

Indigenous identities and politico-juridical demands of CSUTCB and CONAMAQ in the constitutional change process of Bolivia

Identidades indígenas y demandas político-jurídicas de la CSUTCB y el CONAMAQ en la Constituyente boliviana

ABSTRACT

This article has the aim of improving the understanding about indigenous identities and their interrelations with current politico-juridical demands of indigenous organizations. Proposals of structural transformations of the Bolivian state, which have been constructed, approved and defended by indigenous and rural sectors of society during the constitutional change process, will be examined.

RESUMEN

Este artículo tiene el objetivo de mejorar la comprensión sobre las identidades indígenas y sus demandas político-jurídicas, gran parte de ellas históricas, a partir de la aproximación a las propuestas de transformaciones estructurales del Estado boliviano que los sectores indígenas originarios campesinos han construido, consensuado, propuesto y defendido a lo largo del proceso constituyente.

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Based on the assumption that cultural identities and political spheres are interrelated, in the present article I will examine the connections between indigenous identities and politico-juridical demands in the case of the Bolivian constitutional change process. The focus is laid on two organizations that define themselves as indigenous: CONAMAQ (Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu) and CSUTCB (Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia). These are the core organizations in representing the Quechua and Aymara population of Bolivia and both were involved in the constitutional change process.

In a first moment I will argue that indigenous organizations should not be conceived as a “monolithic block” and that in each of them a particular concept of the cultural identity of its members and about the desired transformations of state is predominant. Even if the characteristics of indigenous peoples according to Martínez Cobo (1986) – historical continuity, cultural difference with other sectors of society and their condition as non-dominant sectors – are relevant for all of the indigenous and *campesino* organizations in Bolivia, there are nevertheless different interpretations and conceptions regarding these characteristics. As an example, I will show specific differences comparing CONAMAQ and CSUTCB.

Applying the “Grammars of Identity/Alterity” from Baumann and Gingrich (2004), I will analyze the role of these organizations as well as their intern and extern relationships in the context of the constitutional change process. Important aspects of this investigation are power asymmetries between different indigenous organizations as well as between indigenous organizations and non-indigenous sectors of society.

It is important to understand specific identity constructions and demands of CSUTCB and CONAMAQ in order to be able to see more clearly what they have in common and which tensions and differences exist between them. These insights can play an important role for future reforms and politics. Avigail Eisenberg (2005: 251) also points out the necessity of considering different identities in social change processes and in conflict resolution: “Decisions which fail to take into account whether and how the different identities of those involved are likely to be affected by one outcome or another, are ones that fail to take into account what is often the central and motivating element of many conflicts and, for this reason, are likely to fail as adequate solutions“.

CONAMAQ and CSUTCB: Identities and politico-juridical demands

CONAMAQ was found in 1997 and represents the *ayllus* from the Aymaras, Quechuas and Urus of Potosí, Chuquisaca, La Paz and Cochabamba (see García/Chavéz/Costas 2004: 323). The most important objective of this organization is the reconstitution of precolonial structures of the „original nations“, which include collective rights to land and natural resources, re-definition of administrative units and self-determination exercised through indigenous autonomies and direct representation in state institutions.

In some regions of the highlands and valleys of Bolivia, for example in the north of Potosí and the south of Oruro, the *ayllu* structures were maintained until today in spite of the growing importance of the syndical *campesino* organizations since 1952. In some areas the *ayllu* is the primordial

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organization structure of the indigenous communities, while in others it has been substituted by syndical organizations. In many cases the membership of *ayllus* and syndical organizations is variable and the members oscillate between both of them (see García/Chavéz/Costas 2004: 328-330).

At present, the CSUTCB is the most important indigenous-*campesino* organization of Bolivia, with the greatest amount of members and capacity of mobilization. This organization represents indigenous, *originarios* and *campesinos* and is spread over all departments, with most strength in the highlands and valleys, especially in La Paz and Cochabamba. The CSUTCB was found during a congress in 1979 after a long history of cooptation by the MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario) and during the military-*campesino*-Pact. In this event it declared its independence from political parties and its existence as an autonomous organization (García/Chavéz/Costas 2004: 107-115).

The development and the structure of the *campesino* syndicates affiliated to CSUTCB are different in every region. In some areas where communal structures were weak or not existent (like Cochabamba), the syndicates were the only organizational form to articulate demands and unify the rural population. In other highland areas syndical structures combined with existing *ayllu* structures. In some areas with strong *ayllu* organizations the tensions between *ayllus* and syndicates were very strong and the syndicates were conceived as a form of colonial dominance against the *ayllus* (Rivera Cusicanqui 2003).

There are many similarities between CSUTCB and CONAMAQ. Both incorporate some traditional elements in their organization structure and their comprehension of the political system: the leaders and authorities of their communities should be serving the interests of the community in an unselfish way, the holding of an office is rotative and without remuneration, and the decisions should be taken in a communitarian way, aiming to reach a consensus. Moreover, both organizations established close relations between representatives and the basis, especially at the local level. This is also due to the fact that these social organizations generally fulfill important functions in the daily life of the communities, for example regarding education and infrastructure. Damian Condori, general secretary of the *Federación Única de Trabajadores y Pueblos Originarios de Chuquisaca* (FUTPOCH), affiliated to CSUTCB, says about the differences and similarities between *campesino* syndicates and *ayllus*:

“La estructura, la estructura de organización, por ejemplo nosotros nos organizamos como federación, centralía provincial, subcentral... como si fuera la misma persona con otra ropa, así no más, casi, no veo que haya mucha diferencia, porque vivimos de la misma comunidad, porque comemos de la misma comunidad y además los nombres de autoridad, ellos dicen *Mallku*, nosotros decimos ejecutivo, ellos dicen *Mama T'alla*, nosotros decimos otra palabra, son diferencias muy sencillas, ¿no?” (Entrevista a Damian Condori, 2007).

Between CSUTCB and CONAMAQ there were important agreements regarding their demands in the constitutional change process, for example: Bolivia should be recognized as plurinational state; human rights (especially economic, social and cultural rights) should be incorporated; indigenous territories and autonomies should be inscribed; agriculture and local products supported and indigenous languages recognized as official state languages. They also are both facing the difficulty to deal with their pretension of being autonomous and at the same time with their dependence on financial support, generally obtained from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or political parties. The CSUTCB presents a stronger tendency to ally with political parties while CONAMAQ is frequently supported by international NGOs.

In certain areas and municipalities of the Bolivian highland, where organizations affiliated to CSUTCB and to CONAMAQ coexist, conflicts between them are frequent. Syndical organizations like CSUTCB, the *Cocaleros* and the *Colonizadores* are criticized by members of CONAMAQ because they are seen as representatives of externally imposed Western structures who should return to their cultural roots. On the other hand the *ayllus* are criticized by the syndicates for being too radical and not open for necessary changes. Comparing CSUTCB and CONAMAQ it is also possible to identify a tendency of class differences – the *ayllus* generally can be found in more marginal and poor areas and their members and authorities have less formal education and Spanish knowledge than their syndical counterparts. In the words of Raúl Prada, a Bolivian social scientist: “la dirigencia en los sindicatos es más urbano-rural, muchos de ellos han sido universitarios, en cambio de los originarios, en realidad, son de tierra adentro, son de comunidades de muy adentro” (Interview with Raúl Prada, 2006).

Currently, the tensions between members of CSUTCB and CONAMAQ are related to the fact that some representatives of CSUTCB hold positions in the government of Evo Morales, while many representatives of CONAMAQ still feel excluded and discriminated by state institutions. One example is the case of *Qhara Qhara Suyu*, an organization affiliated to CONAMAQ that represents the *ayllus* of Chuquisaca and of one part of Potosí. *Qhara Qhara Suyu* handed over a report to the anterior UN special reporter for the rights of indigenous peoples Rodolfo Stavenhagen and to the Bolivian Ombudsperson denouncing human rights violations against members of their communities committed by local authorities from the governmental party MAS.

CONAMAQ: Return to *Qullasuyu*

One of the central characteristics of CONAMAQ is its emphasis on continuity, stability and homogeneity of its cultural identity. The principal aim of this organization is to recover and reconstitute pre-colonial structures: “La estructura histórica de nuestros antepasados está en vigencia, está presente, todo eso es lo que queremos fortalecer, no es otra cosa” (Interview with Vicente Flores, indigenous authority of CONAMAQ, 2006).

One expression of the great importance of historical continuity in the sense of revitalizing pre-colonial elements is the fact that CONAMAQ was the only indigenous organization of the Unity Pact² that pretended to change the name of Bolivia to “Qullasuyu Bolivia” or “Republic of Qullasuyu”. The *Qullasuyu* had been the part of the Inca Empire that included part of Bolivia and for CONAMAQ the return to this name and to other pre-colonial elements was conceived as a decolonization process. That kind of attitudes created polemic and members of other organizations from the Unity Pact characterized CONAMAQ as “stubborn, reactionary, radical and ethnocentric”. The primordial difficulty regarding the proposal of changing the name of Bolivia was the fact that indigenous peoples from the lowland areas didn’t identify with the *Qullasuyu* because they had not been part of the Inca Empire and interpreted the aim to return to this name as Andes-centrist and exclusionist. Originally, the CSUTCB also demanded to change the name of Bolivia to *Qullasuyu* but then it gave up this idea in order to establish greater possibilities for alliances with the indigenous lowland organizations as well as with other sectors of society.

The predominant concept of cultural identity in CONAMAQ emphasizes the homogeneity of the population living in the *ayllus*. In community meetings the tree is used as a symbol when referring to their cultural identity – with the roots symbolizing the past, the trunk standing for the present and

² The Unity Pact is an alliance between indigenous *originario campesino* organizations of the country. In the last years and more intensely during the constitutional change process the Unity Pact elaborated a common proposal for the new constitution of Bolivia that was adopted and defended by the MAS.

the crown of the tree for a prosperous future. This symbol also serves to legitimize and support demands to recognize indigenous territories, authorities and juridical systems. Transformations, changes and intern heterogeneity normally are not mentioned, what also has a strategic component. That is why intern changes like the growing political participation of women is interpreted as a historical continuity with pre-colonial conditions and as a decolonization process, because gender inequality and the marginalization of women is attributed to the influence of the Spanish conquerors. Following the same logic current transformations are conceived as a return to pre-colonial relations, presented as more equal and just.

The reference to a pre-colonial past also plays an important role in CONAMAQ's demands for land and territory: the primordial aim is to recover ancestral territories and the demands for collective land titles are based on historical documents. CONAMAQ pretends to reconstitute 16 historic nationalities of the highland areas, whose implementation would require profound processes, including the changing of existing intern frontiers. The most important politico-juridical demands of CONAMAQ refer to the right to self-determination, indigenous territories and the control of natural resources inside of these territories, while the integration of indigenous systems into the state apparatus and changes of dominant society have a lower priority. The demands regarding the transformation of state institutions refer basically to the incorporation of *ayllu* systems at state level. For example, CONAMAQ demanded that the positions in parliament and in the ministries should be held by couples, in accordance with the principle of *chacha-warmi/qhari-warmi*.³ Moreover, the incorporation of the rotative principle in fulfilling positions and the creation of a fourth state power, the "amawtic organ" constituted by spiritual guides of the Andes, to control the other state powers was proposed (see CONAMAQ 2006). The demand to create a fourth state power was also formulated by the Unity Pact and MAS but with an important variation: the fourth power should be called "Plurinational Social Power", constituted by representatives of civil society (see MAS-IPSP 2006; Pacto de Unidad 2007). The spiritual content of CONAMAQ's demand was not integrated.

CONAMAQ rejects the existing political system and especially the existence of political parties – similar to the Zapatistas of Mexico (see Kastner 2007) – and that's why one of its core demands is the direct representation in state institutions. The rejection of political parties and of syndicates is one of the primordial reasons for its distant and tense relations with MAS. Syndical organizations with great loyalty to MAS sometimes compare CONAMAQ with a Trojan horse because it only establishes temporary alliances with the governmental party. The fact that the MAS-fraction in the Constituent Assembly rejected CONAMAQ's demand of reserved seats in parliament was one of the principal reasons for this organization to declare that they do not support the work of the Assembly anymore at 4 August 2007. It retired from the Constituent Assembly and took down the *Wiphala* from the Theatre *Gran Mariscal* where the Assembly held their meetings. Other existing differences were about rights to land, rights to natural resources in indigenous territories and indigenous autonomies. Since the beginning CONAMAQ showed a critical attitude towards the Constituent Assembly because the parliament didn't establish indigenous circumscriptions for the election of its members and therefore there were no direct representatives of indigenous peoples or communities independent from political parties in the Assembly. This critical and distant attitude regarding the Constituent Assembly was reinforced during the process.

In December 2007, only few days before the ratification of the new constitutional text by the Constituent Assembly, CONAMAQ analyzed and discussed its posture in the decisive referendum

³ Irene Silverblatt (1987) explained that the practice of *chacha-warmi/qhari-warmi* originally had a different significance than the one given to it nowadays; it were not necessarily couples who held the same position but men and women held positions with different competences and there were matrilinear and patrilinear systems of access to natural resources.

about the approbation or rejection of the new constitution, foreseen for March 2008. One critique of CONAMAQ was that the new constitution reflected the demands of syndical organizations to a greater extent, while some of their main demands like the recognition of a determined number of direct representatives in the legislative power were not incorporated. Another preoccupation was the eroding of specific indigenous rights; CONAMAQ observed the tendency that indigenous rights were amplified to the *campesino* population and it does not agree with the incorporation of indigenous *originario campesino* autonomies established in the new constitution. The argument behind that rejection was that *campesinos* should not have rights to territory but only to land. This critique is one example for the tendency that many representatives of CONAMAQ conceive themselves as “more indigenous” than the members of the *campesino* syndicates, what explains their demand to exclusivity regarding some rights.

One challenge for CONAMAQ is their representation at national level by traditional authorities that completed all former positions at local and regional level. These authorities generally have excellent competences at local level, in their own cultural systems, while in the spheres of state politics and law there are other decisive requests like occidental education and excellent Spanish knowledge.

... ahora en la comunidad ya se habla de capacidad, de formación, de bachillerato, hasta qué curso, se pide información académica, o sea esa cosa lo está distorsionando, hablando de capacidad, porque si es que no hubiera eso, o sea, todos, todos hacen digamos..., una misma vida, una misma trayectoria y además donde adquieren experiencia es haciendo ejercicio de cargos, o sea de cargos menores de la comunidad ¿no? (Interview with Evaristo Pairo, representative of CONAMAQ in the Constituent Assembly, 2007).

Facing these requests, representatives of CONAMAQ decided in their second last change of authorities and in the election of their representatives for the Constituent Assembly, to choose relatively young representatives who did not complete all traditional positions, but who had other qualities. This change caused new problems: the missing experience of representatives, in some cases the deficient identification with the *ayllus* and the lacking continuity in defending the demands of CONAMAQ.

Even though some of CONAMAQ's central proposals were not incorporated into the new constitution in the desired way, this organization gained important support by the ratification of the UN Declaration on indigenous peoples, approved 7 September 2007. Bolivia was the first country worldwide which ratified the declaration as state law, in October 2007. This declaration is a powerful arm for CONAMAQ to pressure its demands with respect to the recognition of rights to traditional territories, direct representation in state politics and self-determination.

CSUTCB: State with an indigenous face

The CSUTCB is a heterogeneous organization that represents indigenous *originario* and *campesino* communities. It auto-defines as an indigenous organization even though the incorporation of ethnic demands varies depending on the predominant tendencies inside of the syndicates. In the past, the leadership of CSUTCB alternated between more radical and more moderate trends, also with regard to indigenous demands (see García/Chavéz/Costas 2004). Under the leadership of Felipe Quispe a strong indigenous identity and radical demands were represented while under Román Loyaza and Evo Morales less radical positions were defended. The CSUTCB led by Quispe separated from the official entity some years ago; currently the leadership of CSUTCB is not striving for radical indigenous aims and has very close relations with the governmental party. In the past the CSUTCB already established alliances with political parties and intellectuals from the left, combining ethical and economic aims, fighting against neoliberalism and ethnic discrimination at the same time.

The current general secretary of CSUTCB, Isaac Ávalos, is from Santa Cruz and describes his cultural identity in the following way:

- Isaac Ávalos: Yo soy de tierras bajas, medio guarayo, medio cruce con español y tanta cosa.
- Almut Schilling-Vacaflor: Pero ¿habla otro idioma a parte del español?
- Isaac Ávalos.: No,... un poco quechua,... entiendo
(Interview with Isaac Ávalos, 2006).

The cultural identity represented by CSUTCB at present is conceived as more flexible, changing and multiple compared to CONAMAQ. Pre-colonial structures are not automatically conceived as worthy to be revitalized. For example, the national leadership of CSUTCB does not endeavor to maintain the practice of *chacha-warmi/qhari-warmi*. Many members of CSUTCB also don't want to recover collective land rights and instead they give priority to the redistribution of land and the recognition of individual properties. The changing of intern administrative-political frontiers also plays a less important role than in CONAMAQ: for strategic reasons and to avoid conflicts existing frontiers generally are accepted (see CSUTCB 2006).

The CSUTCB wants to change the state, decolonize and “indianize” it and keep its governmental position. This organization pretends to transform state institutions and systems (education, health, politics, economy etc.) into intercultural entities and to incorporate indigenous systems into state architecture. One of CSUTCB's priorities is to recover Bolivia's economic sovereignty, nationalizing and industrializing its natural resources. The CSUTCB demands indigenous autonomies like other indigenous organizations of the country, but in general it places them on the same level as the municipalities and it also focus on state autonomy. Following this logic in the proposal of CSUTCB (2006) you can find the aim to “garantizar una autonomía nacional para compartir todo lo que tiene el país, para indígenas y no indígenas, que sea abierta e incluyente”. In the case of CSUTCB the indigenous autonomies also play a strategic role as a counterweight against department autonomies, while for CONAMAQ and CIDOB (Confederación Indígena del Oriente Boliviano) they primarily represent an important objective to exercise their right to self-determination.

The discourses of CSUTCB, in which the government had been conceived as the “principal enemy”, changed significantly after the swearing in of Evo Morales in February 2006. For example, at present CSUTCB tries to formulate demands that make it possible to establish alliances with other sectors of Bolivia's population: “...nuestra propuesta no debe ser solo para nosotros, sino, debe ser válida para todos: si fuera solo para nosotros no podremos negociar, por tanto será marginado en la Asamblea Constituyente” (CSUTCB, 2006).

Following the same logic ethnocentricity and particularistic tendencies, like the demand that presidential candidates should be indigenous, have been abandoned or transformed in order to obtain more acceptance in the Bolivian population. According to recent proposals from CSUTCB, representatives of the Bolivian state, like ministers and parliamentarians, should not be allowed to have double nationality and must speak, additionally to their Spanish knowledge, at least one indigenous language. The demands to recognize “special” indigenous rights ultimately are losing importance. The demands to direct representation in state politics, to co-property of non-renewable natural resources and to indigenous autonomies on higher levels are almost absent in the discourses of CSUTCB. The most important objective is to stay in power, in a hegemonic position and for that reason many compromises are accepted.

For example, inside of the Constituent Assembly there was an instruction from MAS and its representatives, supported by many members of CSUTCB, to negotiate and establish compromises

with the opposition, in order to avoid conflict and to avoid the possible failure of the constitutional change process. In some commissions this decision caused the insufficient defense of Unity Pact's demands. In the commission of hydrocarbon resources, no right of indigenous peoples was incorporated and the commission of state structure and organization seemed to be satisfied with its decision of not recognizing indigenous languages as official languages of the state, but only on subordinated levels, in the areas where they are spoken from the majority. This kind of tendencies can be partly explained with the fact that the MAS is a very heterogeneous party, with internal sectors that interpret demands for indigenous rights as too radical. In this context, CSUTCB has the difficult task to intermediate between its bases, other indigenous organizations, the governmental party MAS and the opposition, what can cause incoherencies and contradictions in its positions.

During the constitutional change process, CSUTCB protected and defended the work of the Constituent Assembly. In tense and conflictive situations this organization sent representatives in order to support the establishment of the new constitution.

The challenge of reconciliation

Generally, there can be distinguished two tendencies of demands for indigenous rights: on the one side rights that refer to the recognition and implementation of autonomous and self-determined spaces inside of the states – connected to rights to land, territory and natural resources -; and on the other hand rights that refer to the creation of an intercultural and pluralistic state apparatus. Both types of demands are conceived as anti-discriminatory measures that should lead to more social justice; but the first one has a greater delimiting character while the second one tends to be more integrative (see Kymlicka 1995).

Many scientists who work in this field, like Donna Lee Van Cott (2000), Rachel Sieder (2002) and Kymlicka (1995), share the opinion of the majority of Latin American indigenous organizations, that autonomous spaces to exercise the right to self-determination should be seen as a basis to enforce participation in the state. The result of which is that both tendencies of indigenous rights should be seen as complementary, as two sides of the same coin. Also the demands of CONAMAQ and CSUTCB can widely be seen as complementary, taken into account that CSUTCB first of all wants to change state institutions and systems while CONAMAQ set the priority on the establishment of self-governed spaces. The recognition of individual and collective land rights could also be complementary in the sense of pacific coexistence. To find constructive solutions for the existing tensions and contradicting interests between members and representatives of CONAMAQ and CSUTCB it seems to be important to take into account the particularities and the needs of every entity as well as to establish dialogue processes to stimulate mutual understanding.

CONAMAQ and CSUTCB: “Grammars of Identity/Alterity”

In this second part of the article I will examine the relations between CONAMAQ and CSUTCB. Moreover, relations from these organizations with other indigenous organizations, with MAS and with non-indigenous sectors of society are taken into account, in order to analyze their positions and constructions of cultural identity in a wider context during the constitutional change process. For these analyses I will apply the theoretical concepts of Baumann and Gingrich from their book *Grammars of Identity/Alterity*. According to this theoretical framework I will refer to mutual attributions and self-perception as central elements to understand constructions of identity and alterity. These authors distinguish between different grammars of constructing identities: Orientalization, Segmentation and Encompassment (Baumann/Gingrich 2004).

Orientalization

The Orientalization is the binary comparison between attributes that exclude each other and that are seen as oppositions of good and bad, but not in a simple sense. Based on Edward Said: “Orientalism is thus not a simple binary opposition of: ‘us=good’ and ‘them=bad’, but a very shrewd mirrored reversal of: ‘what is good in us is (still) bad in them, but what got twisted in us (still) remains straight in them’” (Baumann 2004: 20). Edward Said conceives “Orientalization” as the oppositions created between Europe and Orient and between “developed” and “underdeveloped” countries (for example calculation vs. spontaneity, rationality vs. mysticism, society vs. community).

The process of orientalizing can be found in the discourses of CONAMAQ and CSUTCB when they refer to each other. In CONAMAQ’s discourses an image of the syndicates is created in which those are presented as egoistic, too individualistic and as reproducing systems that were externally imposed, contrasting with the self-perception as solidary, collectivistic and authentic. On the other hand, the syndical representatives apply the grammar of Orientalization when they express that CONAMAQ is reactionary, ethnocentric and narrow-minded, looking for regression and fragmentation, while CSUTCB is conceived as modern and open-minded, committed to the well-being of the Bolivian population and the unity of the country.

In the discourses of the indigenous organizations about non-indigenous systems, often the impression of two closed and “pure” systems that are mutually exclusive is created. This dualist construction can also be found in the discourses of CONAMAQ and CSUTCB, who sometimes speak of the indigenous and the non-indigenous population as entities that can be clearly identified and distinguished, what represents an extremely simplified vision of Bolivia and covers up the existing graduations and multiple identities (see Albó 2006).

The image of two opposed systems or societies can be considered as a form of Orientalization because not only two population groups are distinguished, but also contrary characteristics are attributed to those groups. The indigenous systems many times are described as solidary, communitarian and environmentally friendly by CSUTCB and CONAMAQ as well as by other actors like intellectuals, students, juvenile groups, leftist groups, environmentalists etc.; while the opposed attributes are projected at “the other, non-indigenous Bolivia”.

The essentialist images widely expressed do not coincide fully with reality, but they have an important strategic significance:

- Van Cott (2000: 24ff) describes that indigenous organizations use to present images of indigenous identity with certain cultural characteristics in order to gain support for its fight for rights and resources. The simplification and folclorization of indigenous cultures makes it possible to obtain sympathy from external actors and to establish alliances, for example with environmentalists, human rights organizations, anti-neoliberalist entities and spiritual groups (see Van Cott 2000: 25).
- The creation of idealist constructions with positive connotations is also conceived as necessary to substitute existing negative and racist images of indigenous peoples, in which primitiveness, aggressiveness or backwardness are predominant. This kind of stereotypes and prejudices is very strong in Bolivia, for example in sectors with economic power and many communication media. In this context, processes of Orientalization constructed by indigenous actors can also be seen as a reaction to dominant orientalist discourses in Bolivia.

- Idealistic and essentialist images also serve to criticize dominant society (see Assies 2000: 16). Following the logic of Orientalization indigenous cultures are associated with positive characteristics, while the lacking of those characteristics in the dominant culture is criticized. By this comparison negative conditions and dynamics of the dominant systems are pointed out what can open the view to possible alternatives. The alternatives proposed by indigenous organizations like CONAMAQ and CSUTCB refer to the recognition and incorporation of indigenous systems and the “decolonization and indianization” of the state.

Segmentation

The grammar of Segmentation is based on a pyramid of identifications, from the most restricted identifications to wider levels of identification. The construction of identities/alterities varies depending on the specific context, the level of Segmentation. For example, in Africa, a Nuer on a low level of Segmentation can be defined as member of a specific local community, in a higher level of Segmentation as member of the Nuer in general and in the highest level of Segmentation as part of indigenous peoples worldwide.

Regarding the indigenous organizations examined in this article it is also possible to find that kind of graduations and Segmentation processes. For example, a member of CONAMAQ can identify himself, depending on the context, as a member of a specific local community, as part of the Quechuas, of the indigenous highland population, of the indigenous peoples in Bolivia or the indigenous peoples worldwide. In intern assemblies of some CONAMAQ communities, members use to speak about local differences and the aim to recover collective land rights for the supposed 16 sub-nationalities of the Quechua and Aymara population. CONAMAQ also drew a (disputed) map based on historic documents, which is used to demand ancestral territories. But when the aim is the external representation, homogeneous and unified images of Quechuas and Aymaras are used. At the superior level of the Unity Pact, the definition of cultural identity widens to the belonging to the indigenous peoples of Bolivia and in international meetings, similarities between indigenous peoples of Latin America are emphasized. The grammar of Segmentation also can be found in alliances with non-indigenous actors. Affiliations referring to common objectives like ecological sustainability, anti-neoliberalism or multiculturalism are established and new common identities, based on certain characteristics, are created.

The Unity Pact was composed by the most important and most representative indigenous organizations of Bolivia (CSUTCB, CONAMAQ, CIDOB etc.) and had the primordial aim to elaborate common demands for the constitutional change as well as to coordinate political strategies. Even though the participating organizations were very heterogeneous regarding their structure, identity and demands, they reached unification in the Unity Pact and were able to elaborate proposals for the new constitution in assemblies and national meetings (see Pacto de Unidad, May 2007). The governmental party MAS assumed the proposals and presented itself as representative of the Unity Pact and of the indigenous organizations (see MAS-IPSP, May 2006), even though it had closer relations and more common interests with some of the organizations than with others. This is also due to the fact that MAS had been founded by the syndical organizations CSUTCB, *Cocaleros* and *Colonizadores* (see García/Chavéz/Costas 2004) and there were much more MAS representatives in the Constituent Assembly that belonged to those organizations than those who belonged to indigenous organizations from lowland areas or from CONAMAQ.

The Unity Pact in Bolivia worked under the premise of “together we are strong”, tried to find common demands and to constitute an entity to fight for them.⁴ Externally, the Pact accentuated the common identity of its members: “Y no hay ninguna diferencia entre nosotros, todos son quechuas, son indígenas, son aymaras, somos los mismos, no hay diferencia, es lo mismo” (Entrevista con Isáac Ávalos, 2006). Internally, differences between the organizations were discussed extensively; for example, syndical organizations accentuated their classist sense of belonging as *campesinos* and their close relations with MAS, while the lowland organizations and CONAMAQ presented themselves as supporters of cultural (and less political) projects and emphasized their distance to the current government. One expression of these tendencies was the fact that the syndical organizations (CSUTCB, Colonizadores and Bartolina Sisas) shared one office in Sucre, while CONAMAQ and lowland organizations shared another one.

The alliance between CONAMAQ and lowland organizations is not a new phenomenon: in the past CONAMAQ already avoided relations and alliances with indigenous-*campesino* syndicates, while it tried to establish alliances with the lowland organizations, that were perceived as more authentic and moreover there was no competition between them. Gualberto Aguilar, traditional authority of CONAMAQ, made the following statement about their relations with the lowland organizations: “El año 2002 eso sí hemos preparado y coordinado con los del oriente, con el CIDOB, con el CPESC, con esas organizaciones que son también netamente indígenas” (see García/Chavéz/Costas 2004: 335). During the work of the Constituent Assembly, there were important similarities between the demands of CIDOB and CONAMAQ that were not supported by the syndicates. These demands referred to the direct representation of indigenous peoples in the legislative power, extensive rights to natural resources in indigenous territories and indigenous autonomies, based on traditional territories.

Encompassment

The Encompassment, the “selfing by appropriating”, is one grammar of Identity/Alterity, in which selected elements of “the other” are adopted or co-opted. Two levels are decisive regarding the grammar of Encompassment: the lower level where differences are accentuated and the higher level where differences are subsumed under the universal or transcendent. The grammar of Encompassment can be identified inside of the Unity Pact and in the relations between indigenous organizations and the governmental party as well as with non-indigenous sectors of society.

In The Unity Pact the CSUTCB had a dominant role and it tried to present itself as “head” of the indigenous organizations. Isaac Ávalos, general secretary of CSUTCB, said in an interview that “la CSUTCB prácticamente ha creado las otras organizaciones”:

..... la CSUTCB es mucho más antigua que el CONAMAQ, entonces nosotros por eso respetamos que se van creando diferentes organizaciones, pero la cabeza ha sido la CSUTCB... respetamos también nuestras otras organizaciones que hemos ido creando prácticamente, por ejemplo se ha creado CIDOB, se ha creado CONAMAQ, bueno y otras organizaciones que se han creado también (Interview with Isaac Ávalos, 2006).

The vision presented in the upper statement is contrary to the perspectives of CIDOB and CONAMAQ, who do not share the view of the supremacy postulated by CSUTCB.

⁴ The importance of these alliances between indigenous organizations is great what can be shown by the examples of Guatemala and Peru, where indigenous organizations are very fragmented what debilitates the fight for common interests (Van Cott 2005).

The governmental party also tended to implement the grammar of Encompassment in its relations with indigenous organizations: it used to present itself as representative of the Unity Pact (see MAS 2006), even though some of Unity Pact's organizations tried to maintain their autonomy regarding political parties. The vice-president Álvaro García Linera said in an interview in August 2007 that the indigenous majority was in government now and that CONAMAQ and CIDOB were committing a mistake when they conceived indigenous peoples as political minority and demanded specific rights like direct representation in parliament. In his opinion these demands were not necessary anymore because now the government represented and defended the interests of the indigenous organizations of Bolivia. But it should not be forgotten that the recognition of indigenous rights is important to guaranty them, independently from the current government. Moreover, the question raises until what point it is possible that the governmental party is able to defend the interests of every indigenous organization to the same degree.

The Encompassment is also relevant in the relations between indigenous organizations and the hitherto dominant non-indigenous society. In this context, the crucial question is "who acknowledges whom?". The media and higher classes, most of whose members are non-indigenous and from urban spaces, and their representatives in the Constituent Assembly aimed at maintaining the state widely as it had been and keeping their privileged positions. From their point of view indigenous rights should only have been recognized on subordinated levels, while the higher levels should not have been changed substantially. The traditional elites of Bolivia demanded that Spanish continued to be the only official state language and that indigenous autonomies remained subordinated to department autonomies (see PODEMOS 2006). Contrarily, the indigenous organizations had the objective that their rights were not recognized on subordinated levels as "special rights", but they demanded that their role as decision-makers in the state would be established in the constitution. The indigenous *originario campesino* organizations from the Unity Pact agreed that it would be just if they, as representatives of the population majority, included and recognized non-indigenous sectors of society and not the other way round.

Conclusions and perspectives

The example of identity constructions and the politico-juridical demands of CSUTCB and CONAMAQ exposed in this article show the close connections between political spheres and the reproduction and transformation of cultural identities. During the constitutional change process, in the relations between these organizations, as well as with other sectors of Bolivian society, different objectives came to the light related to competitions for influence, power and resources. The "Grammars of Identity/Alterity" of Baumann and Gingrich are applied to examine these dynamics. The strategic character of cultural identities and interrelated politico-juridical demands is also examined in this article.

In the discourses of CONAMAQ and CSUTCB sometimes the wish that the other one would disappear or affiliate to the own organization is expressed. To guaranty the pacific coexistence of these organizations and its members it would be of great importance to understand the differences on the surface and in depth. Maybe processes of dialogue and reflection could create the necessary respect to find ways that lead to a constructive common existence, recognizing the differences and overcoming discrimination.

The alliance between the organizations to fight for common objectives is important, particularly when you take into account that there are sectors of Bolivian population with a lot of political and economic power, who want to avoid profound reforms of Bolivian state, especially regarding the stimulation of interculturality and the implementation of plurinationality. The demands of

CONAMAQ which focus particularly on self-determination in autonomous spaces and the demands of CSUTCB, aiming at the transformation of the central state are complementary to a great extent. The differences between CSUTCB and CONAMAQ should be exposed and discussed, but common interests should not be lost out of sight.

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