiro's supposed lack of organizational and representational skills. Although the participants in the meeting pointed out that the idea of creating a common organization had been going around for two or three years, they recognized that it never boiled down to any concrete action because of what seemed to be enormous obstacles. Among these were the divisions within the communities, the lack of trust toward legal leaders in the communities, and external interferences which exacerbated these other problems. The leaders were aware that a common agenda to face the challenges ahead could not be achieved without stable leadership. They were also aware that stable leadership could not be achieved without responding to the demands of the communities' members. Yet they were also aware that in order to respond to most of these demands they had to have the capacity to negotiate with non-indigenous institutions.²

After the meeting some leaders and I had an informal interview with the Prodechaco co-directors who, faced with the leaders' demands, promised that once the Yshiro created their organization, concrete projects would start immediately. The leaders were aware of the danger implied by playing with a promise which ultimately was not in their hands to fulfill. If Prodechaco's promise of concrete projects was not fulfilled in a

²Many Yshiro consider that a good leader must deliver goods (food, clothing, tools and the like) in exchange for their support. I will discuss this conception of leadership in more detail later.

reasonable time, the communities would blame the leaders and their leadership would be doomed. However, to return to the communities with the promise of a big project and the prospect of a pan-Yshiro organization was better than nothing.

I was asked to go to each community, speak with the people and collect their impressions on the proposed organization. Then I would collaborate with the leaders to organize discussions in each community from which, it was hoped, a clear mandate for the creation of the organization would emerge. As these discussions advanced, the leaders would keep meeting in order to draft the statutes that would establish the objectives, scope and structure of the would-be pan-Yshiro organization. Thus, from May to September 1999, the legal leaders and I travelled back and forth between the five Yshiro communities and between these and Asunción. We held communal meetings and interviewed INDI officials, critical NGOs and Prodechaco staff. Every trip back and forth between the communities and between these and Asunción was meant to bring into life a new actant (the organization) by articulating different actant/circulations together. In this process, the imagination-Yshiro Nation came into life as well.

In this chapter I will describe this process in three stages each corresponding to a section (including their respective sub-sections). In the next section I analyse the process through which the leaders sought to overcome theirs and their supporters mutual differences. In the following section I focus on how the communities and the leaders found a way to reestablish trust and understanding among them. Then I shift focus to how the leaders strived to 'corporealize' the nascent organization by making it a mediator between the communities and 'external' actants.

Addressing Internal Divisions: '*Diablos*' and '*Costales*'

After our first meeting in Asunción, in early May the leaders and I travelled back to the communities. On the boat trip, I met Candido Martinez, a *costal* (Pentecostal) leader of Ynishta. Nearing his late thirties, in his early youth he had gone to Asunción and become a police officer. On a visit to his family in Ynishta he met Maria Romero, a teacher with whom he fell in love. He decided to stay and form a family with her. With hard work, a 'good eye' for business and diplomatic manners, Candido had become the visible head of an extended family which acted as intermediaries in the fishing business (see page 219 footnote 4). A few months before our encounter he had been elected the head leader of Ynishta. We introduced ourselves to each other and talked about what had occurred in the meetings from which he had been absent. He said he had other commitments although other participants had speculated that he did not come because he did not want anything to do with 'traditionalists.' As I retold him what had happened in the leaders meetings and in the meeting with Prodechaco he became very excited. He confessed that, being his first experience as leader, he felt a bit unprepared for the task. Thus, he fully supported the idea of creating a pan-Yshiro organization in which all the legal leaders would work together.

Slowly our conversation drifted into our respective religious beliefs and what I thought about the *cultureros*. I told him that I knew several of them and that I was very appreciative of what they had taught me. “No! Those are lies, *konsaho* do not know anything!” he replied, continuing that, “you must not believe in those things because the ancient Yshiro just told lies.” To which I responded, “Well, that’s what most people with other religious beliefs say of the others.” Candido agreed that every *secta* (sect) condemns the others but laughingly added, “I am not going to convince you and you are not going to convince me, but I am going up [heaven] and you are going down [hell]” (Fieldnotes 12/05/1999).³

I did not know it at the time but this conversation was just a sample of what the leaders had identified as one of the main obstacles in the path toward creating a pan-Yshiro organization: the division of the Ebitoso along religious differences. This was not the only division but it appeared as one of the most intractable. In effect, the levelling of hierarchies and the diversity of self-imaginings proliferating since the early 1990s (see 245-255), operated as centrifugal forces. However, the very pressing situation of intensified competition for resources was making people aware of the pragmatic need to operate in concert. Yet according to what the leaders had told me, when it came to religion, the differences appeared to be insurmountable.

Devils, Not Evils

Through the meetings and workshops held in the communities it became clear that for most people, the divisions within the communities had their origin in the arrival of the missionaries and their gospel. As we saw in Chapter Two (page 75), for one reason or another most Ebitoso somehow converted to the Christian faith. Adults who at that time had been raised in contact with the *puruhle* and *porowo* narratives, tried to elaborate commonalities between these narratives and Biblical ones. From these attempts two ideas spread among the Ebitoso. One was that the bible (particularly the ten commandments) was equal almost in every way to the *Esnwherta au'oso* except that the latter did not talk of a Lord Jesus. The other was that all things related to the *Anabsero* and the ritual were ‘diabolic.’ These two ideas projected through time grounded quite different interpretations of the Yshiro heritage.

The idea of the ‘diabolic’ has for some Yshiro, specially elders, a very specific meaning. Upon their arrival in the 1950s, the missionaries told the Yshiro that they were being decimated by diseases as a punishment because they were tinkering with the devil and diabolical activities (i.e., the initiation ritual) and offered them a safe place in the

³Candido never gave up his affectionate concern to save me for his God. Still today, every time I am in contact with him, he finds the time to tell me that the clock is ticking and that I must convert before I die.

church and the Gospel. This idea conjoined with the Ebitoso's own understanding that diseases were the punishment delivered by Nemur for not performing the rituals properly. Thus, the Ebitoso associated the tobich, the ritual, and particularly *Nemur* with the devil. Yet the devil imagery did not appear to those Ebitoso as the personification of evil. Rather the idea was that the devil enforced *Esnwherta*'s heavy discipline on the Ebitoso at a moment in their history in which they had become unable to act in accordance with her rules. For example Don Veneto explained to me in an interview in March, 2000:

You have God. He is the same as *Esnherta*. He has his word (*au'oso*) that you have to obey. If you do not obey here comes Nemur, like a policeman. He comes and punishes you. You get sick or you die. Same as the devil. Nemur and devil are the same thing. Here *eyok tobich'oso*, *eyok diablos*, (we are the men of the tobich, we are devils). We are watching the *weterak* [initiated males]. If they do a bad thing we bring them to the disciplinary place [tobich] and punish them. *Eiyok diablos* (we are devils) (Tape recorded interview. 08/03/2000).

In the 1950s, when Nemur seemed to be on the brink of accomplishing his threat of annihilating the Yshiro, some Ebitoso 'tested' the refuge offered by the missionaries. In effect, Susnik's Ebitoso informants in 1956 and 1968 spoke of *la prueba* (the test) in reference to their abandonment of the initiation ritual (see Susnik 1995:204-205). Nowadays, *culturero* elders usually narrate their incursions into Christianity as an evaluative period from which they returned disappointed (see below).

In contrast, for some other Ebitoso, especially among the younger generations born after the ritual was abandoned in 1956, the imagery of the devil did connote evil, as did all things related to the ritual. Still, this was a kind of evil with which one could negotiate without necessarily compromising oneself in absolute terms.⁴ Thus, these perceptions did not induce any visible division until the *cultureros* emerged in the mid 1980s and, as analysed in Chapter Three, even then 'religion' was not mainly or solely the root of the conflict. In fact, once the initial obfuscation produced by the split among the Ebitoso of Ynishta passed, *cultureros* and non-*cultureros* kept moving from one community to another, mixing and working with each other and often helping each other

⁴Several young male showed me written prayers to the devil/Nemur that they kept in their pant' pockets while visiting their female friends. They explained to me that this procedure would make the women to fall in love with them. I asked them if they were not afraid of praying to the devil, to which they answered that these actions were 'small things' that would not jeopardize their possibilities of entering into Heaven.

and sharing with each other.⁵ After 1994, division based on religious differences began to have a more profound impact as the Pentecostal group grew, incorporating several people from Ynishta and Diana, especially among those under forty years of age. For these peoples, with little or no contact with their sacred dimension, the *porowo* and *puruhle* narratives were at best 'a bunch of funny tales;' at worst they were 'devilish lies.'

As I previously mentioned (page 206), the Pentecostals were not the only ones who strongly opposed the *cultureros*. A group of emerging Ebitoso entrepreneurs (only a few of which were Pentecostals) also opposed them. Every time some of the entrepreneurs or Pentecostals became legal leaders in Diana or Ynishta, the *cultureros* residing in their communities were threatened with expulsion. Usually the excuse these legal leaders gave was that during the ritual periods the *cultureros* stole pigs or vegetables from other people's gardens.⁶

One of these conflicts reached a peak almost at the same time that the leaders began to inform the communities of their intention to create a pan-Yshiro organization. Shortly before their trip to Asunción the leaders of Ynishta (all Pentecostals) had said that they would call a general meeting to vote on whether the initiation rituals were to be allowed any longer in that community or not. Giving that the *cultureros* of Ynishta were a minority they looked for support from the *cultureros* in the other communities. As soon as I arrived in Karcha Bahlut, where *cultureros* are the majority, I was summoned to the *tobich* by Don Veneto, the *konsaha*, who had already gathered a group of *konsaho* from Diana, Karcha Bahlut and Ynishta. They asked me to record a message and some songs that were to be taken to Pai Puku Radio. This radio station located in central Chaco had a show, *La Hora Indígena*, which transmits messages and music sent by Indigenous peoples in their own languages. Some passages of what the *konsaho* said as they took turns to speak, underscore their perspective on the conflict. Speaking in Yshiro while the others kept singing in the background Gines Rizo started by saying:

(y) This is our culture. What it teaches us is that we must not hate other religions and other traditions. This culture comes from this land and we have kept it. Thus, we do not hate or speak badly of other cultures, although other cultures speak badly of us. We do believe that God has

⁵Many contemporary Yshiro, and particularly the *cultureros*, move three or four times a year from one community to another.

⁶ Conflicts with the Tomaraho had dwindled as they moved to their own community in Pitiantouta, however, those few individuals visiting Diana or Ynishta continued to be scorned for their 'backwardness.' In Olimpo and Karcha Bahlut, the *cultureros* were safe. They were either respected by their neighbours or were in the majority. The Tomaraho of Pitiantouta kept more fluid relations with these communities than with Diana and Ynishta (see Map 3).

made some things but this, our culture, it was the Anabsero who came and taught us the good things we know. We are recording this and we want the *costales* (Pentecostals) to listen. We are not badmouthing them. I ask of you brothers and sisters not to have hatreds for each other (Tape recorded meeting 13/05/1999).

Don Veneto followed saying,

(y) As you have heard from Gines there are many good things in our culture . . . we want everybody to hear us . . . Our mother Esnwherta and her mate Nemur had said that culture will be the protection against diseases, against the flood, against the draught. They also said that there must be young people to become *weterak* so that tomorrow when we are all dead there are people left to carry on with *dibyllyta* (the initiation ritual) . . . We do this and I don't understand why there are people who hate us so much . . . I wonder if the preachers fear for their partners, if they fear Don Veneto will fuck them.⁷ I want everybody to hear this. I want everybody to know that I have no hatred for any person and that's the way everybody must be, because that's what our elders taught us. I want everybody to be at ease and united as our ancestors told us. We are *diablos* . . . we sing for the benefit of the community (Tape recorded interview 1/05/1999).⁸

Their emphasis on the need to keep good relations among community members was not just rhetoric for the occasion. Actually, this transpired in multiple conversations that I had with *cultureros* on topics ranging from gender relations, to leaders, to younger generations, and to causes of diseases. For example, Modesto, the Ebitoso friend I introduced in the previous chapter (300-301), witnessed a discussion in the *tobich* of Karcha Bahlut between Don Veneto and a man who had suggested that they should expel a Pentecostal who resided in the community. Modesto told me:

(s) Don Veneto said [to the man] 'You must not speak like this. Each person has his/her own idea and what is the right thing to do . . . but you cannot go into other peoples' houses to take them out and bring them here, to speak words that are not proper. I respect them very much even if they

⁷He was referring to the rumours that the *cultureros* had orgies fuelled by the widely known power of certain *konsaho*'s songs to make men and women who hear them to enter a sexual frenzy.

⁸Don Veneto was referring to the benefits a community receives by having a *konsaha* connected to the *ukurb 'deio*. This connection is made evident when the *konsaha* sings the songs the *ukurb 'deio*, through visionary dreams, tell him/her to sing.

are Pentecostal. We must leave each one to do as they think is better. Those who do not come, do not come. We must not utter bad words about them . . . One must respect them and watch out what comes out of your mouth, watch your words. Otherwise you can make yours and your fellows path diverge, and [not recognizing where the other walks] you may suddenly collide with him/her' (Tape recorded interview 18/08/1999)

It is important to highlight that in this event Don Veneto was implicitly referring to the idea of *eiwo*, the human capacity to distinguish the positive from the negative. In effect, as I indicated in the Introduction (page 31), correct talk is usually taken as a sign of *eiwo*. *Cultureros* often insisted on the need to use *eiwo* in order to be accurate and self-restrained when relating to others (humans or non-humans). Of course *cultureros* criticized *costales* for trying to force them out of their ways. However, most of them rejected the idea of coercing people into abandoning their faiths. Perhaps the spirit of the 'tolerant' attitude displayed by the *cultureros* is best captured with the fatalist remark with which Tito usually ended his criticism of Pentecostals: "Each one knows what she/he knows and does what she/he does. Some acquire *eiwo*, others don't."⁹

A Place for 'Cultura'?

The conflict between Pentecostals and *cultureros* quickly became a central topic in the discussions the communities had about the pan-Yshiro organization. From discussions in formal community meetings and other less formal conversations, I realized that the position adopted by Pentecostal leaders towards the *cultureros* was not supported by the majority of people. Not even in Ynishta where the majority of Pentecostals lived. One day, after an interview with a group of *cultureros* in Ynishta, I was discussing with Modesto what I have heard when he told me:

(s) They [*cultureros*] do as the Yshiro *porowo*. They have no shame of their culture. They are not ashamed of their language. Hopefully it does not finish. There are Europeans and Paraguayans who like this culture. But nowadays the children of the teachers do not want to speak their own language. Then, it is worthwhile that they [*cultureros*] keep on with the culture. They have the right. Nobody goes to the *costales* and says to them,

⁹Note that this tolerant attitude is remarkably different from the one attributed to the Yshiro *porowo*. In effect, according to most Yshiro commentators the Yshiro *porowo* would have punished by death recurrent breaches to the *Enswhertha au'oso*.

'why are you screaming?'¹⁰ Don't do that!' But when they [*cultureros*] are singing the *costales* come and say 'those devils are singing.' Instead of protecting their people and their culture they reject it. For me that is no good. Otherwise, we have to prohibit everything. The leaders [of Ynishta] speak bad of the *cultureros* because they do not know. They never come and see. If you want to know you have to come and see. I am not a *tobich'oso* [member of the *tobich*] but I like to go and see what they do, what they say. I have seen them get together and give advice to the *weterak*. And they said to them, 'there are elders who can no longer work but can sing, and they need to eat. So, *weterak* go look for their food!' They are watching who is old, who is sick and they say 'lets send our daughter to ask for food.'¹¹ They are protecting the people, they look after their fellows. It is not just about singing. Look at me, I am almost becoming a Paraguayan. If they do not keep the culture soon there will be no more Yshiro and the Paraguayans will come and say, you are not Indigenous. So we have to let our people be. Why do we have to abandon the *porongo* [maraca made with gourd] to play guitar? We are *Indígenas* [Indigenous peoples], we are not Paraguayans (Tape recorded interview. 16/05/1999).

Discourses like these were common in Karcha Bahlut, where Modesto lives most of the year, and they reflect the influence of traditionalist leaders such as Don Bruno. But in the years elapsed between 1991 (my first stay in an Yshiro community) and 1999, similar types of discourses had begun to resonate in other communities as well. In effect, as the patronage networks loosened many Yshiro had become more vocal about their feelings that the 'Paraguayization' of the Yshiro was a process with little benefits and many negative effects. In some sense, *cultureros* and *costales* were two relatively clearly bounded and proactive responses to these feelings. Individuals in both groups narrated their embrace of *cultura* and *el culto* (the Pentecostal cult) in similar ways. In effect, many of them talked of pulling themselves out of a life of alienation and senselessness and re-inserting themselves in meaningful networks of sociality. For example, in a conversation I asked Don Vierci, a sixty-year old *culturero* living in Ynishta, why he had 'returned' to the *Esnwherta au'oso*. He responded:

(s) We took that word of God that sister Nora [New Tribes Missionary]

¹⁰He referred to the screams that are heard in the Pentecostal temple when the holy spirit descends over the congregation.

¹¹This refers to the Anabser who during the ritual goes from house to house throughout the community with a bag collecting food for the elders and the ill.

brought. They said it was a word that would save us. But we did not get anything from those religions. They say the same things that *Enswhertha au'oso* did but we did not enjoy the way in which they did it, we did not find that we were in our own selves/place (*no nos hallamos*) when following the missionaries. . . as the new generations were born they had nobody to teach them. They only have school. They are *letrados* (literate but also connotes deceitful, cunning) but they have no *eiwo* . . . They have children but do not raise them. Look how many children are around being raised by their grandparents while their father and mothers are partying and getting drunk. That's why we want the younger people to learn and respect the *Esnwherta au'oso*. They learn respect for their elders, they learn *eiwo*. *Esnwherta* does not want the youth to go around without direction (Tape recorded interview 12/07/1999).

Julio Romero, an Ebitoso man whom I had known since 1991, embraced Pentecostalism in 1998. In 1999, he explained to me his reasons for converting similarly to the way in which Don Vierci had spoken of his 'return' to the *Enswhertha aou'oso*:

(s) I was going around without sense, I worked and spent my money drinking. Always like that, always like that. I fought with my brother. I fought with my friends. I never profited from my work. I was lost. Then, Gregorio [another *costal*] talked to me, 'my brother, why are you suffering like this? Why don't you come and receive a gift from God?' He told me that, and I began to go to the temple. And then, I received the gift and my mind enlightened. I thought, what is the benefit of drinking? What is the benefit of smoking? What is the benefit of partying? There is no use in that for me. In that moment I accepted the Holy Spirit and escaped the hold of Satan . . . Now I know the good things from the bad things. The church does not prohibit anything, each one knows what is correct and what is not. The brothers are there to help each other to see the right track, not to prohibit anything. Nobody obliged me to join the church, Gregorio just showed me the door (Field notes 9/07/1999).¹²

When the topic came up in the meetings organized to discuss whether a pan-Yshiro organization could be created, most people expressed ambivalence and doubts about the ways in which both the *cultureros* and *costales* addressed feelings of a general

¹²Julio's remarks about prohibitions responded to a generalized perception among non-costales that the congregation imposed on its members a series of prohibitions with regard to such things as wearing short pants, going around shirtless, smoking, drinking and laughing loudly.

social malaise. Marciano Barboza, one of the legal leaders of Diana (neither a *culturero* nor a *costal*) contested the argument, raised by some individuals, that it was better to abandon the rituals and enter into the church since the *cultureros* did not follow the *Esnwherta au'oso* properly:

(y) Yes, *cultura* is not observed, but neither is God's word observed. There is no real credence and then everybody turns into a fanatic in vain. You are all believers when going to the church but as soon as you get out of the church you are no longer believers. Everybody goes drinking and partying, fights their neighbours and does not show Christian love. You are all deceiving yourself (Tape recorded meeting 3/07/1999).

While some people criticized the *cultureros* for not following the *Esnwherta au'oso* 'properly', they did not disapprove the *Esnwherta au'oso* itself as Pentecostals did. Rather, most people recognized that the problem was the failure of living up to its rules. Moreover, most Ebitoso held the ancient Yshiro as a reference point to compare with the present, and when it came to the relations among the Yshiro (one of the core matters addressed by the *Esnwherta au'oso*), the comparison was clearly favourable to the past. Again and again through the meetings, workshops and conversations that I witnessed, people repeated what I had heard during the first meeting of the leaders in Asunción: that one of the roots of their contemporary problems was that the Yshiro had lost the sense of cohesion that their ancestors kept through the discipline of the *tobich*.

However, not everybody was happy with the implicit (or assumed) suggestion of 'going back' to that discipline. Many Ebitoso women and youth were particularly apprehensive of this since, according to them, this discipline implied their exclusion from decision-making and a heavy control over them by elderly men. Some stories that circulated in the communities depicted the ancient Yshiro as tyrannizing women and younger males because of their (supposedly) less developed *eiwo*.

As these concerns were voiced, the leaders who had mentioned it explained that it was the spirit of unity of the *tobich* that they were looking for, not to organize the Yshiro communities around the *tobich* again. These leaders reassured younger males that nobody would oblige them to join the *tobich*. The pan-Yshiro organization could be inspired in its unity but was an altogether different kind of organization that should include all the Yshiro regardless of religion or gender. In relation to the last point, women raised the question of what would be their role in the organization. There was consensus among community members that, since the most literate members of the community were women, they should play important roles in the organization. And the leaders pointed out the example of Teresa Payá who was a leader of Diana and one of driving forces behind the creation of the organization.

I must point out that many other women actively participated in the meetings leading to the organization. However, some of the leaders envisioned a subordinated role for participating women. For example, one of the Pentecostal leaders pointed out that

women could occupy the position of treasurer since they were 'good with numbers' and were unable to keep a secret.¹³ He argued that this 'incapacity' made women particularly fit to hold this position because there would be no secrets about the use and distribution of resources. This leader said, "women in this position of leadership will be the warranty that if something dirty is going on with the resources of the organization, the information would get out!"¹⁴

While some consensus was reached regarding the concerns mentioned above, when it came to what should happen with the initiation rituals, the positions were less workable. In early July 1999, when the leaders held their first meeting to draft the statutes of the organization the different stances about this issue came face to face. Babi Ozuna and Alejo Barras, both in their early twenties, nephew and son of Don Bruno respectively, and both weterak who had been recently elected leaders of Karcha Bahlut, asked what would be the attitude of the organization towards the performance of *dibylylta*.¹⁵ Intense discussions ensued.

Some of the leaders, including the Pentecostals from Ynishta and those who were part of the emerging Ebitoso entrepreneurs, argued that *cultureros* and their practices

¹³The *porowo* narratives depict women as inherently unable to keep secrets and that is why as soon as a woman knew anything about what happened in the male's secret society, she had to be killed. Many people (both men and women) say that the incapacity to keep secrets is a women's characteristic, although they do not necessarily make the connection with the *porowo* narratives.

¹⁴As we will see later, Teresa Payá ended up being elected treasurer of the organization. This might be an indication that not only the Pentecostal leader envisioned a subordinated role for women in the organization. Yet Teresa had explicitly asked not to be elected the head leader because this position would require a lot of travelling back and forth to Asunción and her family responsibilities would not allow her to do this. Of course behind Teresa's request there are issues connecting gender, family roles, work, and leadership. These issues are fascinating and quite central to the processes under analysis yet, as I indicated in the Introduction, I only came to see them after I had done my research and a female colleague pointed them to me. Thus, in this work I can just only mention them.

¹⁵Although Babi and Alejo participated in the rituals they were among the few literate individuals who did. As such, they expressed an ambivalence toward the authority of the *tobich*'s illiterate elders. In effect, at times they accepted the elder's opinions as wise and profound and at other times they rejected them as 'backward' and out of touch with the times. Nevertheless, they clearly opposed the views embraced by Pentecostals that all that was related to the Yshiro *porowo* should be abandoned.

were a drag on progress. They said that the *cultureros* were lazy and did not want to work. They argued that the *cultureros* were disrespectful of the legal leaders, and that there were individuals from this group who often travelled to Asunción and claimed to be leaders in order to ask for 'aid.' One of the examples presented was that of Agustin, the forty-year old son of a prominent *culturero* elder, who had been in Asunción for several months living on donations from beneficent institutions. Other leaders pointed out that *cultura* (i.e., traditions including religion) had much to offer the Yshiro regarding their contemporary predicaments and argued that the practice of going to Asunción to fake leadership was general, and not only circumscribed to the *cultureros*. Moreover, these leaders argued that Agustin was in Asunción starting a land claim for the *cultureros* of Ynishta and without other support he had to seek out 'aid' in order to survive.

Seeing that conversations could become stalled, former legal leader Pablo Barboza proposed that, since issues of *cultura* only generated divisions, they should be written off from the discussions leading to the organization and that legal leaders should decide how to handle this in their own communities.¹⁶ In other words, what was suggested was that the circulation from which the organization would emerge should not be articulated through the field of contention catalysed by *cultura*. Otherwise the contentions in this field would transmit their instability to the organization. However, as we will see, this field had to be brought back into the circulation very soon.

'United As The Intipohr': A New Leadership

Very fitting for a Yshiro story of how something came into being, one of the first steps taken to create the organization was to give it a appropriate name. Some leaders raised the issue of the name during the first meeting gathered in early July 1999 to draft the statutes of the organization. An interesting discussion followed on whether the name had to be meaningful for a wider audience beyond the Yshiro. Some leaders argued that the term Chamacoco was better than Yshiro, "this Yshiro word is a new thing, since I was a child I always heard Chamacoco. Most people know us as Chamacoco." "Chamacoco is not our word," answered another leader, "our word is Yshiro, we are Yshiro." Some leaders suggested names for the organization in *Yshiro au'oso* (Yshiro language) while others said that these would make no sense for *instituciones* (non-indigenous institutions). In the end it was agreed that since the organization was to operate 'among the Whites' the

¹⁶Pablo Barboza, an Ebitoso of about forty years of age, was one of the legal leaders of Ynishta when the split narrated in Chapter Three occurred. After his leadership declined, he obtained with the help of contacts/*patrones* in the Colorado Party a position as a public employee. In 1997 some of those contacts/*patrones* became part of the government of Departamento de Alto Paraguay and gave Pablo the position of Secretary of Indigenous Affairs.

name should be in Spanish. Yet, if the organization claimed to work for the self-determination of the Yshiro it had to start by using its own ethnonym. Moreover, Don Bruno argued that since self-determination was at stake, the word nation should be included. It was also agreed that the words *comunidades indígenas* (Indigenous communities) should be added to clarify what Yshiro meant and that, reflecting the spirit of unity of the organization, the word union should go first. Thus, *Unión de las Comunidades Indígenas de la Nación Yshir*, UCINY by its acronym, was the name which the leaders finally accepted.

A few days after the meeting, I went to join a group of Yshiro friends who had gathered to drink *tereré* (a cold infusion made with mate leaves) in the house of Perla, the fifty year old mother of one of the leaders of Karcha Bahlut. As I joined the group, Artigas, a forty year old Ebitoso, greeted me, "Hey Mario! how's the leader's *kooceene* doing? Is it going to bring something for *pobrechaco* any time soon?" Everybody laughed loudly at this interjection. Playing with phonetic similarities, Artigas mingled the Spanish pronunciation of the organization's acronym (*ooceene*) with the Yshiro word for lies, *koocee'a*, and the acronym Prodechaco with the Spanish words *pobre Chaco* (poor Chaco). In this way, he mocked the leaders who had promised that once the organization was created, Prodechaco would fund projects to fight poverty in the communities. This was the first time I heard the pun but soon it spread throughout the Yshiro communities. Beside its humour, the pun highlights that although important, naming the organization was not enough; spelling out a word without other performances could easily turn the 'thing' that the word conjures into something else, a lie for example. In effect the pun revealed that to perform the *unión*, the cynicism and generalized mistrust that the members of the communities felt toward the institution of legal leadership had to be overcome.

Leadership Without Patronage

As I discussed in Chapter Three, many Ebitoso (but also Tomaraho) individuals often refer to their kinship with leaders in order to underline the latter's moral failures. In effect, for many of these people their leaders fail when they do not recognize connections of reciprocity with their supporters/relatives. In these cases, people do not mainly see the leader as a representative of the community in front of the national society but as a relative who, with their support can reach a position from which they can obtain material benefits. Followers expect that the leader will reciprocate their support by sharing with them the benefits of the position and by siding with them in internal disputes. It is telling that the people who express this view of leadership rarely complain if a leader retains a part of the goods that they supposedly obtained for the whole community. This is seen as the privilege leaders receive from their supporters; a privilege for which they have to reciprocate to the latter (see Cordeu 1999:26). People who hold this perspective on leadership usually support a would-be leader during the election but almost immediately

after the leader is elected they begin to demand that their support be reciprocated. If in a few weeks the new leader does not respond, his/her supporters will start to raise their voices calling for another election until the leader is ousted.

As these demands on leadership developed along with the extension of the patronage networks of the Stroessner period, catering to them was relatively uncomplicated when those networks were strong and aid circulated more abundantly. However, as we saw in the previous chapter, when the flows of 'aid' dwindled and the fishing economy grew, leadership on this basis became too shaky and unstable. As leaders obtained fewer resources from the patronage networks, they could not reciprocate as generously the support received from their supporters. In turn, supporters began to closely watch how much the leaders 'ate' (retained) of the few resources obtained from patronage networks. Soon, and following the national trend since the transition, discourses about corruption began to circulate in the communities. Thus, although in my conversations with community members it was evident that most people shared the leaders' view that the emerging challenges demanded their unity, it was also very clear that most people had reservations regarding new and former leaders. They were particularly uncertain about leaders like Don Bruno and Pablo, who had attachments, and some said loyalties, to state institutions, political parties and *indigenista* organizations.

Zulma Franco, a thirty-six year old Ebitoso woman who is a teacher and who is influential in Ylhirta, articulated these doubts without ambiguities. In one of the community meetings in Ylhirta she said:

(y) I am not rejecting anybody, especially people of great intellect like Don Bruno or Pablo, but it must be understood that they are tied to the institutions that they are part of. Don Bruno is an employee of INDI and Pablo is an employee of the *Gobernación* (Departmental Government). An employee has a boss to whom he/she is subjected. What the boss says the employee must do. Sometimes the employee can resist the boss to defend their brothers and sisters but other times he/she cannot. Of course there are many [White] people with good will. Nevertheless we have to be conscious that when somebody provides you with economic resources, like it or not, you have to respond to that provider. We all depend on somebody else but when you depend on a *patron* you cannot resist them. Because that's the system of the Whites, if you do not obey them they cut 'the stream.' [You wonder] what the stream is? Economic support. If UCINY is the organization that will defend us against our *yamaha* (adversary), the *maro* (Paraguayan), then its leaders must be free to oppose them, they must have no *patrones*.

As people discussed how to build the institution of leadership (and the still unborn UCINY) on different grounds than the usual patronage relations, they started to see their own responsibilities in fostering those relations. Former leaders retorted to

accusations of being 'sell-outs' by giving specific examples of how they had been pushed by their communities to negotiate with Paraguayan *patrones* agreements that the communities later regretted. One of the former leaders of Karcha Bahlut bitterly accused his fellow villagers for criticizing him after he had given his consent for them to cut palm trees of the community for the factory of palm hearts. He said: "You were the ones who first criticized me for not getting anything for the community and then when I got you a job and you ate all your money you began to criticize me for cutting the palm trees" (see Modesto's comments on this topic on pages 209).

A few young adults argued that UCINY should have no relations with Paraguayan organizations. An older leader asked them mockingly: 'Do you want to respond to the *indigenistas* who will offer us support by shooting arrows at them?' Most people were aware that the system of patronage tended to bend the loyalties of leaders towards their *patrones*, but they were also aware that leaders without connections were 'useless' for the communities since they could obtain and give nothing to them. These discussions reflect that, based on their previous experiences, it was difficult for most Yshiro to imagine the institution of leadership outside the stark alternatives between patronage and total independence. However, through the discussions people began to see that these unwanted alternatives could be avoided if there was a Yshiro organization backing up the institution of leadership.

After the first round of meetings and conversations in the communities (May to July 1999) the general shape of the organization began to be defined. It was going to be similar to a parliament consisting of the 15 legal leaders (three from each community). Former leaders would act as advisors but without official standing to speak on behalf of the *Unión*. This parliament would designate a Directive Commission of five leaders: three executive and two for replacement in any eventuality. Former leaders with more experience with the national society and *indigenista* institutions suggested that funding for the functioning of the organization should only come from foreign organizations without immediate interests in local and national politics.¹⁷ If the organization had its own economic support, the relation with Paraguayan NGOs would be totally different. They also pointed out that in the process of getting this support the viability of the organization depended on how people behaved towards the leaders. Since people publicly acknowledged their responsibilities for pressuring the leaders into patronage relations, a consensus began to emerge that demands on them should be restrained for a while.

¹⁷In this they showed a sharp knowledge of Paraguayan politicians. For example, on the first trip to Asunción after the organization was created, the executive leaders of UCINY were offered projects and money by an NGO that later was revealed to be just a facade of an internal faction of the Colorado Party. They were looking for the vote of Indigenous peoples in the election to replace the assassinated vice-president.

Kinship and the Demands on Leadership

In the community meetings, people began to react to the kind of pun that I mentioned above and deplored the mistrust and cynicism towards UCINY in eloquent ways. For example Ginés Rizo, an elder I introduced in Chapter Three, pointed out that UCINY was like the baby in the story of the *anhet*. This is one episode in the *puruhle* narratives which is associated with a larger story about the origin of death (see Wilbert and Simoneu 1987: 131-152). This particular episode speaks of a father and his son who after tasting human flesh transform into winged cannibals who prey on the people. Separated from human contact and without hands, they kidnap an old woman to be their cook. In one of their forays they return with a pregnant woman and instruct the old woman to open her up and cook the fetus separately. The old woman ends up cooking the placenta and hides the baby, who she begins to raise and instruct. Every time the cannibals went out to look for new victims the old woman would take the baby out of his hiding place, feed him special food to make him strong, blow on his limbs to make them grow quickly and whisper in his ears: "Grow quickly, grow strong, my grandchild. There are these cannibals who prey on our people and they are finishing them off. You must grow and be strong because you are going to save our people from this calamity." In a few months the baby became a strong young adult and the grandmother began to create and try different weapons for him until she found the appropriate one. When everything was ready, the grandchild ambushed the *anhet* and his son and killed them.

In the meeting, the elder said:

(y) A baby cannot do anything, it is not only useless but also a burden. Yet when a baby grows it is the guarantee of survival for his/her people. This organization has not been born yet, but even when it is born it will just eat, it will produce nothing. This organization is like the baby who killed the *anhet*. What would have happened if the grandmother did not feed the child, if she did not protect him, if she did not instruct him until he was ready? We must be patient. Ask nothing and give everything to this organization for it will save us from those who feed off from us (Tape recorded meeting. 15/07/1999)

The reference to UCINY as a baby became extremely pervasive. For example, I heard somebody criticize those who expressed disbelief towards the organization by saying: "When the mother is pregnant, those who are irresponsible deny their kinship. When the baby is born and everybody sees his/her beauty, men fight each other claiming fatherhood. When the baby is a strong working adult, he/she has lots and lots of relatives." When people went to the leaders to donate money for their trips, some would say: 'Here comes the milk for the baby' or 'food for my grandchild.'

Conceiving UCINY as a baby was a powerful imagination that compelled people

to restrain their demands on the emerging form of collective leadership. At the same time, it transposed to UCINY the idea that the relations between leaders and their supporters are (or must be) based on kinship and its inherent responsibilities. If one considers that, in spite of all its changes, leadership had for a long time been somehow connected to kinship, it is understandable that many people viewed UCINY not as an entity that represented them but as a 'relative,' an entity which emerged from relations of reciprocity.

Although this kind of speech boosted the enthusiasm in the communities to the point that many even gave the little money they had to cover the cost of the leaders' meetings and their travelling back and forth to Asunción, the leaders knew that this enthusiasm would not last because people would not wait long to start making demands on the 'baby.' They also knew that individuals in the communities would keep challenging the leadership of the organization as long as governmental and non-governmental institutions showed that they would give some help to whomever claimed to be a leader. In a meeting Candido, the head leader of Ynishta pointed out that:

(y) There are some of our people who pretend to be leaders and go to Asunción requesting resources from institutions. Resources that they use for their own benefit. If those institutions only deal with our organization, we will put an end to this practice. We must terminate individualism and make our leadership worthy of respect (Tape recorded meeting 12/07/1999).

Teresa Payá, one of Diana's leaders added:

(y) Our organization will be attacked not only by the Paraguayans but also by some of our brothers and sisters. I know my people very well. I know one by one those who like to criticize the leaders who are working for their communities. The Whites support these kind of people so that they can create misunderstandings and confusion within our communities (Tape recorded meeting 12/07/1999).

Don Bruno, eloquently concluded that:

(y) When the *intipohr* [pl. wild boar] stick together the hunter cannot get it. The hunter will wait for the *intipohra* [sgl.] that is detached from its group and then he will get his prey. In the same way when an *Yshir* is detached from our union s/he can be 'domesticated' [coopted] by an external political influence to undermine our organization. For this reason our organization has to watch out for its people, to avoid these traps. If we stick together as the *intipohr*, brave against the dogs, the hunter is not going to get any of us alone . . . We will sanction those that promote indifference towards our organization and those who speak with the authorities without having authority [i.e., non-leaders] because they will be

breaking the principles of our union . . . The objective of this organization is to further the well being of our people. You know that misery gets worse year after year and we cannot fight against it because we are divided . . . We know this land is ours but, how are we going to prove it if the Whites make their words into the only truth? . . . As we are a minority, and divided, non-indigenous peoples dominate us at their whim . . . Now we are closer to that great day in which we will create this organization. We are going to terminate individualism and when outsiders intend to fool us we will force them to deal with our organization, because it will be through our organization that decisions will be made (Tape recorded meeting 12/07/1999).

As can be deduced from their comments, the leaders understood that UCINY would exist only to the extent that it could become a mediator for the circulations between the communities and the national society, international organizations and the like. To achieve this, two interconnected challenges had to be overcome. The first challenge was convincing community members to accept UCINY as the only conduit for relations between the communities and state agencies and (national or international) *indigenistas*. The second challenge was to convince state agencies and national and international *indigenistas* to treat UCINY as the only valid interlocutor in their relations with the Yshiro communities.

These challenges were formidable. Firstly because they implied that UCINY had to respond to demands based on quite different assumptions concerning the meaning of a 'good' leader. Secondly, because the demands based on those different assumptions had to be met almost simultaneously. And thirdly, because the whole idea of UCINY hung on a single thread: Prodechaco's promise of 'concrete projects.' This promise had to be fulfilled before the people in the communities became impatient and started to again disregard leaders for their dealings with non-indigenous institutions. In what follows I discuss how leaders went about overcoming these challenges.

Solidifying UCINY

The leaders understood that the coming into existence of UCINY depended not only on the communities but also on non-indigenous institutions. People in the communities would keep accepting UCINY as intermediary as long as UCINY responded to their demands, and these demands could be met only if UCINY could convince non-indigenous institutions that it was a representative organization. If the leaders could do this, then they could ask non-indigenous institutions to avoid attending to demands from Yshiro individuals, or at least to channel these through UCINY. In this way, the leaders expected, people in the communities would end up relying on UCINY to deal with non-indigenous institutions. This, in turn, would make UCINY stronger (i.e., more

representative) in negotiating with those institutions and thus, more able to cater to the demands of the communities. This perfect plan had a window of opportunity provided by the promise the leaders made to their communities that UCINY would tap on Prodechaco's resources soon. While the peoples' patience for the realization of this promise lasted the leaders had to convince non-indigenous institutions that UCINY was representative.

Ambivalent Responses

For a core group of more experienced leaders, it was evident that the conflict between the *cultureros* and the Pentecostals/entrepreneurs had to be addressed by UCINY. They argued that if UCINY did not adopt a supportive stance towards the *cultureros*, they would mistrust the organization and would keep going to Asunción to pursue their own agendas. This, in turn, would hinder any claim UCINY could make of being representative of all the Yshiro, especially in front of critical *indigenistas* who might consider the *cultureros* as the authentic Indigenous peoples.¹⁸

Besides the fact that, by not addressing the conflict, the legal leaders risked alienating a sector of the communities, these leaders worried because they knew that gaining legitimacy in front of *indigenistas* was a different kind of game than gaining it in front of the communities. In effect, to gain legitimacy in front of the *indigenistas* involved convincing them that UCINY was representative of what they already had defined as worth being represented. *Indigenistas* of all convictions had their own ideas of what was the 'real situation of Indigenous peoples.' The experienced leaders knew that if UCINY did not represent those realities, *indigenistas* would not accept that the organization was really representative. Thus, if critical *indigenistas* considered traditionalists as the real Indigenous people, then UCINY had to claim to be representative of the traditionalists. In other words, UCINY had to appear as a mediator that would not bring instability to the circulation that gave life to the institutions with which it tried to articulate.

The less experienced leaders developed an awareness of this as they kept going to Asunción. Particularly the Pentecostals, who, for the first time, were exposed in an

¹⁸ Why should the leaders worry about these organizations? Because early on in the conversations it was agreed that UCINY was to look for legal recognition as a non-profit civil organization. In this way it could open bank accounts and establish formal relations with other national and international organizations. However, neither I nor the leaders had the necessary knowledge of the Paraguayan legal system to carry out this plan. According to the more experienced leaders, the critical *indigenista* organizations were the only organizations who could be trusted to provide free legal support for the nascent organization.

intensive way to the discourses that circulated in critical *indigenista* circles. Their experiences in Asunción began to open their eyes to the necessity of moderating their position towards the *cultureros* in order to obtain support for UCINY. Moreover, on one of the first trips to Asunción, Don Bruno informed the leaders from Ynishta that a group of *cultureros* was intent on denouncing them to INDI for violation of law 904/81 which protected their rights to keep 'their culture.'¹⁹ In a very diplomatic way he made clear that, as an INDI employee with good access to the new president of this institution, he would confirm that this kind of 'irregularity' was taking place in Ynishta. He reminded the Pentecostal leaders that this could complicate their legal recognition that was still in process within INDI's bureaucracy. Don Bruno's warning had the effect of sobering the aggressive stance of the Pentecostal leaders. Candido, who in April 1999 had told the *cultureros* that their rituals would no longer be allowed in Ynishta, changed his views and at the end of July of that same year expressed to them that in consideration of the superior goal of unity he accepted that nobody should interfere with other peoples beliefs.

In general the trips to Asunción gave the leaders a more complex perspective of how the *indigenista* field operated. At the end of a day of intense visits to NGOs who had badmouthed each other, one of the leaders summarized his perception:

These guys need Indigenous peoples. Without us they have no jobs. That's why all of them tell us 'if you want to be my friend you cannot befriend this other organization.' They are very jealous of each other. We will have to walk very carefully to make friends with everybody, without pissing all of them off (Field notes 30/08/1999).

This was an insightful comment for almost every institution the leaders contacted was ambivalent towards UCINY. While most critical *indigenistas* welcomed the creation of UCINY, they also expressed concerns about the Yshiro leaders openness to talk to both critical and integrationist *indigenista* institutions. Some, even told me as friendly advise, not to trust leaders that I had known for ten years because, according to them, they were corrupted. When I asked for proof of it I was told that it was evident: these leaders 'flirted' with the whole spectrum of *indigenista* institutions. On other occasion a critical *indigenista* told me with a wink and without further explanation that: "It is very risky for the communities when leaders learn too well how to hunt and gather projects. They become too powerful." In the end, one NGO accepted to advise UCINY on legal matters in order to obtain legal recognition as an NGO, but not before one of its staff warned that: "If you [the leaders] work with X, which is an ethnocidal organization, I will not work

¹⁹Recall that law 904/81 established that no form of coercion could be used to 'assimilate' Indigenous peoples to the national society. Don Bruno explained to the Pentecostal leaders that their intention to prohibit the *cultureros*' rituals was a violation of this law.

with you.” As the leader I quoted above had said, the *indigenistas* were very jealous partners.

INDI was another important institution with which UCINY needed to articulate in order to become consolidated as the legitimate representative of the Yshiro nation. The authority invested in INDI to legally recognize leaders and communities meant that it could erode at the base the leaders attempt to construct a pan-Yshiro organization. The leaders aim was to obtain recognition of UCINY as the only valid representative of the Yshiro. The leaders wrote a letter to the president of the institution claiming for UCINY the exclusive right to represent the Yshiro people in several matters, including land claims and the adjudication of legal leadership.²⁰ The leaders argued that having UCINY as the only interlocutor with the Yshiro would speed up INDI’s administrative procedures and thus would contribute to the ‘development of the communities.’

INDI’s response to UCINY’s request was ambivalent. On the one hand, its president was inclined to accept the idea since UCINY could relieve the pressures that Indigenous individuals exert on the staff and the coffers of the institution. On the other hand, accepting UCINY as the only interlocutor meant to give up the remote control that INDI had within the communities through the legal recognition of leaders. That is, if UCINY were the only interlocutor, it would become the gatekeeper to the communities and this, in turn, could undermine the basis on which the governing Colorado Party’s patronage network rested. Facing this dilemma, the official attitude was to go half way: an internal memorandum (see INDI PCN 182/99) was circulated calling to the attention of INDI’s staff the fact that UCINY had asked that no aid be granted to Yshiro individuals without its authorization. However, no mention was made as to how INDI’s staff should respond to this request. The memorandum also made no mention of the most critical areas in which UCINY had requested exclusive rights to represent the Yshiro, the recognition of leaders and land claims. Thus, INDI authorities tried to take whatever advantage they could from UCINY without really taking a clear position on the core of the matter raised by the Yshiro leaders, that is, the exclusivity of UCINY as a mediator.

The ambivalence of these institutions highlights the self-preserving tendency of institutional actants. Both for critical *indigenistas* and INDI articulating with another organization, in which they had little intervention, was a move with uncertain consequences for the circulations of which they were part. In other words, this articulation could bring instability or a threat to the composition (or identity) of the actants *indigenistas* and INDI. As we will see, by contrast, Prodechaco’s attitude makes the self-preserving tendencies of actants more evident.

²⁰Letter dated December 10, 1999 from Candido Martinez and Alejo Barras to INDI’s president. Copy in the possession of the author.

A Common Trope

Of all the *indigenista* institutions, Prodechaco was the one who 'responded' to the leaders most readily. In part because, for different reasons, both the leaders and Prodechaco wanted UCINY to become a mediator of the circulation-development. But also because Prodechaco was confident that, through its plans for 'community formation,' it could control how this mediator would take shape.

On a trip to Asunción in late August 1999, the leaders and I went to visit the co-directors of Prodechaco to inform them that the creation of the organization was underway and to obtain a formal commitment that the institution would start projects right away. The leaders had thought that some sort of support should start to be evident immediately as a way to strengthen the confidence of the communities in the organization. The co-directors again re-stated that because the Yshiro area lacked an organization with 'representational and managerial skills,' Prodechaco could not start concrete projects until these skills were developed. The leaders were quick to point out that in this way Prodechaco was pushing communities to go looking for an NGO to act as an intermediary, which went against what Prodechaco had been 'preaching' about self-development. Moreover, this appeared to be in contradiction to the 'new' objective of Prodechaco, which was to promote the self-reliance and independence of Indigenous communities.

In the end it was negotiated that Prodechaco would provide funding for some of the subsequent meetings and workshops of the nascent organization. The agreement was highly favourable to everyone because it gave Prodechaco another token with which to claim authority on the basis of its involvement with Indigenous grassroots organizations and it gave the leaders something to 'show' in the communities (i.e., funding for meetings). Prodechaco mentioned the 'nascent Yshiro organization' in the written report upon which the continuation of Prodechaco was decided by the ALA Committee in September 1999 (Prodechaco 1999a; see pages 188-190). The leaders, in turn, made a great display of the support they received from Prodechaco as they organized meetings and a tour to visit all the communities presenting a draft of the statutes of the organization for discussion. This idea had been proposed by the Tomaraho leaders.

Before this encounter with the Prodechaco co-directors, in mid August 1999, during the second meeting that the leaders held to draft the statutes of the organization, the Tomaraho leaders joined the Ebitoso leaders for deliberations. They participated as observers since, they said, it was not clear in their community that the idea of a pan-Yshiro organization was good for them. However, as conversations advanced and the Tomaraho leaders travelled to Asunción with their Ebitoso colleagues they became increasingly enthusiastic. Nevertheless, the Tomaraho leaders felt that they could not

convey by themselves the spirit of unity of this organization to their people.²¹ The Tomaraho leaders proposed that all the leaders should tour the communities together and set up workshops in each community to present the final draft of the statutes of the organization for community feed-back and as an example of unity.

When the legal leaders obtained the funding for the tour from Prodechaco, they asked Don Bruno to accompany them as an advisor. Around 20 individuals, including leaders, advisors, sailors, myself and a visiting friend, shared Candido's boat as we travelled from one community to the next during ten days in mid September 1999. In the workshops held in each community, participants again discussed the issue of what kind of attitude the organization should take towards *cultura*. The Tomaraho, were particularly concerned about the issue since all of them participated in the initiation rituals. In each of these workshops the same idea, that the Yshiro had to learn from their ancestors, was repeated over and over again. Back in the boat and during long hours of travel the leaders discussed and reinforced these ideas with each other. Thus, it became evident that a common trope had at last emerged among the Yshiro: the creation of a pan-Yshiro organization was tantamount to the recovery of the unity that the ancient Yshiro had known.

On September 24, 1999 the legal leaders met in Karcha Bahlut and signed the agreement that approved the statutes and officially created UCINY. In the same meeting, Candido Martinez was appointed General Coordinator of UCINY, Alejo Barras its secretary and Teresa Payá its treasurer. Surrounded by community members, the majority of whom were *cultureros*, Candido labelled the common trope:

I know you are practitioners of *cultura* and I want to tell you that I am not going to interfere with your rituals. Each one knows what to do. And our organization will support and promote your *cultura*, because it is important to keep traditions. We are not going to discuss and hate each other for this issue any longer. I think that poverty stands above all these things and this is what this organization will tackle. The well-being of *the Yshiro nation* will come first (Tape recorded meeting 24/09/1999).

Conclusions: Subversive Mediators?

In this chapter we have seen the process of making a mediator from the other side of the coin, so to speak. While in Chapter Seven we saw how Prodechaco went about making mediators, here we have seen how the Yshiro leaders did the same but for their

²¹It must be kept in mind that the Tomaraho had ended up in Pitiantouta in 1996, after almost ten years of problematically living with their Ebitosó neighbours. Thus, it is understandable why they were very cautious to undertake a new joint endeavour with them.

own reasons and attending to the circulations from which they emerged as leaders. The changes that took place during the 1990s meant that leadership had become weak. Although it is a simplification, the situation could be seen as if the different circulations/imaginings that the communities' members had of themselves and their situation were unconnected and divisive. These imaginings delineated groups and divisions but they also fostered mistrust within groups towards their leaders.

By the late 1990s, the need for a strong leadership that could face increasing competition for resources and decreasing attention from the state became a pressing issue. The idea that a pan-Yshiro organization would be a useful way to face these challenges had been circulating for a while when Prodechaco appeared as an opportunity to realize it. In effect, Prodechaco appeared as a mediator that could be used to start linking the multiplicity of imaginings that divided the communities into a common circulation/imagining, i.e., the nascent circulation-UCINY. With the promise of what Prodechaco could bring to the communities, the leaders were able to bridge divisions and ease mistrust which gave the circulation-UCINY a minimum of stability. This stability, in turn, allowed the leaders to claim with at least a minimum of plausibility that UCINY represented the 'Yshiro Nation.' In this way, the leaders attempted to integrate INDI and the critical *indigenistas* as mediators as well. The modicum of success they achieved in integrating these 'external circulations' gave UCINY further (corpo)reality. Finally, after UCINY began to channel resources from Prodechaco, the critical NGOs gave it legal support, and INDI recognized it as an interlocutor, UCINY became a relatively stable circulation textually inscribed in its legal statutes.

Since the legal statutes established UCINY's objectives, scope and structure, it is possible to see in them the inscription of a moment of the fluid dynamics between different ways of imagining the Yshiro and their situation. For example, in the introduction to the statutes various national laws and articles from the National constitution pertaining to Indigenous peoples were mentioned. Following this, it was stated in the statutes that neither religion nor party politics were to be involved in the way UCINY pursued its objectives. The objectives included "to keep and strengthen the cultural and ethnic identity of the Yshiro nation," the "recovery, legalization and protection of the traditional territory of the Yshiro nation" and the "promotion of the general well-being of the Yshiro while preserving the current economic and social system" (UCINY 1999b).

The emergence of the imagination-Yshiro nation was the result of a long historical process plus five months of discussions, workshops and meetings in which different, at times mutually contradicting imaginings about the ancient and contemporary Yshiro, were worked out in order to finally provide a set of discourses with which contemporary Yshiro would begin to perform themselves in ways that were conducive to collective action. However, as must be clear by this point, I do not mean that people ended up sharing exactly the same imaginings and attitudes toward the 'ancient' Yshiro. Nor do I

mean that they came to share exactly the same imaginations of themselves and their prospects for the future. What I mean is that through dialogue and conversation, arguments and disputes, those imaginations kept changing, articulating and merging with each other, eventually coagulating into an imagination such as the Yshiro nation which could provide the basis for collective actions, precisely because it was an imagination/circulation made of all those other circulation/imaginations.

But the statutes were not only about the imaginations circulating 'within' the communities. In effect, the objective of 'preserving the current economic and social system' did not use the word 'current' just by chance. The idea of a current economic and social system, which is neither a remnant of the past nor the finished product of assimilationist designs, addressed the debates around the hunter-gatherer paradigm. In effect, these debates face the Yshiro with the dire alternatives of being 'real Indians' or 'assimilated Indians' and thus having to accept the visions of development attached to either of those imaginations. As we have seen, these imaginations contributed to creating divisions within the communities between *indios atrasados* (backward Indians) and *letrados* (literate).

The seal of the organization (see Figure 5), designed by the young leader Alejo Barra, captured these dynamics between different imaginations in the most synthetic way. In it there is a stereotypical figure of an Indian's head with a feather. Below it a computer, with two crossing spears at the sides, the acronym of the organization at the bottom and the full name displayed through the frame. When Alejo circulated the model some leaders who had never seen a computer asked what the drawing represented, Alejo explained to them the drawing and added that: "the seal means that this [UCINY] is an Indigenous organization that values its traditions and works for the future." Approval for the seal was unanimous.

As I said, inscriptions like the statutes and the seal capture moments of shifting relations of force. That these inscriptions incorporate heterogenous elements such as discourses on rights, the hunter-gatherer paradigm, traditions according to different Yshiro perspectives, stereotypical images and the like, just highlights to what extent UCINY emerged as a node of those relations of force. In other words, they underscore the position of UCINY as a mediator in a multiplicity of circulations involving the Yshiro communities, Prodechaco, critical NGOs and INDI among other actants.

In contrast, that neither Prodechaco, INDI nor the critical NGOs felt the need to

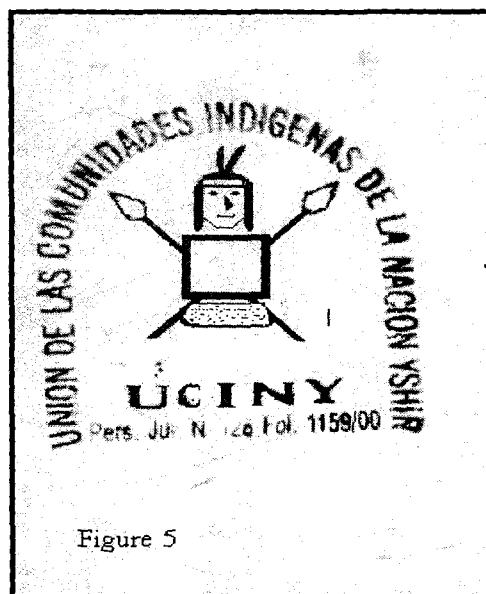


Figure 5 UCINY's seal

accommodate and rework their own imaginations in order to claim and establish their equivalence with the Yshiro's own imaginations points to the asymmetries between these actants. In other words, the different ways of accommodating (or not) to each other, points to the different density that each of these actants have by virtue of the number of circulations that pass through them. Prodechaco, for example, only superficially engaged with the Yshiro's imaginations of themselves and their situation that emerged from the changes taking place since the early 1990s. In part, this is because Prodechaco had a greater capacity to subtly coerce the formation of mediators in ways that would keep the circulation-development unchanged. The Yshiro leaders, in contrast, had to accommodate to this and other circulations such as the ones involving critical NGOs and INDI. In other words, the Yshiro leaders had to make UCINY appear as conducive to those institutions own goals, including the self-preservation of the institutions.

Does this mean that UCINY ended up emerging as a mediator 'functional to the wider order of the world'? In principle it would seem that the answer is yes. In spite of land claims issues being among its objectives, UCINY did not demand from Prodechaco an intervention on these issues. Thus, it appeared as a 'correct' mediator allowing the flow of the circulation-development without much alteration. However, and in spite of these 'alignments,' we must take into account that the leaders were able to 'sneak in' their own agenda by playing on the more or less pressing needs that Prodechaco, INDI and the critical NGOs had for mediators connecting them to the 'real situation of Indigenous peoples.' Critical NGOs were aware that UCINY was not perfectly 'aligned' with their designs. Yet UCINY's objectives of keeping the cultural and ethnic identity of the Yshiro nation and the recovery of its traditional territory, fared well with the critical *indigenistas'* own objectives. Something similar happened with INDI. UCINY was clearly a potential threat to the clientelistic powers of INDI. Yet UCINY's claim to exclusive representation provided some advantages to this impoverished institution such as giving it a good excuse to not attend to individual claims from Yshiro individuals.

UCINY did not emerge from Prodechaco's 'community formation,' rather it emerged from the Yshiro leaders, who for their own purposes, actively tapped into the designs of Prodechaco, and later into those of the critical NGOs and INDI. The leaders' purposes were shaped in part by the changing imaginations that circulated within and outside the communities. For this reason, UCINY emerged as a mediator with a high degree of ambivalence concerning how it would wage the diverse circulations in which it took part. It is true that to some extent, by 'fitting' into Prodechaco's objectives, UCINY turned into a mediator through which the 'wider (neoliberal) order of the world' flowed. Yet because it was also a mediator through which other, perhaps antagonistic, imaginations circulated it introduced a potentially disruptive element into that 'wider' circulation.

In effect, by merely becoming a mediator of a circulation, an actant is potentially in a position to transform the meaning of such circulation. This potential exists because the direction of a circulation/translation is in principle indefinite. However, asymmetries

give circulations/translations more or less definite directions. The question is, can asymmetries and the direction of the circulations between actants such as UCINY, Prodechaco and critical NGOs be subverted? If so, how? I turn to these questions in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE: REALITY CHECK

In the previous chapter I showed how the Yshiro leaders created UCINY as a mediator between diverse Yshiro imaginations and Prodechaco, among other actants. As a circulation, UCINY involved a variety of imaginations, some of which, I argued, could be potentially subversive of the circulation-development and, more generally, of the circulation-neoliberal governmentality. In this chapter, I intend to focus on the subversive potential of certain Yshiro imaginations and on how this is constrained in contemporary conditions. In a sense this chapter mirrors Chapter One, since the main theme is how the 'otherness' of the imaginations making up the *yrmo* is handled by the dominant governmentality of the present moment so that it does not threaten the order of the world. For this discussion, I will focus on a Sustainable Hunting Program (SHP) that UCINY and Prodechaco undertook together.

Faithful to its promise of concrete projects and to its 'participatory methodology,' Prodechaco encouraged UCINY to promote in the Yshiro communities discussions aimed at getting a picture of their situation, defining their problems, and proposing the ways in which specific projects should be designed. In this particular case, the discussions led to the incorporation of certain Yshiro imaginations, connected to the relations between non-human animals and humans, into a proposal that the Yshiro leaders prepared for Prodechaco. These imaginations were potentially subversive of the *status quo* in Alto Paraguay, the circulation-development and neoliberal governmentality, however this potential was not visible until later when the SHP was formally created and executed. But once this potential became evident, a series of operations involving coercion were set in motion in order to contain it.

To discuss these events I must first provide a picture of the situation that UCINY attempted to partially address through the proposal that emerged from community discussions. Then I will discuss how the SHP took shape at the intersection of the Yshiro imaginations and other non-indigenous actants imaginations. I will then describe the struggles the Yshiro had to go through in order to authorize their own imaginations. Yet I will show that this authorization lasted as long as those imaginations did not show their subversive potential, once this happened they were quickly translated into dangerous mistakes or expressions of bath faith which could legitimately be contained by coercion.

Controlling Natural Resources

When the decline of the tannin industry started to become evident in the late 1950s, the focus of Yshiro male economic activities shifted. As I mentioned earlier, between the 1960s and the early 1990s the focus became the hides of wild animals. Brazilian authorities began to enforce bans on hunting on their side of the Upper

Paraguay river in the early 1980s. Paraguayan authorities began to establish regulations on hunting in the late 1980s. By the mid 1990s, hunting some species such as caiman and anaconda, which were among the most sought after, was totally banned on both sides of the river. However, Paraguayan 'citizens' (mostly the Yshiro) kept hunting illegally on both sides of the river. This was possible with the connivance of the local Paraguayan authorities who took part in the illegal trade of animal hides.¹ According to local commentators (Indigenous and non-indigenous), this situation gave Brazilian authorities *carte blanche* to enforce their regulations as they saw fit.

The Brazilian forces counted on the silence of the Paraguayan local authorities to subject the Yshiro to all kinds of human rights abuses. In effect, local authorities in Alto Paraguay were not eager to bring to the public's attention the abusive interventions of Brazilian forces over 'Paraguayan citizens,' because this would have brought attention to their own participation in the breaking of national laws and regulations. It is true that once Yshiro hunters put their feet on Paraguayan territory they were safe, but if they were caught by the Brazilian *forestales* (forest rangers) there was absolutely nothing their family or friends could do for them because the Paraguayan authorities would not even bother asking the Brazilian authorities about the situation of these 'Paraguayan citizens.' Indeed, the Brazilian and the local Paraguayan authorities were engaged in a sort of hide and seek game whose pawns were the Yshiro hunters.

Yshiro hunters comment that repression by the Brazilian *forestales* was merciless. Modesto, whom I already introduced, told me of an experience he had while on a hunting trip:

We were hunting with my companions. We hunt at night and during the day we hide so that the *forestales* would not see us. . . . I had a dream where the Virgin Mary told me, 'My child why are you suffering here? Why don't you go back home?' When I woke up, I told my hunting mate about my dream and we decided to go back home, because my dream was telling me of a danger . . . We left our friends there. They did not believe my dream . . . two days later we were closer to home with our canoe and turned on our radio to hear a soccer game in Brazil and we heard the news that said that the *forestales* found six Paraguayans in Tacuari river that resisted arrest and were killed. Those were our friends who were in Tacuari river, the *forestales* probably caught them sleeping and killed them all (Videotaped interview. 07/1994).

¹Hunting in the Brazilian side of the river was more profitable because given the different geographical conditions there were more animals there. In contrast to the Paraguayan side which becomes very dry a few kilometres from the river, the Brazilian side is characterized by large patches of swampy areas where caiman and anaconda abound.

Stories like this one, describing the horrors that awaited hunters if the Brazilian forces caught them, abound in the communities. There are also a lot of rumours circulating regarding what may have happened to those hunters who disappeared on the 'other' side. For example Tito, an Ebitoso man I already introduced and who used to be a hunter, pondered about the whereabouts of a companion who never returned from a hunting trip:

In Brazil it is better to be a murderer. You see, if they catch you and don't kill you, they take you to jail. For every skin you have they give you a year in jail. Then, you arrive there and those mean people come and ask you, 'Why are you here? Are you a hunter?' If you are a hunter, they all fuck you up your ass as long as they want and then kill you before you are released. If you say you killed somebody, then they embrace you and say 'ah! You are my brother' and when you are released they give you a job trafficking drugs. Who knows, perhaps Don Alberto's son is a wealthy man now . . . (Tape recorded interview 13/09/1999).

These stories ground a perception of the 'other side of the river' as a 'place of death,' a place in which, once one enters, one is caught between the alternative of killing or being killed. Some Yshiro hunters say that if they would not have started to rely on fishing for subsistence probably they all would have been killed. However exaggerated this view may seem, it does reflect the perception that the Yshiro have about hunting in Brazil: it was a trap into which they were forced by the conditions imposed upon them by the patronage system characteristic of the 'hunting business.' In effect, it was indebtedness that forced Yshiro hunters to overcome their fear of going to Brazil. Of course, it was not a sense of 'financial responsibility' that pushed the Yshiro to pay their 'debts' but the instruments of coercion that Paraguayan *patrones* had at their disposal. Not only the coercion of being cut from the patronage networks on which part of their daily subsistence relied but also openly violent coercion. As Antonina, the mother of Diana's female leader, recalled:

Until around 1979 it was a disaster. Like a slave they [Whites] treated Indigenous peoples. They tortured people. Ask Julio, he was tortured by the soldiers because he went to Asunción without paying his debt to his *patron*. In those times you could do nothing because Indigenous peoples were not recognized as persons. Indigenous peoples were like slaves, working just for an exchange of food. Enough to barely survive. If you complained the *patrones* would beat you unconscious . . . Nowadays if you have a problem with your patron you can go to the judge. Although if you have no money it is useless because the judge goes with the one who fills his pocket. But still, at least they cannot beat us as they did before . . . it was after API was created that things began to change. After that we heard that there were friends among the *dhip kunaho* (foreigners) and the *maro*

(Paraguayans) who liked us and did not want the Yshiro to be treated as slaves (Tape recorded 10/05/2000).

The growth of the fishing economy, then, conjoined a process that had already started in the 1970s when the situation of Indigenous peoples in Paraguay became an issue of international attention. These two processes in connection with each other provided in the 1990s a way out not only from the remnants of extremely stringent patronage relations but also from the space of death across the river.

The shift to commercial fishing has been accompanied by a change in the 'map' of control and surveillance over use of natural resources. In effect, as this activity grew Brazilian and Paraguayan authorities began to establish regulations very quickly. Yet as the local representatives of the Paraguayan state have constantly lacked the resources to effectively enforce those regulations, the Brazilian Navy has been doing it.² Nowadays, Brazilian boat-patrols confiscate the fishing nets of Yshiro fishermen, sometimes chasing them into Paraguayan territory. The patrols have even shot over the roofs of the Yshiro communities where fishermen sought refuge. This is something that was never done while the 'hunting economy' was dominant. Why this change?

While the fishing economy meant greater independence for the Yshiro in relation to Paraguayan *patrones*, it also meant the end of the hide and seek game in which the Yshiro played the role of pawns for the Brazilian and Paraguayan local authorities. The Yshiro and several ex-*patrones* now compete for the same resource, fish. Thus, ex-*patrones* in positions of authority are not eager to protect their former 'employees' from the Brazilian authorities. On the contrary these ex-*patrones* seek to exercise their authority at every opportunity. For example, Benito, an Ebitoso fisherman, went to complain to the military authorities in Bahia Negra because the Brazilian navy crossed the river and entered into Paraguayan territory to confiscate his net. The Paraguayan officer to whom Benito talked threatened to give him a fine because, the officer said: 'Why are you trying to fish when is not the season?' In short, nowadays the Yshiro have to face not only the Brazilian authorities, who have expanded their area of control, but also the Paraguayan authorities who not only deny them protection but also harass them in their economic activities.

The new layout of control and surveillance over fishing resources reinforces the perception, common among Indigenous and poor non-indigenous inhabitants in the area of Alto Paraguay, that the regulations on fishing are meant to cater to the needs of the growing Brazilian sportfishing industry. In part this is because regulations on fishing began to be imposed simultaneously with the arrival of sportfishing operators in the

²The main regulations affecting Yshiro fishermen are those that restrict the fishing season to eight months (April to November) and those that establish a minimum size for the weft that the fishing net must have.

Brazilian city of Porto Murtinho and the appearance of large hotel-boats carrying sport fishermen from the city of Corumbá (see Map 2). Paraguayan 'important people' (i.e., authorities) and Brazilian entrepreneurs have begun to pursue joint ventures in order to exploit the opportunities the region offers to the sportfishing and tourist industries. This has reinforced the feeling that the competition for natural resources is intensifying and that it is becoming a war of rich against poor regardless of borders.

The new arrangements of control and surveillance over natural resources and the struggles around them constitute the background against which the proposal for a hunting project was thought about, discussed and planned by the Yshiro communities and UCINY. In the following sections we will see how this project unfolded.

Laughing at the Poor

While on a fishing trip with Artigas, the Ebitoso man who made the joke about *kooceenee* and *pobrechaco* (see page 234), I asked him what he thought about the regulations on fishing and whether they would be useful at all to sustain the stocks of fish. As Artigas looked at me utterly perplexed, I further explained that the authorities said that restrictions were meant to protect the resource from disappearing. Artigas said that this made no sense, the amount of fish in the river had nothing to do with how much they were harvested since fish come with the birds of rain (*Osasero*). As long as there is rain there is fish. "Then, why do you think that they make all these regulations," I asked.

Don't you know? In the bible it says that around the year 2000 the rich will laugh at the poor. Look those tourists that come in their boats, they are all fat, they eat very well. Look at us [Yshiro], we are thin and our children sometimes cry because there is no food. Yet the government lets them [tourists/sport-fishermen] take all the fish they want and does not allow us to work to feed our families. They are laughing at our poverty.

Artigas' comment and his perplexity towards my idea that regulations on fishing had something to do with conserving the stocks of fish underlines a common perception among many Yshiro: that the availability of animals is only indirectly connected to the way humans treat them. In order to understand this idea we must take into account the way in which many Yshiro imagine non-human animals and the connections these have to humans.

Reciprocity, the Critical Nexus

According to several people but mostly elders and cultureros, individual animals are the *abo* of an original specimen, the *bahlut*. Although for brevity the *bahlut* is usually described as the parent or the owner of the *abo*, a more detailed description shows that the *abo* is an emanation of the *bahlut* (see Cordeu 1990:167-169). In other words an

individual animal can be conceived as a synecdoche or a particular manifestation of the *bahlut*. Regarding the availability of animals, then, the relevant connection is the one between humans and the *bahlut* of the species, not the *abo*. Here is where the first link connecting human behaviour and the availability of animals must be sought.

Puruhle narratives describe the particular events by which the *bahlut* of each species emerged from the common indistinction shared with humans, with whom the *bahluts* continue to have social relations. As will be recalled from Chapter Three, the *bahlut* are among the *ukurb 'deio* (powers) that establish relations of reciprocity with *konsaho* (shamans). As we saw, the relations between a *konsaha* and a *bahlut* always implicate other humans. In effect, often the 'gifts' that a *bahlut* gives must be reciprocated by the *konsaho* in ways that unavoidably involve the intervention of other humans; such is the case with food restrictions and rituals (see page 110, footnote 13 and pages 115-118). The incorporation of other humans into an expanding network that starts with the link between a *bahlut* and a *konsaha*, is based on rules of reciprocity and sharing which are often shaped by the instructions of the *bahlut*. Disregard for these instructions may have negative results in the form of diseases, death, draught, floods and, key to our discussion, the availability of the *bahlut's* *abo*, that is, animals (see Susnik 1957a:33-34, 1995:55-61; Wilbert and Simoneau 1987: 444- 451; Cordeu 1989e).

From this perspective, the critical nexus between human behaviour and the availability of animals is the reciprocity that must prevail in the heterogeneous network connecting humans and non-humans such as the *bahlut*.³ Then, if animals are not available, it means that at certain points in the network the flow of reciprocity is failing, thus affecting the whole network. Since *konsaho* are very careful and observant of their connection with *bahlut*, it is usually expected that the link where reciprocity is failing will be located in a human to human connection.

This way of understanding the complex relations between human and animals is not shared or known in its details by everybody in the Yshiro communities. Yet I believe these ideas are lurking behind the general tendency of Yshiro commentators to first look into relations among humans for the causes of fluctuations in the availability of animals. For example, most Yshiro insist that a diminishing population of animals, if recognized, is not the result of the quantity of animals they hunt (or fish) but of the little return they obtain from trading their spoils from hunting (or fishing) activities. Some people who are knowledgeable about the connections described above argue that this amounts to infringements of reciprocity that anger the *bahlut* who withhold animals and fish. Other people who do not know those connections or who do not believe in *bahlut*, simply point out that since the Yshiro are paid little they have to hunt and fish more and thus the

³For similar (although not identical) Indigenous conceptions of networks of sociality transcending the society/nature divide see Feit (1995, 2001); Rival (1993); Descola and Palsson (1996).

animal population decreases. In any case, both these arguments consider the issue of the availability of animals by primarily focussing on human to human relations.

The Yshiro focus on human to human relations contrasts with the focus of attention of governmental regulations, that is, human to animals relations. In effect, the central focus of governmental regulations is the quantity of animals that can be hunted or fished, their size or 'age,' and the period during which they can be harvested. These regulations are based on 'scientific studies' of animal behaviour, patterns of reproduction, and size of populations. Once these 'facts' are established, the regulations attune human behaviour to them in order to achieve the goal of sustainability. In this way of conceiving of conservation and sustainability, 'scientific facts' apparently constitute the anchor point around which regulations are organized. However, as we will see later, this is not the case. For the moment let us return to Yshiro notions of 'conservation,' for the idea that the critical nexus between human behaviour and the availability of animals depends on human reciprocity informed the proposal UCINY elaborated to design the SHP with Prodechaco.

Yshiro 'Conservation'

Since the early 1990s, the growth of the fishing economy, the loosening of patronage networks, and the increasing unavailability of some animal species, has reduced illegal hunting to a minimum. Neither the incentives nor the constraints were there any longer to push Yshiro males to participate in an activity that left them little gain in exchange for risking their lives.⁴ Yet the Yshiro were aware that properly organized, hunting could be a very advantageous activity. Thus, when, in a trip to Asunción, one of the leaders heard rumours about a study showing that caiman, capibara and anaconda could be harvested for commercial purposes without affecting the survival of the species, he began to ask the Paraguayan Sub-secretary of Natural Resources (SSERNMA, by its Spanish acronym) for a copy. Eventually the leader was informed that, in effect, the study existed and that it determined 'scientifically' the number of individual specimens of caiman, capibara, and anaconda that could be harvested for their skin without endangering the reproduction of those species.

Once UCINY was created in September 1999, the leaders began to think how they could take advantage of this opportunity to help the communities, which, at that particular time, were facing grave difficulties. In effect, the dry season had started early that year, in April, and had lasted until November.⁵ By mid October the river's waters had already

⁴The Yshiro continued hunting *teju* (lizards) in the Paraguayan side.

⁵The rainy season usually goes from October to May, with its peak between December and February. The dry season goes from the end of May to the end of

sunk to very low levels making fishing very difficult. In contrast, the draught had forced animals to concentrate along the river and they could be spotted everywhere making a prospective legal hunting season appear very promising. Hunters would not need to enter into Brazilian territory and the presence of Paraguayan inspectors from Asunción would dissuade the Brazilian *forestales* from crossing over their jurisdiction.

When in December 1999, the leaders asked SSERNMA to discuss the opening of a legal hunting season, the state agency informed them that, in spite of the study mentioned above, it could not authorize the hunting because it lacked the resources to send inspectors to the area.⁶ The leaders then turned to Prodechaco and asked if this could be something in which this institution could help. Prodechaco's answer was affirmative. The co-directors said that this would be the first 'big' concrete project of UCINY made with Prodechaco's support. It was agreed that Prodechaco staff would begin conversations with the Paraguayan chapter of CITES and with the Paraguayan National Parks and Wildlife Direction (known as DPNVS, its acronym in Spanish) in order to organize the legal and technical aspects of the project, which was named the Sustainable Hunting Program. In meanwhile, UCINY would carry out consultations in the Yshiro communities in order to prepare a proposal of how the Yshiro would organize the activities with the goal of benefiting the communities and encouraging the Paraguayan government to repeat the experience every year. These consultations lasted throughout January 2000.

When the goals of the project were discussed in the community, the first idea that emerged was that they could not be achieved if the hunting season was organized according to the system of the old *patrones*.⁷ People pointed out that animals would begin

September.

⁶It must be pointed out that since Paraguay is a signatory of the Convention of International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES), the harvest of certain animal species must be certified by inspectors *in situ*, and every single skin for trade has to be assigned a numbered tag.

⁷As we saw in Chapter Two, the system of the old *patrones* operated on the basis of debt/bondage: *patrones* would give credit to the hunters, who in turn would pay back with skins priced very low. Thus, usually the hunter would end up the season with debts. Besides these characteristics, for our present discussion it is important to highlight that *patrones* were in charge of stockpiling the skins so that about once a month they could be picked up by an intermediary who would take the skins to the leather industries that processed and exported them. Thus, the chain went from hunter to patron (stockpiling), to intermediary (transportation), and to industry (processing and exporting). The biggest share of the profits in this chain was taken by those operating as brokers (*patrones* and

to hide or diminish like in the old times while the Yshiro would receive no benefits beyond filling their stomachs during the hunting season. Of course, at the basis of this evaluation of the circumstances was the idea that in order to ensure the availability of animals (i.e., the sustainability of the resource) the SHP had to focus on the relevant connections, that is, human to human relations. Thus, the suggestion was made, that UCINY should adopt the role of broker between the hunters and the 'leather industry.' In this position UCINY could address the critical points which, according to the perspective of most Yshiro, were the link between the availability of animals and reciprocity among humans.

The suggestion immediately raised questions about who should be included in the planning for the hunting season. Experienced hunters were the obvious beneficiaries but arguments were raised in relation to the responsibilities of UCINY towards all those who had supported it when it was a 'baby.' Should not UCINY reciprocate them? These arguments, in turn, opened the way to more general arguments about reciprocity and duties towards others. For example, some elders and *cultureros* pointed out to the role of the *bahlut* and the *konsaho* in assuring a good hunting season. Thus, elderly *konsaho* should be reciprocated even if they could not hunt. People asked how younger people, who had been most of their adult life working on the fishing economy, would benefit from the hunting season?⁸ And the many single mothers and widows who had no husbands to bring the benefits of the hunting season home? And the few Paraguayans living in the communities with their Yshiro partners? And the poor Paraguayans living in Olimpo and Bahia Negra who had friends in the communities and who had shared with them work tools and food in times of scarcity?

Although there were strong controversies, gradually a consensus was achieved that the benefits of the hunting season had to reach every single household in the Yshiro communities and even a few Paraguayan households outside the communities. To be able to do this UCINY had to obtain the exclusive right to act as a broker. In the plan that emerged from these discussions, UCINY would operate as intermediary, and hunter's cooperatives that were to be created in each community would allocate household quotas according to the idea that the limited benefits of the hunting season should reach every household. The cooperatives would also take care of stockpiling the skins and provide advances in food and other elements necessary for the hunt. The cooperatives would pay the highest possible price to the hunters and, if their associates so agreed, retain a margin

intermediaries). Sometimes the same person would play both roles. This is how, in a few years, many hunting *patrones*/intermediaries became landowners.

⁸By benefit people were referring not to the sharing of meat that always ensued from a hunting season but to the usually more restricted circulation of money and market goods connected with the selling of skins.

of profit to be reinvested in other productive activities. UCINY, in turn, would negotiate the skins with the industry retaining a percentage in order to repay the loan that Prodechaco would give to the communities to start the operations and in order to finance a future collective endeavour: a pan-Yshiro fishers' cooperative.

The Yshiro communities prepared a proposal for a hunting season that embodied an imagination-conservation in which the availability or sustainability of animals depends to a large extent on the status of reciprocity among humans. Thus, although it addressed the issue of conservation almost as a side effect, for the sake of our discussion I will refer to this imagination as 'Yshiro conservation.' For Yshiro conservation to work in the context of the SHP, exclusive rights to broker had to be granted to UCINY. Otherwise, the leaders feared, some hunters would be tempted by 'old *patrones*' to take advances in food and other items from the hunter's cooperatives and then sell the skins to the *patrones*. I soon realized, they knew very well the tricks of their old *patrones*.

The Sustainable Hunting Program (SHP)

In early February 2000, Prodechaco organized a 'training workshop' to start developing the Yshiro communities 'representational and managerial skills' including those that would be needed to carry out the SHP.⁹ During the meetings the leaders explained to Marcelo and Susana, the staff from Prodechaco, how they conceived the SHP. They did not go into all the details of why they required the exclusive rights to broker but Marcelo and Susana understood the idea that *patrones* and intermediaries exploited Yshiro hunters. In any case, Marcelo and Susana told the leaders that theirs was a good idea and that their preparations to organize the hunters cooperatives had to speed up because the DPNVS's resolution regulating the technical and legal aspects of the SHP was to be ready soon. At the end of the workshop a plane that came to pick up Prodechaco staff brought radios that had been requested by the leaders to keep the communities connected with each other and with the Prodechaco office in Asunción.

While I was in Karcha Bahlut, in March 19, 2000 we heard through the radio that old local *patrones* were talking to people in Diana and Ylhirta about hiring them for the upcoming hunting season. In March 22, we heard that a powerful *patron* and intermediary, Colonel Matanza, was coming on the weekly boat from Concepción with equipment and other consumable goods for the hunting season.¹⁰ According to the reports

⁹This is the meeting I evoked in the preface.

¹⁰Colonel Matanza is a pseudonym for a very well known character in the 'leather industry.' Ex-military officer and with connections reaching deep into the local and national Colorado party structures, Colonel Matanza is the quintessential 'entrepreneur' that emerged from the Stroessner regime. As such, he is involved in all kinds of legal and

that we received in Karcha Bahlut, Colonel Matanza was giving advances in the form of hunting equipment (ammunition, flashlights, drying salt and ropes) and food to his Yshiro 'employees' in each community where the boat made a stop in its way up north (see Map 3). Later on that day inspectors from CITES and DPNVS who had disembarked in Ylhirta talked to Candido Martinez, the General Coordinator of UCINY, by the radio. They informed him that, indeed, Colonel Matanza was only the first 'representative of the leather industry' (i.e., intermediary) who was travelling up north with the head inspectors from CITES and DPNVS. They also informed Candido that the hunting season had already started.

The leaders and I were astounded and immediately contacted Prodechaco. Marcelo, who was in charge of the project, was not sure what had happened but promised he would get a Ministerial order, to be transmitted through the military base in Bahia Negra to the inspectors from DPNVS and CITES, that hunting operations were to be withheld until the details of what had happened with the project had been clarified. Later we were able to reconstruct some of the events that led to this situation.

In late December 1999, soon after the Yshiro leaders asked Prodechaco to support UCINY in obtaining the permits for the hunting season, Marcelo, representing Prodechaco, and Aida, then the director of CITES-Paraguay, began official conversations with DPNVS in order to give shape to the legal and technical aspects of the SHP. When Prodechaco expressed its willingness to finance the costs of sending inspectors for the hunting season, the news quickly reached the leather industry, and following the previous usual procedures, it started to unofficially negotiate quotas and conditions with DPNVS. Having received news of the SHP, ARP the landowners association, told DPNVS that their associates were worried about the potential intrusion of hunters into their properties. Each one of these parties tried to instill into the program their own particular interest/imaginings.

Prodechaco, echoing in part the comments of Yshiro leaders, insisted on making sure that the Indigenous hunters should be paid a fair price for the skins and that the benefits of the program should be directed mostly to them. CITES wanted the simplest and most transparent mechanism to be in place in order to control that no illegally obtained hide was 'laundered' through the program.¹¹ Thus, CITES proposed restricting permission to hunt only to the Yshiro. In that way, there would be fewer people to control and the benefits of the program would be focussed on the Yshiro, as Prodechaco wanted. The leather industry wanted DPNVS to establish the fixed number of hides that each

illegal trade depending on what kind of 'merchandise' is available at the time.

¹¹Apparently CITES suspected that a shipment of caiman' skins illegally harvested was waiting along the Bolivian border near Bahia Negra to be smuggled into Paraguay for this purpose.

company could buy and export. In that way they would avoid competing between themselves when buying the hides and the prices would not inflate. ARP wanted assurances that intrusions on private properties would not be allowed. Finally, the old *patrones* and intermediaries, who also had heard the news and mobilized their own lobby, pressured DPNVS for a hunting season in the old style, open to whomever was able to benefit from it either hunting, stockpiling or brokering.

DPNVS drafted a resolution regulating the technical and legal aspects of the SHP in a way that, while attending in part to CITES and Prodechaco's concerns, misinterpreted UCINY's proposal and was clearly drafted to benefit the leather industry, their intermediaries and associated *patrones*. The resolution (DPNVS no. 19/00) promulgated several norms to be followed by the SHP. It established that the skins had to be paid a set minimum price; that the number of skins to be bought and exported by the leather companies was fixed; that rights to broker were open to all those who applied for permits; that hunting should be done with 'traditional weapons;' that hunting permits would only be given to residents of the Yshiro communities; and, that the hunting activities could only be carried out in Yshiro lands, government's lands, or in the lands of others who gave the Yshiro permission for this. In this way, DPNVS responded to the different interests, imaginations and relations of power between the parties involved in shaping the SHP. Yshiro conservation and the demand for exclusive rights to broker were dismissed in front of other more powerful interests/imaginations.

The ways in which the allocation of fixed quotas to the leather companies, and the 'freedom' to broker, connected to the interests/imaginations of the industry, intermediaries and *patrones* does not need much explanation. In effect, this interest/imagination can be summarized in three words: private economic profit. The SHP, as regulated by the resolution, would cater to this imagination. But what about the other interests/imaginations? According to a DNPVS staff member with whom I talked later, setting a minimum price for the hides and restricting hunting permits to residents in the Yshiro communities was aimed at circumscribing the benefits of the season to the Yshiro, as Prodechaco has requested. CITES was also happy with this restriction because a reduced number of hunters would ease the task of the inspectors. Moreover, this person told me, they all agreed that "non-indigenous hunters are very destructive." This idea, in turn, underlay the norm that hunting should be done with 'traditional weapons.' According to this person, the scientists from CITES had insisted that Indigenous peoples' traditional weapons were better suited for 'sustainable hunting.' Why? My interlocutor could not remember if the 'scientists' had given an explanation for this assertion. When I asked this person why the leather companies had been given the permit to only buy a set number of hides, making thus impossible for UCINY to put the skins to tender for higher bids, the answer was that DPNVS had to protect the smaller companies from bigger ones. That even the smallest company had far more financial resources than all the Yshiro communities together or that they employed less than 1% of the Yshiro population was not even considered as an argument. As Artigas said, the rich were laughing at the poor.

Sometimes the poor laugh back . . .

Marcelo was able to convince DPNVS and CITES that their inspectors should not allow the hunting season to begin until new instructions were received. In that way, UCINY would have an opportunity to send a delegation to Asunción and discuss what would happen with the program. A fortuitous incident was key in creating this opportunity. In early March 2000, the Paraguayan government replaced Aida, the biologist who occupied the position of director in CITES-Paraguay, with an agronomist. This change was part of a wider process in which the different political forces that formed the 'government of unity' were taking positions to face the upcoming election for a new vice-president late in the year 2000. Positions within state agencies provided leverage to 'request' contributions for campaigns. In any case, on March 10, 2000 a fax was received in Prodechaco from Professor Wayne King, the Deputy Chairman of the Crocodile Specialist Group of CITES international and a colleague of Aida, who raised concerns about the replacement of a biologist by an agronomist in the position of director of CITES-Paraguay.¹² King reminded Prodechaco that, in 1987, Paraguay had come close to being sanctioned by CITES-international with a total ban on trade of wildlife species because of the government involvement in illegal trade. With this antecedent, King implied, it was worrisome that a change in the direction of CITES was taking place in the context of an impending hunting program and strongly advised Prodechaco to be very careful with the program.

Marcelo used this fax as an argument to convince the European co-director of Prodechaco to withhold the delivery of the financial resources that CITES and DPNVS needed in order to keep the inspectors in Alto Paraguay, until things were clarified with UCINY. In general, the European members of Prodechaco agreed with him that the last thing the project needed was an ecological controversy to follow the Indigenous rights controversy they had barely overcome the previous September.¹³ The Paraguayan members of Prodechaco, as well as the personnel from CITES and DPNVS, were not entirely content with the decision but had no compelling arguments to deny UCINY a few days of time to discuss details of the program, especially since UCINY had not been informed in advance about the beginning of the hunting season.

As the leaders and I arrived to Asunción in early April 2000, we noticed that a newspaper article by journalist Roque Gonzales Vera put the spotlight on the change of directors in CITES. The journalist said that the new director was a 'political cheerleader' of an internal faction of the Colorado party and implied that he had been given the

¹²Fax dated March 10, 2000 from Prof. King to Prodechaco.

¹³Recall that Prodechaco's GOP had been given final approval in September 1999, against the opposition of the critical *indigenistas* and their European allies.

position in order to gather from the hunting program economic resources for the election campaign of this political faction's candidate (Newspaper *ABC Color*, April 2, 2000. p.51). At the time we were surprised to see the program to had become a theme in a newspaper but did not give further importance to it.

We went to a meeting with the sub-secretary of Natural Resources in order to explain why the resolution regulating the hunting season should conform to the original plan proposed by the Yshiro. The leaders insisted that it was not exclusive hunting rights that had been requested for UCINY but exclusive rights to broker. They explained that from this position UCINY could control who hunted and also could make sure the benefits of the SHP remained within the communities, even if Paraguayan hunters participated. The Sub-secretary promised that everything was going to be arranged as petitioned and ordered his personnel to begin the drafting of an amended resolution. As we came out of the meeting, we saw Colonel Matanza who was waiting to also see the Sub-secretary.

Later we found out that he had brought with him a letter from a *seccionalero*, the president of the Colorado Party local *seccional* (cell) from Bahia Negra. This person was an old *patron* who was associated with Matanza and he demanded that the DPNVS' inspector who had 'dared' to suspend the hunting operation that he was organizing be fired (see Newspaper *ABC Color* April 6, 2000. p. 24). Matanza also brought a list of 'independent Yshiro' who had signed up with this old *patron* because 'they wanted to work with him and not with UCINY.' In effect, Matanza and the old *patron* had obtained signatures from a group of Ebitoso from Diana in exchange for food. It must be noted that by April, after an extremely prolonged draught, the situation in the communities was critical. Matanza not only visited the sub-secretary but also successfully lobbied, as we later realized, the higher echelons in the Ministry of Agriculture in order to obtain a superior order giving the green light to the SHP and the regulations in the first resolution.¹⁴

In spite of his success, it seems that there was some lack of communication between the different units under the Ministry of Agriculture because the day following ours and Matanza's meeting with the Sub-secretary, DPNVS published a press release in which it refuted the doubts publicly cast over the SHP by Gonzales Vera's article which I mentioned above. In the press release, DPNVS mentioned that the SHP gave the Yshiro exclusive rights to hunt and broker (DPNVS April 3, 2000). Moreover, the director of DPNVS later invited Gonzales Vera to a meeting with the Yshiro delegation where he publicly promised that the resolution regulating the SHP was being re-drafted to accommodate the Yshiro's demands (Newspaper *ABC Color*, April 7, 2000. p.20). Yet a

¹⁴The Sub-Secretary of Natural Resources and DPNVS are under the mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture. Recall also that Prodechaco's Paraguayan staff had to report back to this Ministry.

few hours after the meeting, the leaders received, from a friend within the Ministry of Agriculture, a copy of an internal communication that spelled out a series of 'legal' reasons why the Yshiro's demands should not be granted (see memorandum A.J. SSERNMA 58/00). This friend told the Yshiro that DPNVS had used these reasons to draft a new resolution that did not grant UCINY exclusive rights to broker. This resolution, the friend said, was to be published the following day.

In a moment of inspiration, and with the connivance of Marcelo, the leaders decided to conceal this information, act as if everything was moving along normally, and convince Prodechaco's co-directors to publish a joint press release describing for the public the details of the SHP. The leaders argued that, given Gonzales Vera's article casting doubts on it, the SHP would benefit from making clear to the public the technical reasons that made this 'a good program.' The co-directors thought that this was a good idea. Thus, the leaders, Marcelo and I set out to draft the press release which repeated in several ways that the SHP was sustainable *because* UCINY would have exclusive rights to broker. The following morning, once the press release was published in the newspaper (see Newspaper *ABC Color*, April 6, 2000. p.6), the Yshiro delegation sent an official note to Prodechaco. The leaders said that, after reading a copy of the new amended resolution regulating the SHP (see DPNVS 74/00), it was not possible to assert, as Prodechaco and UCINY had publicly stated in the press release published that same day, that the SHP was sustainable. In effect, the only important change introduced to the original resolution was that non-indigenous hunters residing in the communities could also participate in the program but rights to broker were still open to whomever obtained the permits. Considering this, the note explained, UCINY felt it had to walk out of the program and requested Prodechaco to withdraw all financial support for the SHP. In addition, the note mentioned that UCINY will inform the national and international public about the dangerous situation for the environment that was developing in Alto Paraguay.¹⁵ Although the Paraguayan staff initially opposed it, they were convinced by their European colleagues that, given the assertions made in the joint press release, Prodechaco could do no more than to respond with a note assuring UCINY that it will not finance the SHP without UCINY's participation.¹⁶

The official response from Prodechaco to the leaders unleashed a frenzy of activity among industrialists, intermediaries, *patrones*, some of the Paraguayan staff of Prodechaco, and even high ranking government officials who knew that without UCINY there was no funding from Prodechaco, and without this funding there was no SHP. They offered bribes, 'private arrangements,' and even threatened the leaders with 'retaliations' if they did not accept the resolution as it was drafted. In response, every time something

¹⁵Letter from UCINY to Prodechaco dated April 6, 2000.

¹⁶Letter from Prodechaco to UCINY dated April 6, 2000.

of this kind happened the leaders informed the journalist from *ABC*, who got another very appealing story. In effect, what could be more appealing than a story involving the underdog, ecological Indians, who care for the environment, being harassed by the corrupt and careless Paraguayan entrepreneurs and politicians who have no care for the environment. Since he picked up the story, the journalist continued to highlight that the key issue in the controversy was that Paraguayans (non-indigenous peoples) destroy the environment and Indigenous peoples do not, (see Gonzales Vera's articles in newspaper *ABC Color* between April 6 and 14, 2000). At the moment neither the leaders nor I realized that this kind of support could backfire very quickly. But, let us not to move ahead of the events.

As the case acquired more public visibility, the head of the Ministry of Agriculture tried to curtail the controversy by passing a resolution ordering every project and unit within the Ministry to communicate with the press only through the Ministry's press office (see MAG Circular 1/00). However, the damage was done and the industrial lobby began to distance itself from the interests of their old intermediaries and *patrones*. They called the Yshiro delegation for a private meeting and told the leaders that as long as a reasonable price was agreed upon for the skins they did not care who did the brokering. Once the price was agreed upon, the industrial lobby turned against the old intermediaries and *patrones* and asked DNPVS to abide by the Yshiro's request for exclusive rights to broker.

People in the communities received the news with exultation. For the first time since the Whites began to control the area, the Yshiro had successfully faced not only a local *patron* but a whole lobby of them operating at the highest level in the capital city. The successful struggle undertaken by UCINY reinforced its reputation in the communities. Upon our return to Alto Paraguay we heard new words people made up to express their loyalty to UCINY, they began to call themselves *ucinieros* and *uciny'oso* (people of UCINY). The happiness that was palpable in the communities developed alongside the resentment of the old *patrones*, who had seen an opportunity to make money lost to their old employees. This resentment began to take visible forms when it combined with other more tangible interests.

... But the Poor's Laughter Hardly Lasts: Extending the Space of Death?

Because of the delays that the fight with the old *patrones'* lobby created, the hunter's cooperatives were not ready to start operating until mid May 2000. By this time the rainy season had brought floods, and the caimans, anacondas and capibaras dispersed making the hunt very difficult. Although there was only about a month and a half left of the hunting season, most Yshiro (excepting the most experienced hunters) were confident that in the time left UCINY could harvest the quotas allowed, repay Prodechaco's credit and make a profit to re-invest in the next project, the pan-Yshiro fishing cooperative.

Certainly expectations and hopes were high, especially after the first two weeks in

which the operations of the hunters cooperatives seemed to work without difficulties. The cooperatives were receiving skins at a steady pace and people were thrilled with the prices they were paying in the hunters cooperative stores, 50 and even 100% cheaper than in the Paraguayans' stores in Fuerte Olimpo and Bahia Negra. The cooperative store in Diana began to sell even to the poor Paraguayan population that was closer to the community. This was as much as some Paraguayan *patrones* were able to tolerate.

One day, as I entered a hardware store in Bahia Negra, the owner made a comment, half jokingly half seriously, about my working with the *avá* (savages in Guaraní) and getting my nose into other peoples' business, 'You can get your nose cut off, you know?' I played the fool, bought my stuff and left. Back in Diana, at Teresa's house I recounted what happened and Silvino, her eighteen-year-old son, told me that bullying of Yshiro individuals had been on the increase lately in Bahia Negra. Alfredo, a young Ebitoso man who was in charge of the hunters cooperative store in Diana told me that several Paraguayan costumers came at night to buy groceries so that the *patrones* would not see them. He even heard that there was the idea circulating among store owners in Bahia Negra of drafting a municipal resolution making the cooperative store in Diana illegal because it did not have a proper license or pay taxes. For whatever reason, the rumoured resolution as well as rumours about a planned attack and destruction by fire of the cooperative store, never crystalized. Yet the rumours reflected a climate of increased intolerance towards UCINY and the Yshiro in general. I was stunned when a notorious hunting patron who had become cattle-rancher told me without a twitch in his face that if the Yshiro were not stopped they would destroy the ecology! This comment could have been another excuse to criticize the Yshiro but it was one element more in an imagination that had started to emerge more clearly in Alto Paraguay with ominous repercussions for the Yshiro. This is an imagination of conservation which is not only exclusionary of the Yshiro's imaginations of conservation but also very conservative in the sense that tends to reinforce the power asymmetries already in place in the area.

'Conservative' Conservation

In 1996, a Spanish backed NGO, established a 'School of Ecology' (SoE) in Bahia Negra. At that time Don Bruno, then the leader of Karcha Bahlut, and I met the head of the NGO. It was a short conversation over lunch and did not go beyond expressions of mutual interest in doing something together. Three years later the staff from SoE showed up in Karcha Bahlut with a ready-made project financed by the City of Seville. The project consisted in organizing a fishing cooperative, training a group of young Yshiro in 'ecology,' and building a house where SoE would bring tourists.¹⁷ I will

¹⁷This was the NGO that financed the cooperative store of which I spoke in Chapter Three (see page 107).

not dwell on the many problems and misunderstandings that emerged between SoE and the communities of Karcha Bahlut and Diana regarding projects that the former financed.¹⁸ I am more interested in pointing out how the visions that SoE's staff had about the environment and its conservation contributed to shaping the formation of the conservative conservation of which I spoke above.

The staff from SoE were willing to negotiate some issues around the organization of the projects that they financed but showed little willingness to negotiate their views on ecology and the place of humans in it. For them, transforming nature was totally negative. "Agriculture is like a disease. I think we [humans] lost our track when we started to cultivate," one of them told me in a conversation. In a community meeting where SoE's staff were asked to explain what benefits the association between the community and their NGO would bring, one of them explained, "You have a lot of knowledge that we have lost and we have a lot of knowledge of what could happen to you in the future if you follow our steps." These perceptions of 'our culture' and 'their culture' led SoE's staff from enthusiasm to disappointment with the Yshiro as 'their culture' seemed to be nowhere to find it (see Povinelli 2001b).

In effect, as soon as SoE staff heard about the SHP they started to comment in Bahia Negra how disastrous this would be. The leaders of Diana invited them to a meeting where the details of the hunting program were being discussed. Although they participated in the meeting, their only question was whether the study that backed the decision to create the SHP was 'scientific' enough or not. In a few informal conversations I had with them I tried to 'translate' the Yshiro view of conservation and its focus on the relations between humans. I must not have been very eloquent or clear for they could not fathom that conservation may have a different 'critical nexus' than in the relations 'man/nature.' However, one of the staff, at least, seemed to have understood the general idea for he told me that conservation with a focus on human relations was a bit naive: "Some interests in the area are too powerful to expect that they could be thwarted," he

¹⁸A major controversy that terminated the involvement of Karcha Bahlut with SoE took place when this NGO demanded the leaders of the community sign a document in which they granted SoE the right to use the tourists house being built in the community for an unlimited time. It became clear that the strategy of SoE was to exchange a project for a permanent spot for their tourist business. The leaders and I tried to denounce this through a critical NGO who contacted the authorities of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (SAIC). The person from SAIC who responded to the Paraguayan NGO said that he knew the head of the Spanish NGO who backed the operation of SoE and asserted that this was a misunderstanding that could be easily solved. He concluded that there were more urgent problems to be addressed like the accelerated rhythm of clear-cutting in the area. This is a small example of how, and who, sets the priorities in the agenda of conservation.

said. Thus, without him necessarily being aware of it, the implication of his position was that conservation might only be achieved at the expense of those who are in a weaker position to defend their own views of it.

Given their permanent presence in Bahia Negra and their not very disguised hostility towards the SHP, it is reasonable to think that SoE's discourse of conservation was picked up by some interested parties. As a matter of fact, until the year 2000, SoE had not been successful in raising 'ecological concerns' among the townspeople in Bahia Negra. Moreover, up to that point in time, the different 'ecology teachers' that SoE brought to Bahia Negra were often harassed by the locals who perceived them as 'freaks' who came to spoil the few existing local 'industries' (i.e., fishing, hunting, forest clear-cutting for cattle ranching and for palm hearts). It is telling, then, that the first time I heard ecological concerns among people in Bahia Negra was when the SHP started. Indeed, I think that having some important people of Bahia Negra speaking of protecting the environment from the Yshiro, like the ex hunting-*patron* did, involves much more than growing ecological awareness. As I mentioned, many *patrones* in Alto Paraguay are starting joint ventures with Brazilian entrepreneurs in the tourist business. These *patrones* had the financial means to benefit from a switch between forms of natural resource use. Other *patrones*, as Modesto said (page 209), are not necessarily interested in shifting business but in grabbing the Yshiro's lands. And in general, most *patrones* are wary of Indigenous organizations that, as UCINY did, show they have the capacity to subvert the hierarchical order from which they benefit.

Subversive Imaginations

In July 2000, UCINY requested from DPNVS an extension of the hunting season that was to end the 20th of that month. The floods had made it increasingly difficult to find animals and the quotas were not yet filled. As the industrial lobby strongly supported the idea, DPNVS decided to grant the extension in spite of the reports from Prodechaco and CITES recommending that the SHP be terminated as originally planned. Among others, the main concern raised by these institutions was the intrusion of 'Indigenous and Paraguayan hunters' into private properties and into Brazilian territory. How did Paraguayan hunters enter into the picture? Why were the Yshiro entering into private properties and into Brazilian territory? To respond to these questions we must back-track our story and look into what the Yshiro demand for exclusive rights of broker meant for different actants shaping the SHP.

Given the fortuitous circumstances that the Yshiro leaders had used to their favour, 'Yshiro conservation' was relatively and momentarily empowered. In effect, when DPNVS finally accepted that only UCINY would be in charge of brokering operations 'Yshiro conservation' and its focus on reciprocity seemed to become the working frame of the SHP. Yet this was only apparent, for 'Yshiro conservation' was acceptable to the other actants involved in the SHP only to the extent that this

imagination did not disrupt their own interests/imaginings. Once the industrial lobby was assured of their economic profit and *patrones* and intermediaries were left out of the SHP, the other interests/imaginings to which Yshiro conservation had to respond were CITES' and Prodechaco's. As we have seen above, CITES was interested in having only the 'ecological Indians' participate in the SHP. Prodechaco, as we have seen in previous chapters, had as an overarching interest avoiding controversies with powerful landowners. And both Prodechaco and CITES operated within a frame in which the sanctity of private property and national jurisdictions were undiscussed. As we will see, Yshiro conservation was very disruptive of these interest/imaginings. In effect, Yshiro conservation involved much more than the issue of brokering, it involved a series of ideas that had an enormous potential to subvert not only the wider circulations that authorize dominant imaginings of conservation but also the subordinated position that the Yshiro occupy in the increasingly shared space where the *yrmo* and the world meet.

The first idea, expressed through Artigas' comment on the priority given to sport fishermen as an example of the rich laughing at the poor, implies that human beings needs for survival gives them equal priority to use natural resources. Very simple yet very 'subversive.' Artigas pointed out that, if people need to 'eat,' they should not be denied the means to do it. Implicit in his critique of governmental regulations was the position that this basic idea should be the Archimedean point around which 'natural resources use' should be organized. The second idea, expressed through the claims that single women, elders and poor Paraguayans be included in the hunting program, implies that responsible relations between humans make the equal priority to use natural resources for survival inclusive and not exclusive. All humans in need are recognized. The third idea is that non-human animals diminish or hide because of lack of attention to what constitutes responsible relations among humans; and, that their availability depends in large proportion on how those responsibilities between humans are honoured.

It is very clear that following these ideas to their consequences means that, to meet the goal of Yshiro conservation, private property, market values and even international jurisdictions must be subordinated to it. Yet the other actants participating in the SHP did not even suspect that these ideas were at the root of the original UCINY's proposal and its demands for exclusive rights to broker. On the contrary, since the Yshiro leaders went along with the amended resolution, it was assumed that the only issue was the right to broker and that, once this issue had been agreed upon, the Yshiro backed the dominant view of conservation and its (apparent) central focus on the human/animal nexus.

However, the people in the communities acted without regard for this assumed equivalence and tended to dismiss regulations that seemed totally out of touch with the central issue in 'Yshiro conservation,' that is, honouring relations of reciprocity among humans. In effect, the leaders found it difficult to explain to the community members the meaning of some norms such as the restrictions on the participation of Paraguayan hunters, the spatial limitation of the hunt to Yshiro lands, and the need for obtaining the

permission of private owners to hunt on their lands. In the end, they could just warn their community fellows that if these norms were not respected, the program could be suspended.

The Yshiro were respectful of what apparently was the central aim of the SHP, that is, to keep the number of animals harvested at 'sustainable levels.' However, they disregarded private property boundaries, national jurisdictions and gave participation to Paraguayan hunters. In effect, the hunters searched animals wherever they could find them and with the floods, these started to disperse. It was impossible to expect a profitable hunt only from the short stretch of land that the Yshiro have along the river (see Map 3). The Yshiro also found a way to work around the norm which restricted participation in the program only to residents in the communities. Those Yshiro hunters without a boat paired with a Paraguayan hunter who had one, or single mothers associated with Paraguayan hunters who would share the profits with the 'owner' of the quota. All these arrangements were done between people who had longtime relations of collaboration and who trusted each other. However, it was understood in a completely different way by other observers.

The Politics of 'Ecological Indians' and Its Backlash

I mentioned before that the journalist Gonzales Vera, had found with this 'case' a very appealing story. The interest this story had for him, and the editorial direction of his newspaper, was the 'ammunition' it provided to attack the governing faction of the Colorado Party. I mention this because I want to distinguish meaning from rhetoric in Gonzales Vera's articles. I am not interested in discussing why this journalist's articles were meant to criticize the government with whatever issue was at hand. What interests me are the rhetorical devices he used to sharpen his criticism. In effect, to make it sharp, the story he told had to be featured with commonly accessible and simple, contrasting images. Insofar as these images related to Indigenous peoples, they give us an idea of the tropes that circulate about Indigenous peoples in Paraguay. As I mentioned before, the image of the underdog, ecological Indians, opposed by the corrupt and careless Paraguayan hunters, entrepreneurs and politicians, is one of these tropes.

I also mentioned that the contrast between 'Indigenous = ecological attitudes' versus 'non-indigenous = anti-ecological attitudes,' was at the core of how this journalist framed his story. For example, in an attempt to give 'more strength' to Candido's words, Gonzales Vera transformed what the former had told him about how important it was for UCINY to obtain the exclusive rights to broker, into the idea that one of the critical issues for the Yshiro was that "Paraguayan hunters [were] predators" (see *ABC Color* April 10, 2000. P.14). As we have seen above, this was never the case. This is important to highlight, because while the Yshiro had mobilized behind an explicitly ethnic agenda, the dominant conception of this agenda was inclusive and not exclusive. The focus of this agenda was on extending relations of reciprocity and keep them balanced, not on denying

relations and mutual responsibilities on the basis of ethnic adscription. Yet neither I nor the leaders confronted the image of the Yshiro as 'ecologist Indians' that the journalist was portraying while the controversy with DPNVS, intermediaries and the old *patrones* was unfolding. At the moment, we all agreed that whatever 'story' was told that strengthened UCINY's capacity to force the amendments to the resolution was welcomed. This was a mistake because Gonzales Vera was echoing the ethnicist agenda that I mentioned before (see page 219) and which seeks to clearly distinguish struggles for Indigenous rights from other struggles within a given society. By denying connections between different social movements and their demands, the ethnicist agenda seeks to isolate Indigenous demands so that they do not disturb the wider *status quo*. This agenda seems to be lurking behind a series of articles this journalist wrote after visiting the Yshiro area during the execution of the SHP.

In the first of a series of articles which Gonzales Vera published after his return to Asunción, he criticized DNPVS for accepting the Yshiro's request to extend the hunting season (*ABC Color* July 30. P.18). He asserted that the SHP had turned into an ecological disaster mostly because the Yshiro had sold quotas to Paraguayans hunters.¹⁹ The articles that followed portrayed the hunting operations as 'depredation' and 'devastation' provoked by groups of Indigenous and non-indigenous hunters who entered into private properties and, worse, Brazilian territory, with the consequent risk of violent clashes with the policing forces there. He criticized the national government for letting the department of Alto Paraguay rely on hunting to boost its economy. Gonzales Vera wondered if a tourist would not pay more money to take pictures of the animals than what was being paid for their skins. He regretted the way in which the natural resources of the region were being destroyed and finally he argued that what was needed in the area was a policing force just like the Brazilian *forestales* (see newspaper *ABC Color* July 31 to August 6, 2000). In other words, if the Indians did not behave as 'natural born ecologists' as they were supposed to do, then perhaps coercing them into that behaviour by extending 'the space of death' of which I spoke before, was the solution.²⁰

The Yshiro and the Paraguayan hunters did not hunt a single individual specimen beyond the quota. Yet their disregard for private property and national jurisdictions was turned into 'depredation' and 'devastation.' This makes it clear that what appeared as the core of governmental and 'scientific' conservation, i.e. the nexus human/animals, was (and is) not isolated from the nexus humans/humans. In effect, by calling the Yshiro's

¹⁹ As I mentioned above, the sharing of quotas with Paraguayan hunters was done among people who trusted and knew each other and in no way involved simply 'selling and buying quotas' as the journalist asserted.

²⁰ Backlashes of ecological imagery used in relation to Indigenous peoples seems to have become widespread (see Conklin and Graham 1995).

disregard for private property and national jurisdictions, depredation and devastation, behaviours dangerous for the current socioeconomic and political order were turned into behaviours dangerous for the environment. Thus, instead of discussing why private property and national boundaries have come to constitute a limit for the Yshiro to access resources that they have used since time immemorial, staff from CITES and Prodechaco, in addition to the journalist, attacked the Yshiro for betraying the 'conservation' that supposedly they had implicitly accepted as representing their own perspectives. This shows that the SHP, in the view of these organizations was a milder version of the conservative conservation that I said had started to emerge more clearly in Alto Paraguay.

In effect, when Gonzales Vera proposed as a solution for the conservation of natural resources, the creation of a police force similar to the Brazilian *forestales*, he was repeating the 'solution' to the problem of conservation that some of SoE's staff and a few other influential people in Bahia Negra, including the commander of the military base, had mentioned to me. I would argue that a hegemonic coincidence was taking shape around the idea that conservation can be (corpo)realized at the expense of those who are too weak to defend their own imaginations of it. Prodechaco's and CITES' opposition to the extension of the hunting season on the basis of their concerns for the intrusions on private properties and the possibility of diplomatic incidents with Brazil, underline this hegemonic coincidence. In effect, besides UCINY, none of the intervening voices in these debates pointed out the need to undertake a serious binational negotiation on how the resources of the river area should be used (see newspaper *Noticias*, August 7, 2000. P.15).

The question of how to make the rights the Yshiro have to use the lands to which they have had access from 'time immemorial' effective was not addressed, although this is a right that they legally obtained when Paraguay signed the ILO convention 169. Of course, Yshiro conservation was not even recognized as existing. This is because the translation (articulation) between UCINY's proposal and the conservative conservation that other actants assumed in the SHP, involved a huge 'jump.' In effect, the gap between Yshiro conservation and 'conservative conservation' was in principle too wide to make a plausible claim of equivalence. Thus, when this gap became visible rather than an articulation between these imaginations what took place was the displacement of the former by the latter. These kinds of displacement often generate entrenched resistance which can only be contained by recourse to the threat or the effective use of violence.²¹ This is because without violence the alternative courses of action would imply a profound restructuring of relations of force in the area and of the very circulations that shape the way in which the *yrmo* and the world are entangled. Thus, although its foundations seem to be changing, the subordination of the Yshiro and the *yrmo* emerges as the most enduring feature of their entanglement with the Whites and the world. Central to this

²¹This gives us an idea of why short jumps and small transformations are key to establish stable equivalences.

repeated outcome of ongoing transformations is coercion.

Conclusions: The Coercion of Reality and the Reality of Coercion

Yshiro friends with whom I have been in contact lately tell me that a newly minted 'environmental lobby' from Alto Paraguay has, since 2000, dissuaded the authorities from attempting the hunting program again. It seems that fortuitous circumstances, skilfully used by different interests, are contributing to authorize an imagination of conservation in which the critical nexus appears to be in the relations between humans and non-humans animals, although, a central 'side effect' of it is to sustain the current socioeconomic and political order. In effect, SoE's ecologists, old *patrones* with new businesses, ecotourism and sportfishing operators, local authorities and prospective policing forces, all find in this 'conservative conservation' a good mediator that articulates their diverse interests and imaginations without risking the status quo.

The authorization of this imagination has gone hand in hand with its turning into the required point of passage through which a larger number of circulations/actants, than those that passed through 'Yshiro conservation,' get translated into each other. However, the asymmetries between this 'conservative conservation' and 'Yshiro conservation', or more generally between these actants and the Yshiro, are not reproduced automatically. They must be actively reproduced and protected from challenges. In effect, the authorization of the conservative conservation both legitimizes and necessitates violent coercion, or the threat of it, to sustain itself. The proposal of creating a police force similar to the Brazilian *forestales* precisely points to this. For those who propose it, it is clear that nothing but the threat of coercion can compel the Yshiro to respect the governmental regulations based on conservative conservation.

Supposedly, and according to neoliberal governmentality, there should be no use of coercion to govern the Yshiro, since their autonomy should be respected and they should take part in their own government through their own choices. However, the restriction on the use of coercion applies as long as the Yshiro operate within the limits of what is reasonable and conceivable (see Povinelli 2001a); and these limits are defined by what is 'real' and true, that is, by authorized imaginations.

From my analytical perspective, conservative conservation has become an authorized imagination because a large number of actants/circulations have it as a mediator. Yet from the perspective of modern dualism, conservative conservation (should) have acquired its dominance because it derives from accurate representations of reality. Since the behaviours prompted by Yshiro conservation do not respond to this reality, they are understood as being based at best in error, at worst in bad faith. Thus, today as almost a hundred years ago Yshiro imaginations of themselves and the *yrmo* are disregarded as unconceivable. The behaviours that they prompt are taken to be anomalies which must be subjected to the disciplining power of coercion. In this way, coercion

continues to be the 'brutal epistemological guarantee' (see page 60) that the reality in which the Yshiro are forced to live will remain the same. But also as a hundred years ago, coercion is just an element composing a hegemonic coincidence which finds its point of articulation in certain authorized imaginations. It is precisely in the interplay between these elements where a key generative principle of the modern regime of truth resides.

While an hegemonic coincidence is necessarily the product of the interplay between authorized imaginations (or reality) and coercion, the relations between these terms are not exactly symmetrical, that is, they do not constitute each other in the same degree. Coercion is just one circulation making up reality. Indeed, without the mobilizing power of reality, it is difficult for coercion to take shape. No repressive system, no dictator makes use of coercion without reference to a certain reality to justify it, even when such reality may be illusory for other mortals. Reality, in contrast, does not always need coercion in its making, although it does need it to remain identical to itself. In effect, as we have seen throughout this part of the thesis, reality gets produced through the incessant processes by which actants establish linkages with other actants in order to gain further (corpo)reality. This is a necessary process for being to come out of indistinction and is inscribed as an ontological condition, in other words it does not need to be created to occur. In contrast, to sustain being identical to itself does requires coercion in the sense that a direction and a limit is imposed on the processes of the perpetual generation of being. Yet this does not justify coercion because it is the value we give to the current state of being or reality that makes protecting it from change justifiable or not. Nevertheless, as long as reality is assumed to be out there, as the modern regime of truth does, coercion can be seen as naturally flowing from it rather than as shielding it from change. In this way, the value of reality or the current state of being is sequestered from discussion. This is something that neoliberal governmentality continues to do as previous forms of modern governmentality did.

In Chapter Five I argued that neoliberal governmentality is the network of discourses and practices which have neoliberal postulates (or the neoliberal model) as a common point of reference. Throughout Part three I have shown how these linkages are actively produced through translations/articulations that form a chain through which the circulation-neoliberal governmentality flows. This circulation acquires (corpo)reality through the micro-operations and struggles waged in the diverse fields which it traverses. Yet this (corpo)reality is, on a closer look, the product of the multiple forms neoliberal governmentality adopts. In my discussion I analysed neoliberal governmentality in the form of the circulation-development. In turn, I analysed this circulation as it changed its forms of inscription, from policy frameworks to a project to an institution to an Indigenous organization to a very different (and potentially subversive) project. Yet I also showed that at each point of this chain of transformations, the inscriptions/actants being articulated emerged from the intersection of the circulation-development and other circulations. In this sense, different local forms of neoliberalism are only secondarily a function of geographical differences (see Chase 2002) for, as I said, neoliberalism appears

under different forms primarily because it is a circulation composed by a multiplicity of actants/imaginations.

Neoliberal governmentality gains (corpo)reality if the actants/imaginations that are added or come to join its circulation are rationalized in terms of the neoliberal postulates or at least do not challenge them. As we saw throughout this part of the thesis, at each point of articulation, or (what is the same) each time that a new actant/mediator was added to or joined the circulation-development, there were struggles to 'streamline' the new addition to the present chain of equivalences. In this way, the circulation-development kept extending by more or less forcing new actants to fit. This was more clearly evident in Prodechaco's use of indirect interventions to shape Indigenous organizations as mediators. It was expected that these mediators would connect the project with the 'real situation of Indigenous peoples' and, at the same time, would fit into the circulation-development without altering it. These were the goals that emerged from Prodechaco's GOP.

Prodechaco's goals came to meet the Yshiro leaders' own goals of creating a pan-Yshiro organization. As I indicated, this idea had been circulating among the Yshiro for a few years before Prodechaco became an institution, and it grew from the Yshiro's own imaginations of themselves and their situation. Yet differences between these imaginations had constituted an obstacle for the realization of the pan-Yshiro organization. Prodechaco and its promises of concrete projects appeared as an actant that could be used to articulate Yshiro imaginations. Using Prodechaco in this way, the Yshiro leaders created the first link of the circulation-UCINY. Then they harnessed other actants (INDI and critical *indigenistas*) as mediators to give UCINY further (corpo)reality.

UCINY became a mediator in the circulation-development as much as the circulation-development became a mediator of the circulation-UCINY. Yet precisely because UCINY was composed by several imaginations/circulations, as any actant/imagination is, it contained the potential to subvert the circulation-development and neoliberal governmentality. As we saw, eventually the subversive potential of those other imaginations making up UCINY became visible. However, the subversive potential of Yshiro imaginations was quickly contained by the threat of coercion justified on the basis of the more powerful actants' authorized imaginations according to which Yshiro imaginations were inconceivable.

The dynamics between coercion and authorized imaginations seems to bring us back to where we were in the late 19th century when the direction that the Whites wanted to give to the entanglement between the *yrmo* and the world began to be imposed on the Yshiro. Nothing has changed, then? Yes and no. The interplay between coercion and authorized imaginations is still a key principle of the modern regime of truth. Yet the route that connects one to the other is more circuitous than before. In the 19th century, the imagination-Indians already precluded the participation of the Indians in its authorization: being imagined as quasi-objects, Indians could not define themselves. In contrast, non-indigenous governmental institutions nowadays need to involve Indigenous peoples in

their own processes of authorizing their imagination-Indigenous peoples. It is true, as we have seen that several technologies are available to frame this participation and shield dominant imaginations from being transformed in unwanted ways. Nevertheless, the more circuitous the connection between coercion and authorized imaginations, the more opportunities there exist to transform those imaginations/circulations by adding to them new subversive imaginations before coercion can protect them. Indeed, that the Yshiro could momentarily introduce their subversive imaginations into the SHP before they were controlled through the threat of coercion, speaks to this distance between coercion and authorized imaginations. This distance constitutes a space of hope.

CONCLUSIONS: AN INVITATION

Y me hablaron de futuros/fraternales, solidarios,
 Donde todo lo falsario/ acabaría en el pilón.
 Y ahora que se cae el muro/ya no somos tan iguales
 Tanto tienes, tanto vales /¡Viva la revolución!
 Reivindico el espejismo/de intentar ser uno mismo,
 Ese viaje hacia la nada/que consiste en la certeza
 De encontrar en tu mirada/la belleza . . .¹

Luis Eduardo Auté - La
 Belleza. (Song recorded in
Mano a Mano, RCA 1993)

I have told my story of the present by highlighting discontinuities and continuities with a previous moment. The threads that I have followed between one and the other have been imaginations, governmentalities and ontologies. Investigating the transformations of these 'threads' and their mutual correlations was part of three of the four purposes that I laid down for this work in the Introduction. In order to recapitulate these transformations let me begin with a somewhat static picture of the two moments within which I have framed my analysis.

My starting point was the correlation between a set of imaginations (Indians, nature and development); a governmentality characterized by the logic of restricted governance; and the modern ontology characterized by the stark distinction between nature and society and the mediating role that the dynamic principle of development plays between them.² I chose this set of imaginations because they were central to both the form

¹And they talked about a future/with solidarity and fraternity/where all the false things/would end up in a bonfire/And now, when the wall is falling,/we are no longer that equal./How much you have is how much you are worth/Long live the revolution!/I claim the value of a mirage:/attempting to be oneself,/which is a trip to nowhere/based on the certainty/that in your gaze is /the beauty . . .

²Recall that in my use the concept of imaginations, as well as synonymous terms such as actant, circulation and mediators, is meant to avoid Cartesian dichotomies between the material and the ideational, between the object and subject and the like. In

of governmentality expressed in the agendas of *laissez-faire* progress and state-driven development and the modern ontology. I argued that confidence in the (ontological) developmental principle of progress and the certainty claimed by modern knowledge (based on Cartesian dualism) were thoroughly entangled with the ways in which Indians and nature were imagined and treated by the Whites as building blocks of progress in the Chaco. In effect, Indians and nature were clearly assigned to the Cartesian pole of objects and their autonomy in relation to 'modern man' was of little or no moral concern to 'him.' These imaginations encountered the Yshiro own imaginations of themselves, the Whites and the *yrmo* and, while for a brief period of time they stood on a relatively symmetrical position vis a vis each other, eventually the Yshiro and their imaginations were subordinated by the Whites. 'Pedagogic violence' as a governmental methodology was required in order to ensure this outcome. In effect, pedagogic violence was central both in authorizing the imagination-Indians and in attempting to fulfill the goal of modern governmentality, that is, to perform modernity by making 'the same' out of 'others,' through development. I argued that a point of rupture between this moment and the present moment was signalled by governmental recognition, through laws and covenants, that transformation of the 'other' into 'the same' was no longer a legitimate endeavour, especially if doing this required the use of any kind of violence.

In the present moment, a new set of imaginations (Indigenous peoples, environment and sustainability/risk) have become authorized in governmental circles. These imaginations, and the governmental practices they prompt, correspond with a governmentality emerged from the conditions of expanded governance. Indians and nature (transformed into Indigenous peoples and the environment) are not any longer outside of the problematic of government concerned with the autonomy of the objects of government; now they both have come to occupy a place alongside society in this problematic. Correspondingly with this erasure of the distinction between nature and society (or object/subject) an ontology of reflexive modernity arises. This ontology is characterized by the dynamic between two levels: one in which nature and society have become indistinguishable and uncertainty is unavoidable; and another (meta level) in which Cartesian dualism and certainty are still operative. I argued that conceiving the present moment as characterized by ontological uncertainty has led experts to search for procedural answers to 'the moral question' (i.e., what is the right thing to do?). I also argued that procedural answers such as market dynamics or cosmopolitan democracy retain a ghostly notion of a 'reality out there' that embodies Cartesian dualism and its claims of certainty. Procedural answers translated into governmental practices become

this sense, imaginations occupy the middle mixed ground between what from a modern perspective appears as separate and pure domains. The concept of governmentality, in turn, refers to the way of thinking and organizing the task of government: who can govern, what or who is governed; what governing is; and how this task can be performed.

technologies of government which I called indirect interventions, that is, interventions that appear as non-interventions.

These kinds of interventions involve engaging the participation of the objects of government in their own government. Yet this participation is framed within the parameters established by the governing subject. I argued that the current dominant parameters used by governments and development institutions are patterned after market dynamics. In other words, the dominant form that expanded governance takes nowadays is rationalized in terms of neoliberal postulates, hence, the label neoliberal governmentality. These postulates imply that the goal of neoliberal governmentality is to perform a market society. One of the ways in which this goal is pursued is by attempting to transform the 'other' into what I now would call a 'tamed other' through sustainable development promoted by governments and development institutions. A 'tamed other' is an 'other' who will govern her/himself by making choices that will not alter the wider frame set up by the governing subject. In order to achieve its goal of producing 'tamed others,' neoliberal governmentality supplements indirect interventions with coercion. Thus, I concluded that in spite of the differences between the present moment and the early moment in which the *yrimo* and the world became entangled, violence or the threat of it continues to be a fundamental feature of how this entanglement unfolds.

With the starting point and the concluding point of my story now in view, let me stress that the main focus of the story has been the process of transformation from one moment to the next. In this sense, I have tried to show, on the one hand, the conditions of the possibility of interrelated imaginations, governmentalities and ontologies, and, on the other hand, how these interrelated phenomena in practice created the conditions of possibility for other sets of interrelated imaginations, governmentalities and ontologies. I presented my story as a chain of events which I analysed by shifting focuses in spatial terms and in terms of the level of details.

I started in Part I with a focus on Paraguay, showing how the asymmetrical entanglement between the *yrimo* and the world, implicit in the imposition of modern governmentality through development, and the struggles generated around it, produced new actants/imaginations in the form of values, desires, forms of authority, circulation of goods, livelihood and the like. At this point I only provided a general overview of how, throughout the little more than a hundred years of connection between the *yrimo* and the world, these processes took place.

In Part II, I progressively moved from spatially circumscribed focus to a wider focus involving translocal and transnational dimensions of the events under analysis. Here, I deepened the analysis, and taking as a reference point moral logics, I 'travelled through' the complex networks from which imaginations, governmentalities and ontologies co-emerge and acquire (corpo)reality. I started by focussing on a situation in which the Ebitoso were struggling with one of those emerging imaginations: the situated moralities arising from the intersection of Cartesian and relational moral logics as exemplified by the events surrounding the management of the cooperative store in

Ynishta. Then I moved to show how new moral imaginations associated with Indigenous peoples, environment and sustainability prompted actants such as critical *indigenistas* to join the struggles around the products of state-driven development and its integrationist agenda. I described how, as international networks of activists joined in these struggles, the new moral imaginations were pushed into nodal points of governmental decision-making. Yet in this very same process those imaginations were translated or rationalized in terms of neoliberal postulates, joining, thus, the constellation of practices and discourses that shape neoliberal governmentality. Throughout this Part, I underscored that the modern regime of truth, expressed through the Cartesian moral logic, plays a fundamental role in shaping imaginations; and that this is particularly the case with imaginations that become authorized through networks of expertise connected to governmental circles

In Part III, I progressively moved back to a narrower and deeper focus. Thus, as I described how neoliberal governmentality is deployed throughout heterogeneous networks that extend across national borders, I paid attention to the minute detail of how actants/imaginings/circulations become (corpo)real. I showed that this involves struggles over the conditions in which actants will become translated/articulated into/with each other. I argued that neoliberal governmentality changes forms as it circulates and new mediators/circulations become part of it. I described how neoliberal governmentality in the form of a circulation-development traverses different fields of contention in Europe and Paraguay, adopting at each step a different form. One of these forms was a development project-come-institution, Prodechaco. I showed that, in order to gain (corpo)reality, neoliberal governmentality, inscribed in an actant such as Prodechaco, attempted to make new actants/imaginings out of the actant/imaginings-Indigenous peoples. By discussing how this was attempted through the use of indirect interventions I showed in more detail how participation (in this case of Indigenous peoples) is framed or rationalized within the parameters established by neoliberal postulates. However, by showing the whole chain of links between Indigenous participation and neoliberal postulates I stressed the importance of mediations and translations to understanding neoliberal governmentality as a set of relations and not as an entity. At a more general level, I showed that Prodechaco intended to 'form' Indigenous communities as mediators in order that they would give to it (and indirectly to the neoliberal model) further (corpo)reality. These attempts at making Indigenous communities mediators, provided the Yshiro a space of negotiations where they could try gaining more control of the way in which the world and the *yrimo* mingle with each other. Yet in practice when these spaces for negotiation threaten certain (corpo)realities they are rapidly contained by the systematic threat or use of coercion.

To some extent, the minute analysis in Part III can be used to shed light back on how the early moment of interconnection between the *yrimo* and the world took place. But more importantly it shed lights on how new imaginations are being brought into being right now. In this sense, the analysis provides a window through which one can see how

the present moment is being produced in the midst of the struggles waged around the deployment of neoliberal governmentality. I have highlighted a critical continuity with the previous moment: the relevance that the modern regime of truth has in shaping our present reality. The continuity of this regime of truth is more clearly evidenced in the role that the Cartesian moral logic still has in dominant forms of governmentality. In effect, I have shown that regardless of the experts who claim that we now operate on the basis of an uncertain reality (i.e., Beck and to some extent Hayek), the view that there is a reality out there that can be known with certainty and that can provide us with answers to the unsettling question of what is the right thing to do, is still central to governmental (and other) practices. This perspective also continues to ground the logic that converts reality-out-there into a justification to exercise coercion. In this sense I would say that the drive towards closure implicit in the Cartesian moral logic has as a corollary the continuing denial of otherness and of other realities.

I think that by highlighting the continuities and the differences in the operation of the modern regime of truth one can visualize both threats to and opportunities for transformation. For example, by showing how neoliberal governmentality arose from struggles against state-driven development, I underscored the mutual implication of dominant governmentalities and struggles against it. I see this as a cautionary note: informing political action with knowledge produced under the modern regime of truth only generates more insidious mechanisms by which this regime of truth is redeployed and reproduced. However, these struggles have also made evident the loopholes in the modern regime of truth and have contributed to its being questioned and its erosion. Indeed, I believe that these struggles have created conditions for establishing other forms of articulations. This is the reason why I situated myself and my work in the middle of my narrative. In this way I intended to convey the idea that although the result of struggles are hardly expected, struggles are necessary to bring about possibilities. Yes, the struggles against state-driven development led to neoliberal governmentality, but they also created a relative opening that might be the opportunity to radically transform the modern regime of truth.

This point brings me to the fourth purpose I had mentioned in the Introduction: exercising a form of critique which by not being based on the modern ontology, avoids reproducing the conditions that sustain the dominant governmental rationality. Let me highlight why this purpose of my work is relevant to the issues analysed. In effect, it could be argued that a highly abstract disquisition like this dissertation has little import on the processes by which the Yshiro are constantly pushed to a subordinated position in relation to non-indigenous peoples, and more generally on how subordination is produced and reproduced. Yet throughout my analysis I have shown that this is not the case. In effect, I have more or less explicitly highlighted both connections that go from so called abstract issues (such as ontologies) to so called concrete issues (such as a sustainable hunting program), and connections that link seemingly unconnected 'places' such as the office of an expert in Brussels, Seville or Munich and the cooperative store of Ynishta.

Through the temporal progression of my story and the changes of focus that I mentioned above, I have tried to give the reader a sense of these diverse connections, extending across space, time and what we usually take to be levels of abstraction. In this way I hope to have conveyed the meaning I intended when I spoke of treating 'realities' or universes as networks of actants. If I have succeeded in this, the reader will understand that struggles to perform a 'reality' that differs from the one being performed by the dominant governmentality (a reality in which the *yrmo* and the world are thoroughly yet asymmetrically interconnected) must be waged and can be waged at any point of this network. It is in this sense that I said in the Introduction that the writing of this ethnography must be understood as being part and parcel of the struggles it describes. In effect, in Part III, I discussed how the Yshiro went about trying to perform a different reality by articulating themselves, and the *yrmo*, with the circulation-development. Yet the reality being extended and corporealized by neoliberal governmentality set a limit to this attempt; mainly by means of the threat of coercion.

I argued that coercion is fundamental to shield certain (corpo)realities from changes. Seeing the dynamics between reality and coercion in this way means that, in order to transform a reality full of inequalities, one of the tasks is to deactivate the coercion that protects it. Yet to do this, reality must be transformed first so that its mobilizing power cannot be used to activate coercion. At first sight this might appear as an impossible task for there is no obvious entry point into what looks like a closed mechanism. However, the Yshiro experience with UCINY and the SHP shows that entry points abound because, in their search for stability, actants are permanently expanding their mutual articulations and thus creating reality all the time. Each new articulation opens a window of uncertainty that can be fruitfully used to stabilize or (corpo)realize imaginations that, while potentially subversive, do not prompt the immediate intervention of coercion. For this the short jumps and small transformations of translations are needed because they allow for articulations that do not necessarily appear very threatening to the *status quo*. For example, as long as 'Yshiro conservation' did not show its subversive potential, it was possible for this imagination to occupy the position of mediator of different circulations (Prodechaco, CITES, industrialists, and the like). I claim that if time and resources had allowed it, a larger number of circulations (academic expertise, political parties and different strands of ecologism to mention some examples) could have been brought to pass through this mediator. Thus, when the subversive aspects of this imagination would have become visible, it would have been more difficult to label it unrealistic. Consequently, the use of coercion would have appeared as less reasonable.

Thus, translations (i.e., articulating operations) provide an opening for the hope of changing reality. Here, I have tried to make this ethnography a mediator that articulates some imaginations of Yshiro intellectuals with other imaginations (academic theories for example) that shape the circulation-expert knowledge. I have tried to do this in ways that do not suppress these Yshiro imaginations. Rather, enticed by their apparent possibilities, I have tried to make a little jump that would take me to a 'place' located between where I

was and where those Yshiro intellectuals were. Yet in this translation there is no pretense that my imagination (i.e., this ethnography) is their imaginations. This 'place' is just a third term that mediates and approaches us but does not obliterate our (and our imaginations) uniqueness. My hope is that, if this effort resonates with other similar efforts, other circulations, other chains of translations might be formed, and the imaginations that compose neoliberal governmentality, and more generally the modern regime of truth, will start to lose (corpo)reality and the coercion that guards the present state of affairs will be harder to mobilize, creating thus the space for other realities to emerge.

The present moment is full of threats and opportunities. As some of my Yshiro intellectual partners would say, the kind of reality in which we can live will depend on how we use *eiwo* to sort out one from the others. And, as I have tried to show throughout this work, sorting these out cannot be done on the basis of isolating entities and denying connections. As Latour (1993:41-42) says, non-moderns focus the outmost care on the web of relations from which entities arise so that no undesired outcomes result from tinkering with those relations. We must be very careful of how we go about changing the web of connections that perform a reality that certainly needs to be transformed. The worst that we could do is to be blind to the connections between 'us' and this reality. And this is particularly applicable to 'experts.' Paraphrasing Bourdieu (1999:55), "to have a chance to think [the activity of government], which still thinks itself through those who attempt to think it, it is imperative to submit to radical questioning all the presuppositions inscribed in the reality to be thought and in the very thought of the analysts." Intending to change reality as if it were 'out there,' can only produce a different arrangement of the same regime of truth. Neoliberalism might be on the wane as Ulrich Beck (1999:9) has argued, yet the return of right wing imaginations signals that whatever is emerging from it might be terrifying. If instead of new forms of asymmetries, the hopeful opportunities for more symmetrical relations are to become realized, we will have to be very careful about how we struggle with the present reality.

Telling this story is part of mine and other peoples struggles with the present state of the network/reality. This story narrates the genealogy of the present moment. By including in this genealogy the conditions that made possible my telling of it, I have situated myself within this story. This means that there is no outside from which I am looking at 'reality.' This means that I cannot even pretend to have described a reality that is not shaped by my interests, purposes and morality. This means that if I have to defend the 'authority' of my story I have to present not only the research protocols I followed and the academic credentials I gained through the usual academic rites of passage but also the interests, purposes and morality that guided me. Ultimately, this means that I cannot present a reality out there to give closure to this genealogy. This genealogy will necessarily remain open-ended. This, creates the opportunity for more frank negotiations of realities. This does not mean that agreements will be the final result but that unstable, temporary and highly contextual consensus (and not impositions) might emerge.

* * *

In 1989, a film crew from Spain was visiting the community of Wututa. The people from ACIP had brought them to film the initiation ritual being performed by the traditionalist Ebitoso and the Tomaraho. Among the crew there was a man with deep blue eyes whom Elena, the then fifteen-year old sister of Don Bruno Barras, kept observing intently. Curious at her behaviour the man asked Elena: 'Why are you looking at me like that?' Elena responded: 'I wonder in what colour you see things.' 'The same colours as you see them,' he answered. Elena then retorted: 'How do you know of what colour I see things?'³

Assuming ontological uncertainty and the partiality of our experience of the world can be a step towards shedding off the modern regime of truth only to the extent that this assumption is not kidnapped by the 'ghost of modernity' in the form of its reintroduction in more subtle ways. Assuming that reality is in perpetual flow, that it is in a permanent state of becoming in which distinction-making is central, makes the otherness of other gazes unique and necessary. With the help of other peoples' gazes, I was able to suspect other possible realities and from this grew the story I have told. For sure this story would have been different if I had engaged more deeply with the desires, purposes and situated moralities of Yshiro women, or Pentecostals, or the Tomaraho, or other scholars. Yet at this point in time, and from the limits of my gaze this is my statement of how I see and act in the present moment. This is a political and moral statement which I am not shy to make. This is because in telling this story I have not concealed my political purposes, I have not obscured my moral standing, and fundamentally I have not assumed that this story is a representation of a reality out there. Thus, I offer this story as an invitation for others to narrate 'in what colour they see the world.' This is an invitation to produce other statements or imaginations which might articulate with mine. In this way, I hope we can weave the tight web of a different reality.

³Don Clemente, Elena's father told me about this incident in 1996, recalling that those who were present had celebrated Elena's sharp wit. In 1999, I found that critical *indigenista* Ticio Escobar had been present and had also found the incident memorable. He recorded it in his field notes and later included the fragment on one of his books (see Escobar 1999:77).

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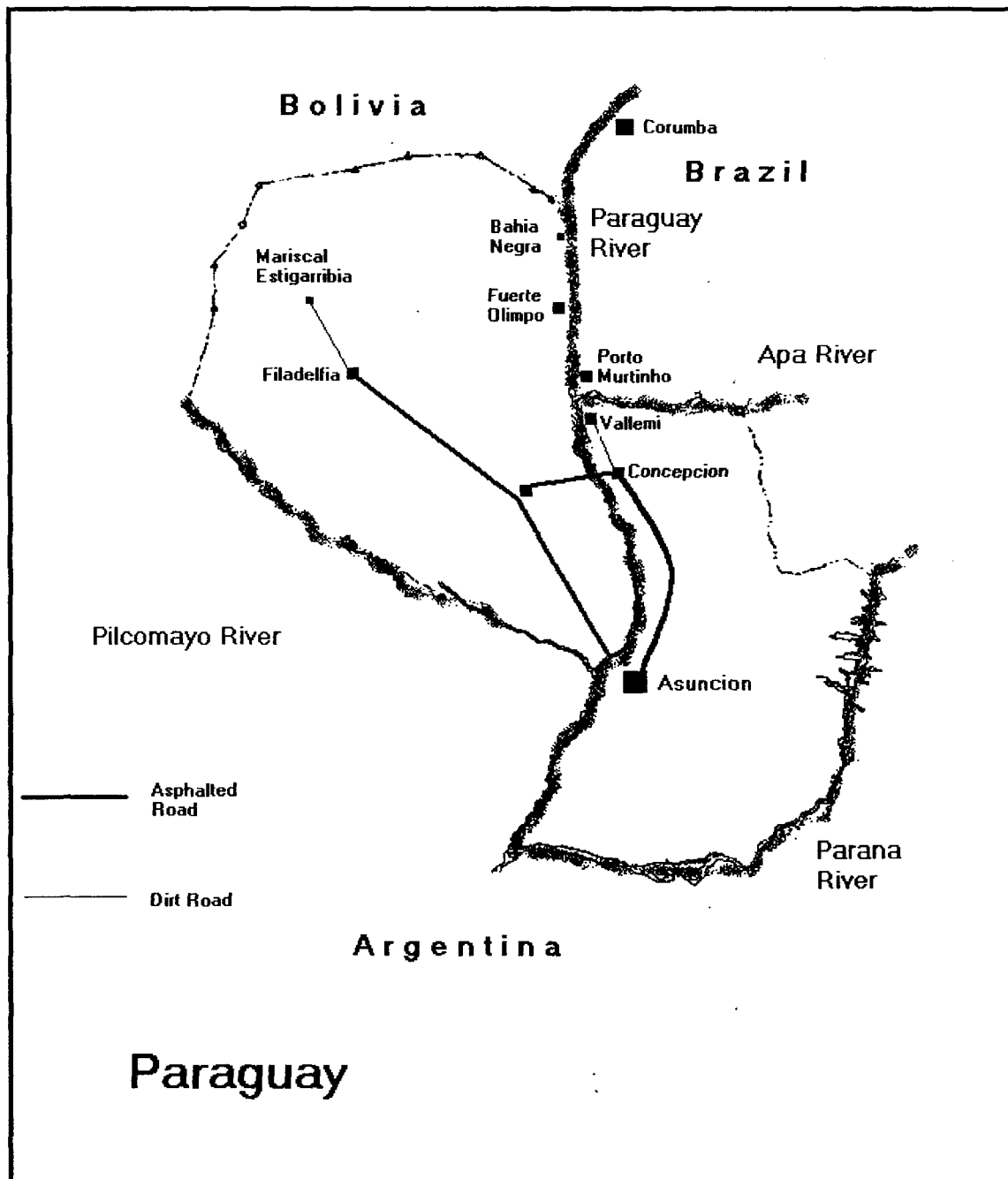
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MAPS

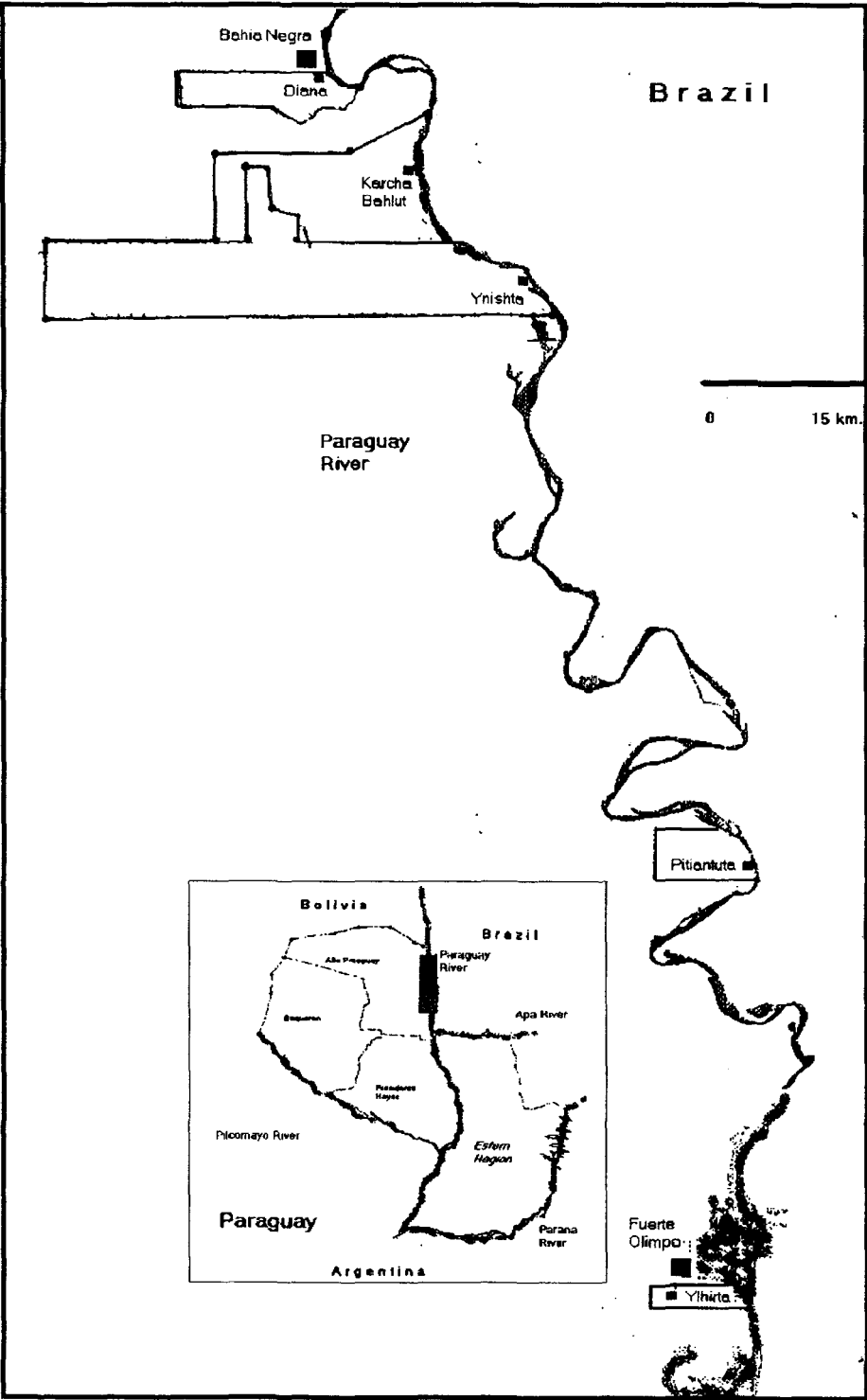


Map 1: Gran Chaco Americano

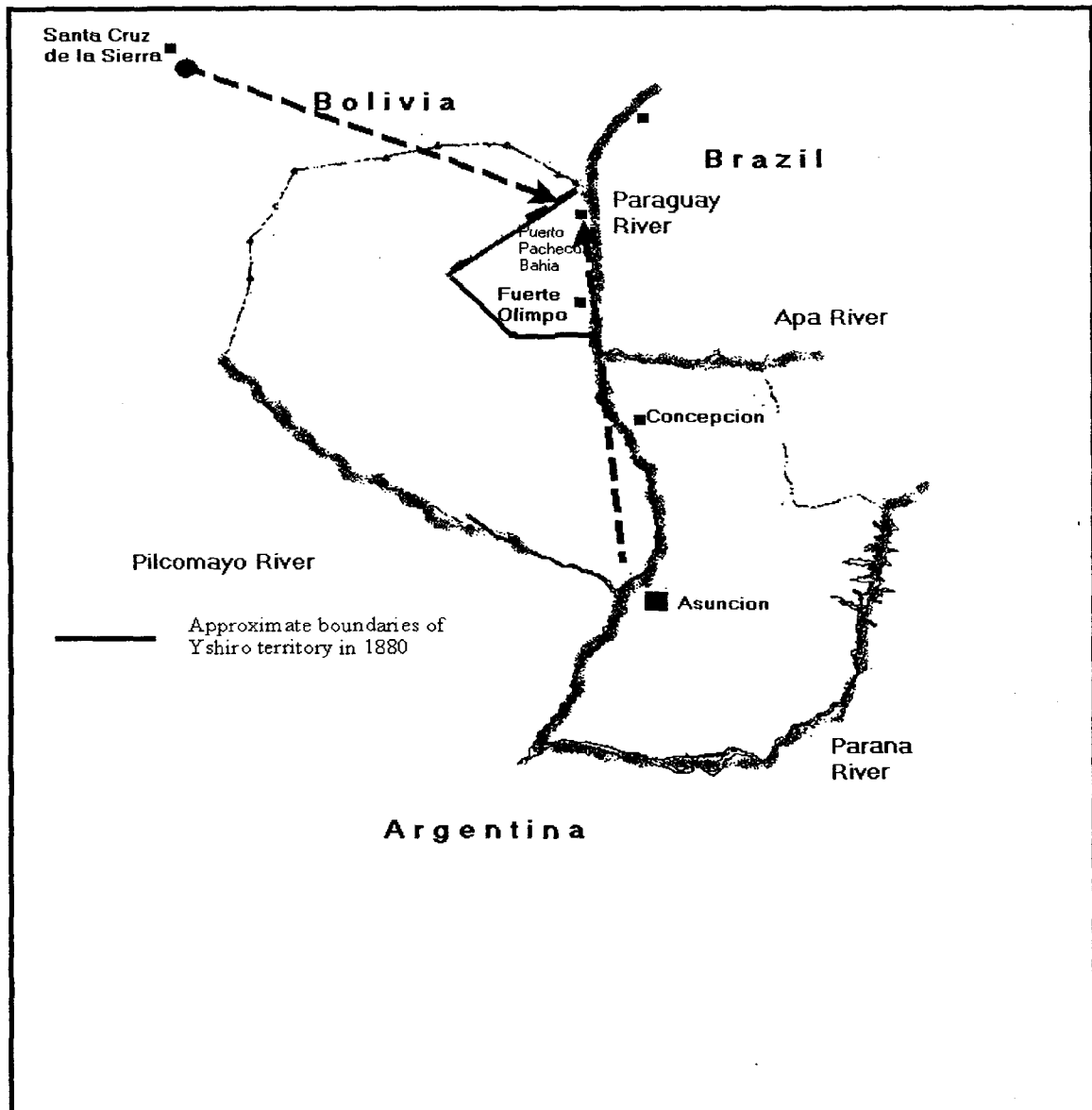
Map 2- Paraguay

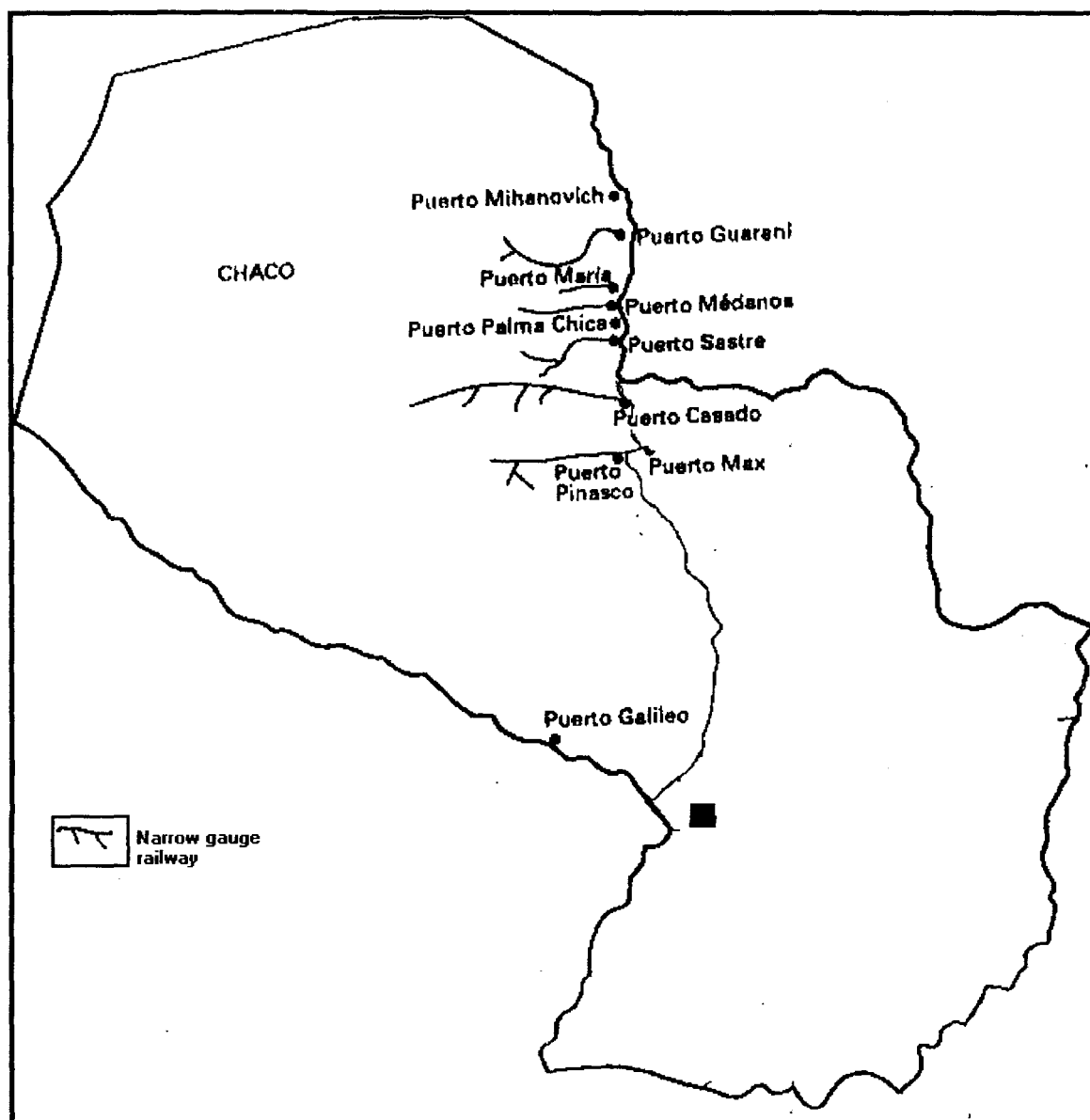


Map 3- Yshiro Communities



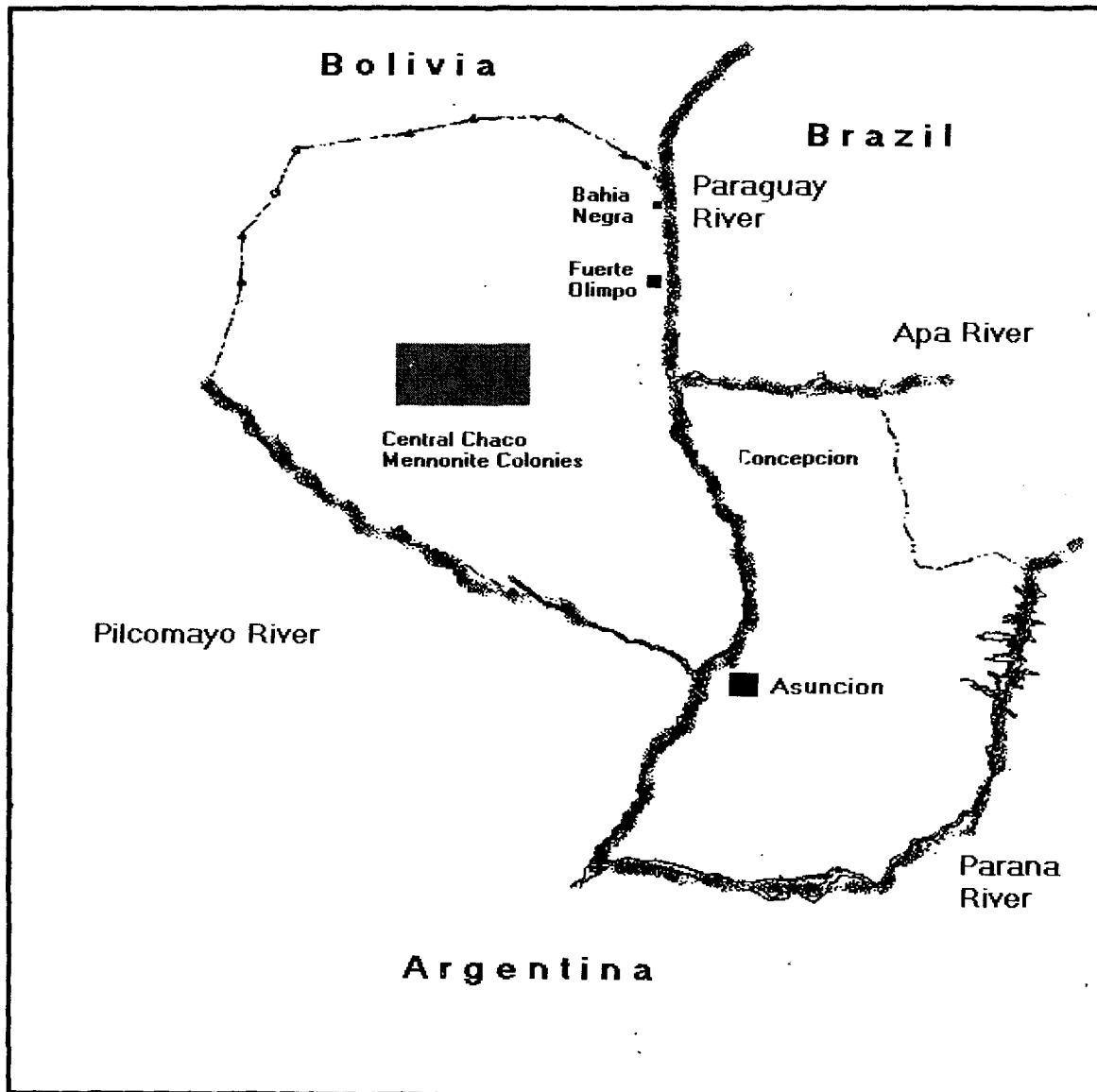
Map 5 - Meeting point of European entrepreneurs within the Yshiro territory

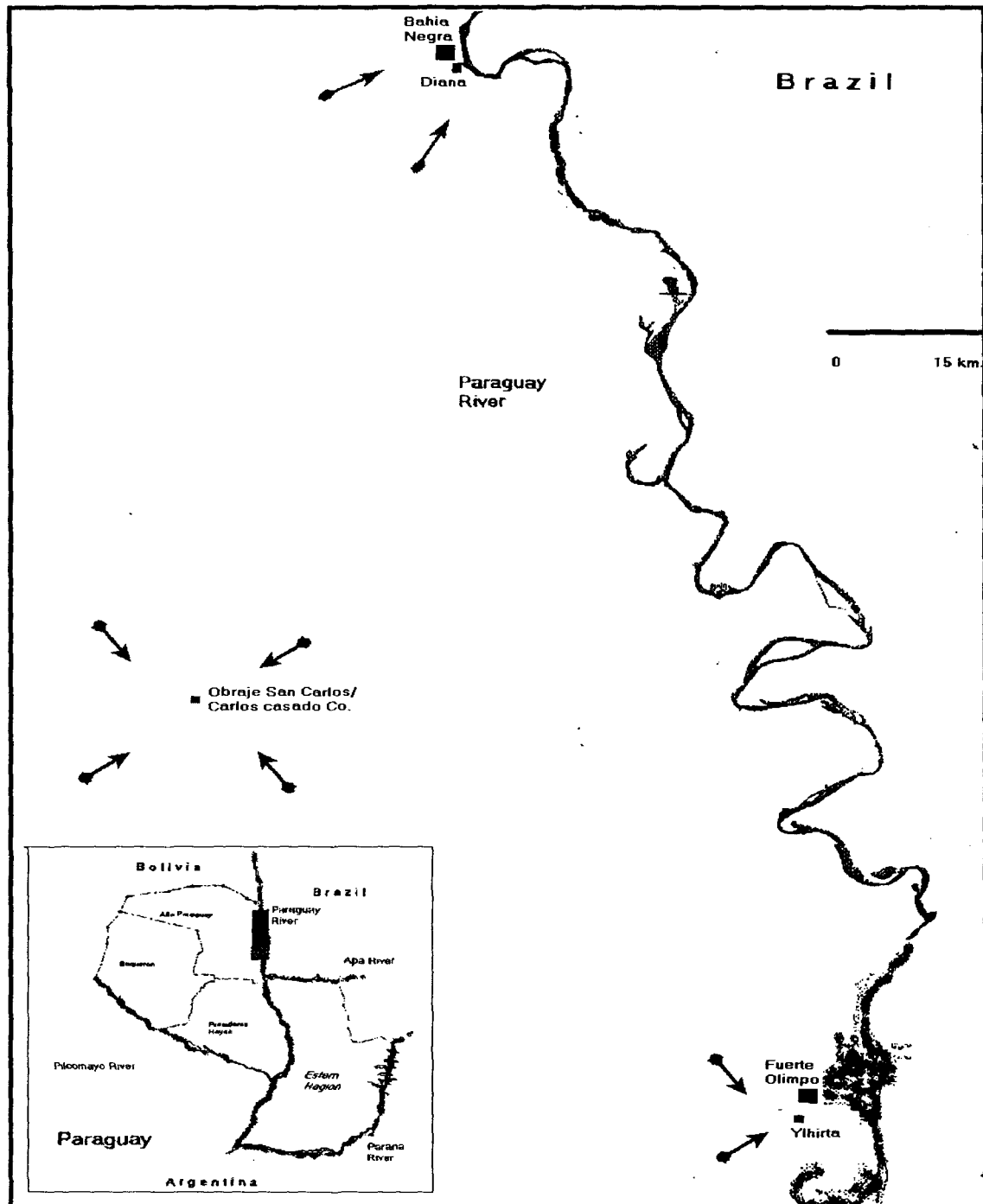




Map 4 - Tannin Companies ca. 1930 (Source Kleinpenning 1992)

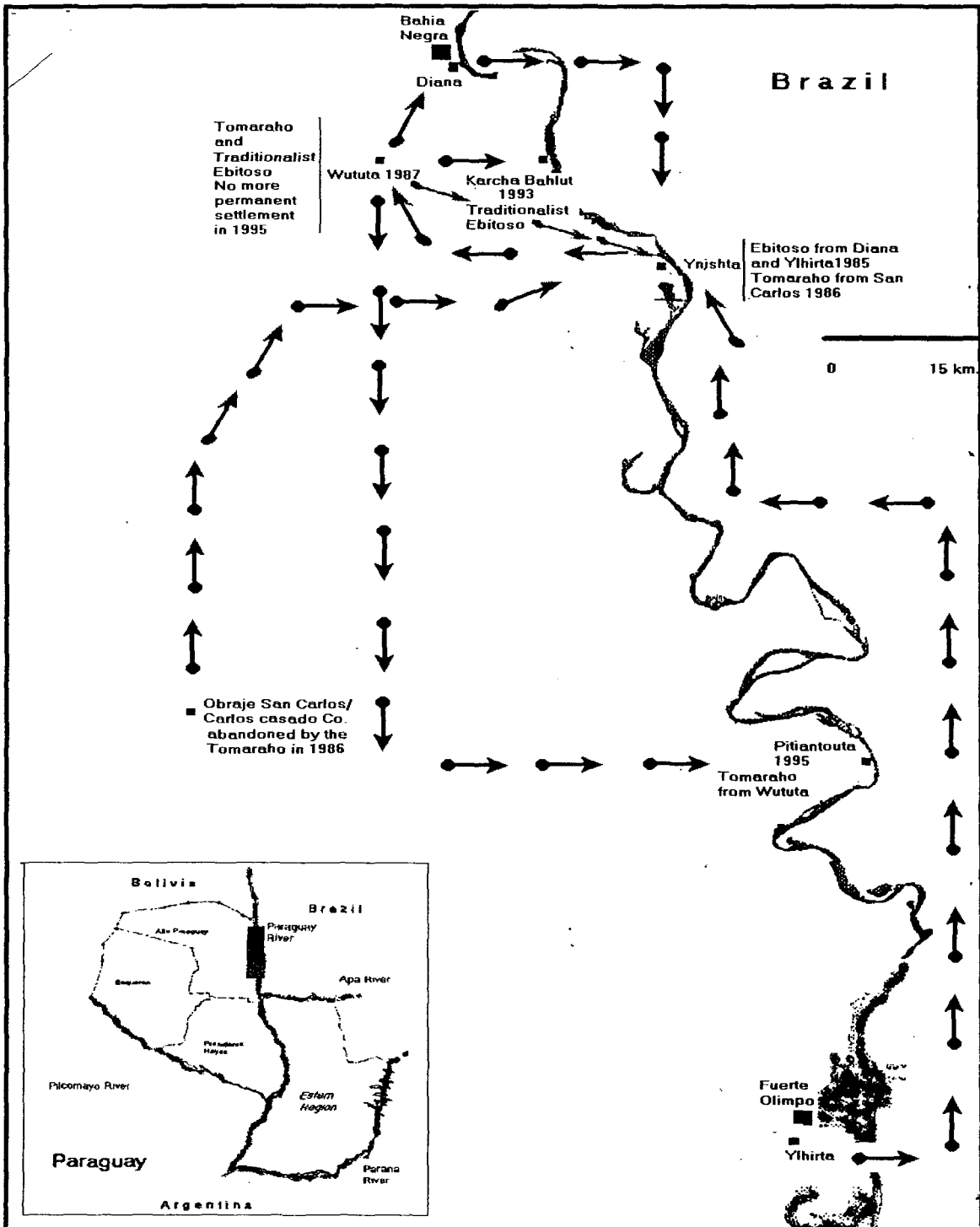
Map 6 - Mennonite Colonies in Central CHaco





Map 7- Yshiro Settlements in the 1960s

Map 8- Formation of contemporary Yshiro Communities in the 1980s and 1990s



List of Acronyms

ACIP - *Apoyo a las Comunidades Indígenas del Paraguay*, Paraguayan *indigenista* NGO

AIP - *Asociación Indigenista del Paraguay*, first Paraguayan *indigenista* NGO

API - *Asociación de Parcialidades Indígenas*, Indigenous organization of national scope

ALA Committee - Asia and Latin America Committee, European Union

ARP - *Asociación Rural del Paraguay*, landowners' association of Paraguay

ASCIM - *Asociación de Cooperation Indígena-Menonita*, Paraguayan Mennonites' *indigenista* NGO

CE - Council of Europe, one of the governing bodies of the European Union

CITES - Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species

DPNVS - *Dirección de Parques Nacionales y Vida Silvestre*, Paraguay (Directorate of National Parks and Wildlife)

EC - European Commission, one of the governing bodies of the European Union

EU - European Union

GOP - Global Operative Plan

INDI - *Instituto Nacional derl Indígena*, Paraguay

Prodechaco - *Programa de Desarrollo Sustentable del Chaco Paraguayo*

SHP - Sustainable Hunting Program

SSERNMA - *Sub Secretaria de Recusros Naturales y Medio Ambiente*, Paraguay (Sub-Secretary of Natural Resources and the Environment)

Glossary

agalio: literally, they eat together; refers to comrade,

Anabsero (singular, Anabser): mythical beings whose story is narrated by the porowo narratives.

Azle: the temporal dimension of contemporaneity

Bahlut/Lata: the first individual of a species or kind, usually translated as mother or father

debylylta: the males initiation ritual

eiwo: the capacity to make distinctions and to reason

Esnwherta au'oso: lit, the word of Esnwherta. Set of narratives containing social and moral codes of the old Yshiro society

harra: central place in the village

konsaho (singular konsaha): shaman

polotak: war leader

Porosht: God

porowo: the temporal dimension accessible to memory

puruhle: the temporal dimension accessible thorough dreams, the basic source of being

weterak: young initiated male

Wozosh (mehné for the Tomaraho): the tendency of being to fall into indistinction

yrmo: cosmos, universe