

EDITORIAL

The principal theme of this new number of the CUHSO Review, edited by Dr. Alvaro Bello, is the situation of indigenous groups and movements in Latin America, concentrating mainly on case studies from four countries: Bolivia, Mexico, Guatemala and Chile. It would appear that, over the last two decades, these countries have presented an increasingly complex diagnosis of the difficulties facing societies, social classes and groups, and ethnic minorities in achieving development consistent with their cultural roots. We see the importance that the subject of development is assuming for international and government institutions, who today are seeking to demonstrate that the term is not merely a synonym for economic growth or the satisfaction of certain basic needs, or a proposal which responds only to the logic of highly industrialised countries. Thus new expressions are born, such as “human development”, “social development”, “integrated development” and “sustainable development”. However they do not always make sufficiently clear the concrete, everyday difficulties experienced by ethnic communities in projecting their own styles of production, consumption and distribution. It is our aim with this special number of CUHSO to contribute to this debate.

The socio-cultural problem presented is of great interest from both the theoretical and practical angles, since this experience serves as a basis for discussion of two ways of addressing the cultural study of development adopted in recent decades. Firstly, the traditionalist features of indigenous societies have sometimes been exaggerated, and insufficient weight has been given to the importance of the mechanisms of contact and of economic and political evolution through which the majority has impacted on indigenous society and vice-versa. Secondly, place may be given to discussion of a cultural analysis of indigenous peoples in a colonialist framework based on the domination and hegemony with which western society has scor-

ned the internal processes by which indigenous peoples have made use of the techniques and knowledge brought to them by Chilean society.

Events in Bolivia are analysed in two important works: the article by Gabriela Canedo Vásquez, entitled “Territory and Power: The territorial claims of the indigenous peoples of Bolivian Amazonia” demonstrates the central position of territory and territorial claims for the indigenous peoples of Bolivian Amazonia. Through a study of the itinerant management of territory and the perception of territory held by the indigenous peoples of the province of Mojos, Beni department, the author shows how these have been transformed by the introduction of a state framework, specially the INRA law. In this sense their conception of territory as unlimited has been transformed into one on which it is limited, fenced in by private properties. Thus territory, as one of the central demands of indigenous organizations, has become the vital element in the political positioning of these organizations on the local and national stage.

Nelson Antequera’s article, “Indigenous autonomy, first nations and local political systems. The case of *ayllu* Kirkyawi (Bolivia)”, explains the political transformation of indigenous communities in the Andean region of Bolivia as a result of state reforms implemented in the 1990s, from a perspective focused on how the politics and organization of *ayllu* Kirkyawi have been reconfigured by the new legal, institutional and political framework. The author demonstrates the need to pass from “recognition” of ethnic and cultural diversity to the construction of a political and administrative system which contemplates the possibility of indigenous communities being able to construct their own true autonomy; in other words, of allowing them to determine the political system by which they wish to govern themselves, in terms of authorities, opportunities for participation, decision-making, and their own legal forms and institutions.

There are three articles discussing the situation in Mexico. The first is the work of Dr. Alvaro Bello, entitled "Space and territory in the anthropological perspective. The case of the Purhérpechas of Nurío and Michoacán in México", which analyses some theoretical perspectives on the categories of territory and space in indigenous contexts. The aim of the analysis is to review the traditional perspectives linking territory, political practice and ethnicity in indigenous contexts. The case study of the Purhérpechas of Michoacán in Mexico is important because it has been a real "laboratory" of Mexican and North American anthropology for the application of concepts and focuses such as "area studies", "regions of refuge" and "indigenous regions".

In his article "This old custom of self-protection from the market. The ethnography of an 'economic process' among the Nahuas of Huasteca", Claudio Espinoza examines an economic process which occurred in a Nahua community in Mexico, studying the interaction which occurs when a microcredit programme is introduced into the indigenous community. This case serves to show, once again, that global and national trends end up being relocated by local actors.

Dr. Francisca de la Maza offers her work "Indigenous government and social policy. Integrated Development Programme for the Yaqui Tribe", which addresses the contemporary situation of the Yaquis, an indigenous people of north-western Mexico. It examines their forms of indigenous government and the social policy developed by the federal and state governments between 1989 and 2003. During this period the Integrated Development Programme for the Yaqui Tribe was implemented, based on self-management by the Yaquis with important economic support from both the federal and state governments.

Dr. Santiago Bastos writes an interesting article on the situation of indigenous peoples in Guatemala: "The Mezcala community and ethnic recreation in the face of neoliberal globalisation", in which he shows us the conflict in which Mezcala is embroiled due to threats to its community lands in the context of a renovation of the idea of community and of the contents of ethnic identity. With the collapse of the post-revolutionary system which sheltered Mezcala

territoriality from agrarian legislation, the new proposals associated with the idea of indigenous peoples - in this case the Coca People - are being used to renew rights to territory and self-government, and also the contents of indigenous existence and community life.

Sergio Caniuqueo Huircapan, in his article "Intra-ethnic reconstruction: reflections on territorial reconstruction processes in Koliko, in the Carahue District, IX Region", takes the perspective of the social sciences to reflect on efforts at intra-ethnic reconstruction, based on the reconstruction of Mapuche territories, addressing the problems of sources and methodology using the Mapuche *kimun* and western science as perspectives which may be complementary.

To recapitulate, it is frequently observed, in field studies of both the Mapuche and other indigenous peoples, that original communities most often appropriate, and integrate into, new modernisation processes in the economic, political-legal and cultural fields from the starting point of their own cultural and ethnic matrices. If these data are correct, the "integration" and "resistance" of indigenous societies with respect to the dominant society cannot be thought of "en bloc". Rather, they form a dynamic in which we must consider the various kinds of interpenetration which occur through permanent relations in time, the cross-fertilisation between economy and culture, and the links between groups both from the communities and from the dominant society.

Ricardo Salas Astráin
Director