

— THE HISTORY OF LOMERIO: —

ON THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

ANACLETO PEÑA | PEDRO TUBARI
LIDIA CHUVE | MARÍA CHORE | CECILIA IPI

MOKOXI NATION, LOMERIO

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Authors:

Anacleto Peña
Pedro Tubari
Lidia Chuve
María Chore
Cecilia Ipi

Direction and Supervision:

Mirna Inturias
Iokiñe Rodríguez

Design and Diagram:

Jhonny Ovando

Spanish to English Translation:

Juliete Genge and Emma Mazri

UEA University of
East Anglia



Environmental Justice and Territorial Based Indigenous Autonomy in Bolivia

A political dialogue
from the Monkoxi
Indigenous Nation
of Lomerio

PROLOGUE

"Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions."

***United Nations Declaration
on the rights of Indigenous
People (Art.4)***

"Given the pre-colonial existence of nations and rural native indigenous peoples and the ancestral control of their territories, their free determination, consisting of the right to autonomy, self-government, their culture, recognition of their institutions, and the consolidation of their territorial entities is guaranteed within the framework of the unity of the State, in accordance with this Constitution and the law."

(Art.2)

***Political Constitution of the Plurinational
State of Bolivia***

“Rural native indigenous autonomy consists in self-government as an exercise of free determination of the nations and rural native indigenous peoples, who share territory, culture, history, languages, and their own juridical, political, social and economic organizations or institutions”.

**(Art. 289)
Political Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**

“The Monkoxi nation of Lomerio expresses its historical political will to constitute its own system, exercising the right to free determination, with responsibilities, competences and financial resources sustained in its own political, social, economic, cultural and territorial identity, within the framework of the Political Constitution of the State”.

**Autonomous Statute of the People of the Monkoxi Nation of Lomerio
(Art.1, pt. III)**

With the promulgation of the new Political Constitution of the State, in February 2009, Bolivia began a process of transformation of the State, of its structures and its territorial organization, which includes diverse autonomies, and recognises the existence of nations and rural native indigenous people as a distinctive characteristic of the construction of the Plurinational State.

Over seven years have passed under the new constitutional text and efforts realised for its implementation have run into various difficulties, some of which are related, still, with the existence of some republican institutionality of colonial traits. The process of implementing Indigenous Autonomy is not alien to these difficulties, nonetheless, it can be affirmed that there are considerable advances, which indeed require the allocation of increased commitment and effort, in order to consolidate the progress already made, and may the remainder of the path left to cover be sufficiently weeded.

The Political Constitution of the State and the Framework Law for Autonomies and Decentralization "Andres Ibanez" lay down the characteristics and the procedures to obtain the condition of rural native indigenous autonomy. In this regards, it points out three

ways to access this condition, namely: a) through the conversion from municipality to indigenous autonomy, b) as Indigenous Territory (TCO, "Tierra Comunitaria de Origen"), c) as an indigenous region. We can affirm, without doubts, that advancements have been made regarding the first two ways.

The result of the referendum in September 2015 of the Autonomous Statute of Charagua constitutes, undoubtedly, an historical reference for the process of autonomy in Bolivia in relation to the validity of the first Autonomous Indigenous Rural Native Statute. The process of access to Indigenous Autonomy through the conversion from Municipality to Indigenous Autonomy has reached its historical milestone. There remains of course, a long way ahead with an itinerary full of challenges, expectations and a lot of hope.

On the other hand, we must consider and give the same importance to the process of access to autonomy carried out by the Monkoxi People of Lomerio, in the department of Santa Cruz, which is framed in the second mode of access to the Rural Native Indigenous Autonomy provided for by the CPE (Political Constitution of the State).

Nevertheless, one of the main challenges

related to the exclusive and concurrent competencies of the Indigenous Autonomy is, on the one hand, the management and administration of renewable resources, on the other hand, the conservation of forestry resources, biodiversity and the environment. These are issues that the process of implementation of Rural Native Indigenous Autonomies inevitably has to address, as part of the construction process of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

The content of this publication precisely addresses the experience gained by the Monkoxi People of Lomerio in order to access its autonomy, and the necessity to reflect upon and create new institutional and normative ways to find solutions to a problem which is increasingly more urgent, regarding the construction of a fair, harmonic and sustainable Environmental Order. Therefore, with the aim of contributing to the debate on this theme, which constitutes an imperative of the present century and concerns the future of humanity, we offer this publication which is a result of the efforts coordinated among representatives from NUR University in Bolivia, University of East Anglia in England, and the Ministry of Autonomies.

Undoubtedly, the public debate on this

theme has begun to take shape, so we are progressively recognizing the need to respond to an environmental problem which today is perceived as a "crisis of civilization", resulting from the saturation point and the overflow of economic rationality. Surely, we are convinced that a change of paradigm on environmental issues is necessary, and will develop as a result of fostering increasing opportunities for reflection and debate in which we can capture and recuperate the experience, knowledge and wisdom of indigenous people, and of the ecological conditions for sustainable development of the people who inhabit the planet, and for humanity as a whole.

Certainly the process of modernization, characterised by economic growth and technological progress, has been the breeding ground for the unfolding of market logic in the process of economic globalization. Globalizing dynamics has standardized a "life model", almost as a sort of straightjacket, whose only acceptable pattern of thought negates and ignores nature.

Given the need to fight "with determination to resolve the dramatic consequences of environmental degradation in the lives of the poorest in the world", are the words of Pope

Francis I, and to demolish the predominance of the homogenising, inequitable and unsustainable logic of modernity from the debate and political practices. We believe that the contents of the present publication will allow us to open furrows for a new path to sustainability, founded on environmental rationality.

We invite you to accompany us on this brief exercise of reflexion to identify together the strategic lines that will allow the construction of a new world economic, and ecological order in favour of conservation and ecological sustainability, as part of the efforts being developed for the implementation and development of Rural Native Indigenous Autonomy in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which is the distinguishing feature in the process of the democratic and cultural revolution which Bolivia is undertaking.

"The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes the concern to unite the whole human family to seek sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change"

Pope Francis I

Laudato si

Hugo Siles Nunez del Prado

Former Minister of Autonomies

Plurinational State of Bolivia

INTRODUCTION

The book you are holding in your hands is the result of the union of three projects that over the years have been carried out between the university of East Anglia (UEA) in the UK, NUR University in Santa Cruz, Bolivia and the Indigenous Union of Indigenous Communities of Lomerio (CICOL): the *"Conservation, Markets and Justice"* (CMJ), the *'Academic and Activist co-production of environmental Justice Project (ACKNOWLEDGE)'* and more recently the *'Indigenous International Interactions for Sustainable Development Project'* (INDIS). They all originated from the desire to create much needed spaces for intercultural dialogue and debate which would allow public policy makers and civil society to connect, in this case, with the communities of Lomerio who are seeking to consolidate their Territorial based Indigenous Autonomy. Thus, social research places itself at the service of society's transformation and generates

bridges between academia, indigenous peoples and State agencies.

The three projects mentioned above adopted a participatory action research methodology in response to the growing call for a science to connect more directly with the necessities of society. We formed intercultural research teams made up of researchers from UEA, NUR University and the Lomerio indigenous territory. Moreover, the planning of all activities was carried out together with the management board of CICOL, and various members accompanied many of the processes on the field. Together, we have applied a great variety of social research methods to help understand the tensions that the Monkoxi people of Lomerio are experiencing in the management of their forests and territories, such as: ethnography, reflexive workshops, participatory videos, economic games and surveys.

Furthermore, from the beginning the three projects were committed to using the research to create spaces for collective reflection and dialogue within the communities that make up the Lomerio indigenous territory, in such a way as to identify ideas and actions which would help overcome some of the tensions they experience related to the management of their forest and territory. In every case, we have conducted activities to jointly analyze the results, as well as a combination of activities to socialize the results with the communities themselves, in communal and general assemblies.

The three projects have also been committed to producing outputs that can help revitalize the Monkoxi culture and identity. This book is one of these outputs, which was written by five of the indigenous researchers that have formed part of these three projects. This book talks of the historical journey

of the Monkoxi people of Lomerio to attain their territorial autonomy. They call this process "the path toward freedom". This book is narrated by Anacleto Peña, former chief general of CICOL and four community researchers that participated in the *Conservation, Markets and Justice Project*: Pedro Tubari, Lidia Chuve, Maria Chore and Cecilia Ipi.

This book comes together with a Participatory Video with the same title, made by CICOL, which captures this story in camera, as narrated to them by elders, women, leaders and young people that have taken part in the more recent history of Lomerio.

This is one of the few books of this kind in Bolivia and we are proud to bring it to you so that you can learn about the Monkoxi and their long struggle for Freedom, as narrated by them.

The original version of the book was written in Spanish and we are now making it available in English so that the story of the Monkoxi can travel to other far-away lands and be read by English speaking readers interested in learning about the struggles of indigenous peoples in Bolivia for their political autonomy. Hopefully the book can thus be part of very much needed global worldviews dialogues between indigenous peoples about their struggle for freedom across the world.

We hope you enjoy it!

History of Lomerio: the path towards freedom^{*1}

Anacleto Pena

Pedro Tubari

Lidia Chuve

Maria Chore

Cecilia Ipi

In this chapter we present a historical compilation of Lomerio which is a result of our efforts as indigenous leaders and inhabitants of our TCO to rebuild our past. The material presented has been gathered throughout the years; however, more recently, as part of the *Conservation, Markets and Justice Project*, we have undertaken the work of systematically interviewing our parents and grandparents. It fills us with pride to now publish the fruit of our efforts in different formats: written, in texts such as this one, but also in audiovisual form, through a participative video that we produced as part of a project during 2014, titled "Path Towards Freedom: The History of the Monkoxi People of Lomerio".

When we talk about our history, we metaphorically refer to it as "the path towards freedom", because it makes reference to the actions taken in the XIX century by our indigenous families while escaping from Jesuit "reducciones"² or the hacienda owners, directed towards the unknown to find refuge in the heart of the immense green patch that is Lomerio today; that natural habitat awaiting them with open arms so they could return to live in harmony with nature.

"The path towards freedom", because the families wandered without knowing what awaited them. Each family that managed to escape, settled independently in this land ribbed by the hills, where they were able to satisfy their needs. Supposedly

¹ The following is a literal translation from the native language of Lomerio: Besiro, hence not all the rules of grammar apply.

² The Jesuit "Reducciones" also called Jesuit Missions were a group of villages founded as early as the 17th century by the Catholic Order Society of Jesus. The aim of these missions was to gather the indigenous peoples in order to indoctrinate them in the catholic teachings and thereby preserve the indians from contact with the white man.

³ The video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdeWZXFqecWQ>

the name Lomerio³ derives from these hills.

"The path towards freedom", because as they got established in a new homeland, the communities organized agrarian unions to defend themselves from the attacks of the landowners who continued to persecute them. Until the 1980's they were not sure that agrarian unions was the best form of protection. However in the 80s, the decade of vindication, the indigenous people organized and articulated a clear vision which gave a more strategic direction to our actions.

"The path towards freedom" continues in the decade of the 90's, this time with visible results: we have strengthened our organization, we have attained ownership for our lands and territory, we have productive organizations in the

process of consolidation, new indigenous human resources who are trained and participating in State bodies in decision making positions.

Presently, following the demand of the reconstruction of the country through the Constituent Assembly and the approval of the New Political State Constitution, *"the path towards freedom"* poses a new challenge for us: achieve our OWN GOVERNMENT without any interference of the traditional political parties, in order to appropriate the full exercise of the right to decision making, by achieving INDIGENOUS AUTONOMY.

To leave a record of this history, we wrote down, with more details, some of the more important milestones that for us have marked *"the path towards freedom"* of the Monkoxi people of Lomerio.



Period before Colonization

Our history narrates that the region of present-day Chiquitania was populated by more than 50 indigenous groups. The majority lived in egalitarian societies and did not produce surplus; the *woodland* provided everything they needed for their subsistence. Our ancestors traversed great distances to collect, hunt and fish, and to satisfy their need for clothing and tools. There were numerous semi-nomadic groups that would alternate periods of crop preparation (yucca and corn) with

journeys across great extensions of forests and rivers, and then go back to harvest.

They were organized in extensive family groups and decisions were made by all adult members. The chief, who stood out for his warrior virtues, public speaking abilities and generosity, also intervened in case of crisis, generally when there were conflicts with other groups, and he was backed by the elders. The figure with the most symbolic power was the shaman, who had the capacity of healing the sick.



Pre-missionary Period (1542)

The arrival of the Spanish looking for "El Dorado", or rather GOLD, during the XVI century, started a period of conquest of indigenous ethnic groups that occupied the "chiquitano" territory. These raids never accomplished their objective. As early as 1557, Spanish people began exploiting natural resources and indigenous

workforce to provide personal services in Spanish agricultural properties, or for forced labor in the mines of Potosi through the *encomienda*⁴.

During this period fights and uprisings were frequent, and many indigenous groups were withdrawing to areas free from Spanish occupation.

⁴Encomienda – Was an institution implemented by the Spanish conquerors during the colonization of America in order to capitalize indigenous labor. It involved the delivery of a group of indians to a Spaniard for him to protect, educate and evangelize. Essentially it was a Spanish labor system that rewarded conquerors with the labor of particular groups of subjects (indians).



Missionary Period

(1691 - 1767)

This period is the beginning of the pacification and its objective was to integrate the territory and the native people to the Spanish crown. For this, 10 missions or "reducciones" were established, and the JESUIT congregation, who did not answer to the colonial administration but was directly accountable to the king, was put in charge of them.

The consolidation of the missions was achieved through the intervention of Spanish merchants and slave traffickers who raided indigenous territories, causing natives to accept "reducciones" as a form of protection against the

Spanish, since missions had the authority to prohibit the Spanish from entering their territory. However, many indigenous groups moved away to inaccessible places in order to escape from Spanish as well as Jesuit missionaries.

The Missions were organized in villages, formed by natives of all ethnicities who inhabited the territories between the rivers Pilcomayo, Paraguay and Rio Grande or Guapay. Each ethnic group lived separately. Until 1667, approximately 37,000 indigenous people lived in the Missions.

During this period a hierarchic political system called "Cabildo" was established,

comprised of political positions held by indigenous authorities (Caciques) of different nations which constituted the Mission.

The Caciques had to maintain order in the Missions and supervise the work, making sure it got done. The missionary which headed each "reduccion" had absolute power, and relied on the authority of the Caciques to impose order in the Mission.

One way of speaking was imposed and generalized as the only language which was also used for prayers. Cultural practices such as crafts, pictures, paintings, carvings were introduced, the later ones turned into monumental churches. Also specialized production was introduced: cattle industry, agriculture with different crops, mainly rice. Dams were built for water supply and fish farming management. These were activities unknown to the indigenous until then.

The indigenous worked for missionaries, and a percentage of the supplies and financial resources that they produced were allocated to the Mission. However,

they could not reach an adequate supply of animal proteins. For this reason the indigenous used to leave the Mission for some time and returned to their habitat in the wilderness. This allowed them to re-encounter with nature and their traditional practices of hunting, fishing and gathering.

According to the anthropologist Jurgen Riester, "it is difficult to talk about uninhabited or virgin places in the Chiquitania". During the Jesuit period, the Missions of San Javier and Concepcion, located in the province of Nuflo de Chavez, were the most populated. The cattle ranches started as small villages, however, the ancestral territory of the indigenous people of Lomerio, as it is named in its certificate of ancestry, was a difficult area to access and not suitable for cattle, therefore becoming a place to reconnect and a refuge for the "chiquitana" population who was fleeing the serfdom of the Missions and the cattle ranches.

Post-missionary Period

(1767 – 1880)

The missionary regime changed after the Jesuit people were expelled in 1767. The Missions were transferred to secular priests and then to public officials. A civil authority was established, taxes were fixed, and census were carried out. The old "recuccioness" became cattle ranches; the people who lived on them became the mestizo population.

This was the beginning of a new period of indigenous exploitation by authorities

backed by the government that had distributed indigenous lands to white and mestizo people, and had imposed the recruitment of the inhabitants of the Missions to serve as workforce in the cattle ranches. Towards the end of 1870 there was an expansion of the cattle ranches and farms with indigenous workforce in servile conditions, without any recognition or payment. They virtually became property of the landowners, who could sell them along with the land.

Therefore, Lomerio, because of its geography, became a place of refuge for the families that arrived in this territory and formed the present day communities. This is how our grandparents recount it:

"Therefore our parents, those who did not want to be under Jesuit rule because there they were forced to work, as if they were slaves, fled the "reducciones" in search of freedom, and came to live here. Each family settled depending on the place where they thought they had to live" (Miguel Garcia, personal account, 2014)

For example, in the San Antonio community, according to oral history, the community members recount:

"The Chuvé family is from San Javier. From what they told me, a certain Nicolas Chuvé was the first to arrive to this place. He came from San Javier, fleeing, I don't know what year. But according to what they told me, they left San Javier fleeing from the landowners because back then they were

really marginalized. That is why he came to live here. Don Nicolas Chuvé with his wife doña Josefa and their 3 children. These 3 children are the ones who worked here. Don Nicolas Chuvé went to Santa Cruz and there he died. However, the children stayed. The one who worked the most was Don Ignacio Chuvé, in this case my grandfather. Surely the family of Parapaino was also here, I don't know where they came from. there was another family as well, the Soqueré. In 1939 after the war, they built the small chapel where they chose an image; San Antonio. I suppose that since then this place is called San Antonio, with the image of San Antonio of Padua. We have the image here" (Pedro Chuvé, personal account, 2014).

Each community has its own story of how families arrived, established and settled, in the case of Puquío, Don Miguel Ípamo relates:

"The first inhabitant here is called Nicolas Supayabe, and that old man is my

grandfather; the old man's spouse is called Isabel Parapaino. My grandfather told me: 'I came from here, from the passage, to look for this place here, and I found it. Here there is water that never dries up and that is why I came to build my house here, because of the water we have now'. Thus, this natural spring here in our language, Nantaichu, is called Puquiao; until now this is its name for this spring water that never dried and still hasn't dried up (personal account, 2014).

Therefore, this is how Lomerio was formed, like our grandfather and leader Miguel Garcia recounts:

"From that period until now we are a big population, we come from; San Javier, San Ignacio, Concepcion, San Miguel, San Rafael and Santo Corazon. From these places the families have come to live here. Now, Lomerio is composed by 29 communities of different groups, and that is why there are different languages

spoken in Lomerio; what dominates now is the Monkoxi language which is the Besiro, but here there are also: Paunaca, Tetemocas, Kusiki, Paiconecas and other groups. If we carefully analyze the existence of our communities, their origin are the Jesuit Missions and some ex-cattle ranches" (personal account, 2014).

Lomerian history and identity was shaped by an unequal relationship of coloniality between Monkoxi and the others. The following periods of the Bolivian historic process have their peculiarities in these people whose quest for freedom was always a utopia.



Rubber boom and Railways to Corumba Period





During the rubber boom (1880-1920) in the departments of Pando and Beni, the indigenous people were subjected to forced labor and, in many cases, hired by the new patrons, mestizo cruceños⁵ and foreigners (German, English).

During this period, the system of slavery prevailing in the rubber plantations and the ranches caused many indigenous to flee towards less traveled and remote places, thereby establishing free ranches and communities, living off what was provided by the wilderness, the rivers and work on the land; and one of these communities is Lomerio.

After the Chaco war (1932 - 1935) between Bolivia and Paraguay, a new period of indigenous displacement began, since many indigenous were freed from military

service and obligatory recruitment, thus giving them the opportunity of creating new, free communities. This is how they returned to territories traditionally occupied by natives. Nevertheless, the working conditions for the indigenous people did not change substantially. Even though forced registration was abolished in 1937, they continued working in the rubber plantations and cattle ranches under the system of chained debt or "hook", which was passed from one generation to the next. The payment generally consisted of dresses for women and a shirt and trousers for men.

On the other hand, the construction of the Santa Cruz - Corumba railway (1945) broke up the indigenous territories once again, forcing them to relocate in new settlements; in some cases, the railway construction hired indigenous labor for

⁵Cruceño is the term used to refer to people who are from the Department of Santa Cruz.

the first time in exchange for money, and subjected them to speculators and merchants.

From this period painful testimonies have been recounted by the grandchildren, now elders, who tell about the suffering of our parents and grandparents:

"Listen carefully to what I say, ladies. There in the 'rubber' there was no respect. The foremen measured or counted 200 sticks, for men as well as for women, they sent the husbands to one side and the wives to the other. The foremen went after the women. There in the 'rubber' there were devils, because there in the rubber there were no husbands. And if they did not finish tapping the rubber, they were punished with the whip. There women belonged to the foremen." (Asunta Jimenez, personal account, 2014).

Testimonies like the one of Mr. Alonso Supayabe, whose parents had been slaves in the rubber plantation, show:

"When my father returned from the Chaco war he looked for a lady. When they married there was already slavery. Thus, they took him to work to Piedra Marcada, a league from here, where a master (landlord) used to live. There he was forced to have an account because they gave him clothing and they gave him soap paste, or booze (alcohol) and all was charged to his account, and this way he was always in debt. Until they brought him to the rubber plantation, he was still young then; he did not even have one child, but then he was with my mother and they had a little child. There the work was harder, because they had their child there and were working, but not together. The woman on one side and the man on the other side, all day

long. They had to walk almost 4 leagues. One has to be in the plantation all day long, and there he had his little son, and to leave that son he had to tie him up to the bed to prevent him from falling. When he comes back at night, he finds his baby son all dirty and peed, and he has not been breastfeed all day because there was no one to feed him, and that is how life was in the rubber plantation back then" (personal account, 2014).

In the collective memory of the Monkoxi people this is a dark epoch in which no one was free: parents, grandparents, women, all were slaves.

Even during the Chaco war, the abuse continued. The recruit of men in the battlefield between Bolivians and Paraguayans was not sufficient. After they returned, the Lomerians continued to be under the abuse of landowners and cattle ranchers in the area.

"In the past the masters made the youth foremen, and if something wasn't right regarding the work, they immediately exerted punishment. When the worker got tired, the foreman put the machete on his shoulder. Formerly, grandparents didn't speak Spanish well, but they made themselves understood. One day one of the young men stood up to the master and told him to go weed; it was my grandfather, he tried to defense himself by beating the master, and said: "these whites aren't strong". For this they got angry and gave him a lashing. They stretched him out with 4 stakes, what they did to my grandfather hurt me so much, he cried when he told me and so did I. The master was up on a tree and beat a drum while they whipped him. Back then our lives had no value, they treated us worse than dogs. If somebody died, we had nowhere to appeal to, no one to turn to" (Asunta Jimenez, personal account, 2014).





The Agrarian Reform (1953)

The 1953 Agrarian Reform does not recognize indigenous communal land: it re-distributed individual plots of land but not communal ones. Family plots were distributed, contributing in this way to the expansion of cattle ranches, causing the subordination of indigenous families to the ranch-owners. Nevertheless, the majority of indigenous families lived in their own communities.

In Lomerío the end of the masters' oppression over the indigenous youth (mozos, as they called them) was slow coming because here masters (land owners) continued to oppress the communities, kept on enslaving them. The creation of trade unions was the seed that slowly sprouted, bringing an end to the days of the whip.







Period of Unionism

Mr. Ignacio Garcia recounts this period as follows:

"In 1961 we created an agrarian union; it was a way to maintain communities free and independent from the masters' oppression. In the San Lorenzo community, headed by Bruno Suarez, the first leader, we organized the first agrarian union in order to work together and we planted peanuts and sugar cane. However, we lacked training, loyalty and honesty; due to this weakness it did not prosper. Unionism ended with the persecution of the leaders." (personal account, 2014).

The '52 revolution and the Agrarian Reform that followed opened a gap that marks the path towards freedom. The end of slavery in Lomerio happened in a meeting in the Salinas community, fuelled by a commission which came from the city of Santa Cruz, to put an end to this malaise that was present in the society of Lomerio. According to the accounts of the grandparents, we had to take by force the masters of that time. These men who had cattle ranches and farms around these places were taken, tied up by their ex laborers, and whipped.

It was in the Salinas community where this incident that is still present in the collective memory of the people of Lomerio happened: "Those masters German Pedraza and Benjamin Roman came here to get whipped because the people said... stop slavery! Therefore those masters were brought here, they were stretched out with four stakes and whipped, and here slavery ended" (Elvio Rodriguez, personal account, 2014).

Later the Committees or Subcentrales were formed, with Mr. Miguel Garcia Chuve of the Surusubi community. Those were times in which the country was ruled by dictators, and it was prohibited to hold meetings or gather in big groups.

"But later ... I went to my military service and came back. I had been working in Santa Cruz for 10 years, therefore I knew; I understood what unionism was, so I came back and reorganized unions here. In 1970, it was reorganized. It was working for 12 years. I was executive secretary of

the committee in Puquio. The authorities in Concepcion were used to taking people of Lomerio by force. It took 12 years to stop all the abuse, there were threats, because here we had meetings and it was the time when the military was in power".

In the 1980's the unification of the indigenous movement from the lowlands began, with the creation of the CIDOB (Confederation of the Indigenous People of Bolivia) and of the CICOL (Indigenous Centre of the Native Communities of Lomerio), in defense of their territory and for the consolidation of their rights. In this period the indigenous people organized and vindicated their right to access, use and manage the natural resources in the territories their ancestors occupied.

In Lomerio the historical processes had its own particularities. The unions were closing a cycle. On the other hand, persons like Benito Chuve, from the San Lorenzo community, worked in Santa Cruz translating the Bible into the Besiro

language. This was the place where Jorge Riester, director of the Support for the Indigenous Farmers of the East (APCOB), met Benito Chuve, and as a result of that meeting Jorge Riester came to Lomerio.

This was an institution that worked for many years with the people of Lomerio and accompanied us in a very important process of strife. When it first arrived APCOB formed the Temporary Committee; Mr. Ignacio Garcia Supayabe and Mr. Esteban Quiviquivi were in charge of it.

Miguel Garcia recounts:

"At that time, in 1982, the unions were still working and I was the executive secretary. The CIDOB in Santa Cruz was organized, with the participation of 4 people (indigenous groups). We participated and when we came back here we debated whether we should continue as a union or we needed to reorganize. So we agreed

that we would change once and for all; we changed according to what was approved in Santa Cruz. We figured it was good to be represented at the national level and have someone representing us here at the department level. That year in that same month, on the 17th of November, we had the meeting. What was once the Committee was transformed, and the name was changed to what is now the CICOL".

The CICOL organization has now existed for 32 years, and has gone through a long trajectory of actions that translate into the acknowledgment and exercise of indigenous rights. One of the most important achievements was the entitlement to an area of 259 thousand hectares as communal land for the 29 communities the CICOL represents.



The CICOL Organization

In 1982 the Intercommunal Campesino Centre of East Lomerio was founded, whose acronym is CICOL.

The CICOL directors defined our organization as:

"A society founded, not in a religion, not in an ethnicity, not in a political opinion, it is based on a culture, on the principle of freedom, of whom loves freedom, and for this wish, this burning desire for freedom one can STAND OUT".

Initially the CICOL fought for the following issues:

- Organizational Strengthening
- Consolidation of Indigenous Territory
- Production and Economy
- Education and Health



Its first president was Mr. Ignacio Garcia Supayabe, from the Puquio community. Since its formation, CICOL has become consolidated as an organization and acquired legitimacy. Table 4 lists the various chiefs who directed and direct CICOL.

Table 4: Presidents and General Chiefs of the CICOL Organization

NAMES AND LAST NAMES	POSITION	PERIOD IN OFFICE
Ignacio García Supayabe	President of CICOL	- 1984
Ignacio García Supayabe	President of CICOL	1985 - 1986
Nicolás Supayabe Pocoena	President of CICOL	1987 - 1990
Rubén Suarez Choré	President of CICOL	1991 - 1994
Juan Soqueré Gómez	President of CICOL	1996 - 2001
Augustín García Choré	President of CICOL	2002 - 2005
Ignacio Soqueré Tomichá	General Chief of CICOL	2006 - 2009
Nélida Faldín Chuvé	General Chief of CICOL	2009 - 2012
Juan Soqueré Chuvé	General Chief of CICOL	6 October 2012
Anacleto Peña Supayabe	General Chief of CICOL	2013 - 2016

Source: prepared by authors

Sustainable Forests Management and Natural Resources,

Territorial

Consolidation and

Organizational

Strengthening

Project

One year later, in 1983, the CICOL Organization got technical support from **“APCOB” Support for the Eastern Farmers of Bolivia**, with whom they managed to channel funding to execute together the forestry project in Lomerio. Based on the Bolivian forestry legislation, we proceeded to draft a request from the State of Bolivia for a forest concession of a surface area of 150,000 hectares, as a requirement for access to sustainable forestry management. This initiative was not well received by some communities who opposed the delimitation of the forest concession in Lomerio. Following the proposal the communities who agreed with the sustainable forestry management were identified, and the project was recognized for its rational use of natural resources in the area of Lomerio. In 1984 the first forest inventory of the area of Lomerio was undertaken.

In 1986 they managed to continue with the execution of the forest project CICOL/APCOB, whose objective was to execute a forest census, and ensure the supply of raw materials to be transformed into a stable sawmill that was already in the process of being installed in the Puquio community of Lomerio. In order to access a forest concession, it was required to have a sawmill. It was finally installed in 1988 with a social aim rather than for business reasons, because the sawmill contributed to the consolidation of the territorial claim, the improvement of housing and the creation of new employment opportunities. In 1992 we expelled the private timber corporations which were illegally extracting commercially precious species of wood with no means to ensure the recovery of the forest. On March 19th, 1993 the Quebrada Azul timber company was expelled.

The investigations and practices of sustainable forestry management carried out in Lomerio lay down the foundation for the creation of the Bolivian Forestry Law N° 1700.

The CICOL Organization initiative of heading towards a system for the management of natural resources attained State recognition in 1994 for its sawmill. The efforts in management and conservation of natural resources, and the pioneering experience inspired by Lomerio, marked a new challenge: certification. With this objective in mind, the PSV project and BOLFOR started preparing an assessment mission along with SNV, an assessment for pre-certification.

Subsequently, in 1995, the forestry management assessment was carried out in Lomerio by the Smart Wood (*Green*

label) assessment mission, thereby achieving international recognition of Lomerio for its practices in conservation and forestry management.

In 1996, the CICOL organization, and therefore Lomerio, received the certificate SM - FM - 010, known as Sello Verde (*green label*), as fair recognition for the efforts and initiatives of its leaders. Since then, Lomerio was seen worldwide as a model for forestry management. This was the beginning of exporting certified timber from sustainable forestry management sources.

The actions taken in the forestry sector in Lomerio responded to a combined strategy for the consolidation of its territory.





Context and Struggle of the Indigenous Movement and CICOL

to Consolidate
its Territories

On the 15th of August, 1990 representatives of the CICOL participated in the First National Indigenous March organized by the Indigenous Confederation of Bolivia CIDOB, departing from the city of Trinidad, in the department of Beni. It was called "**March for Territory and Dignity**". In this march, the CIDOB proposed to the government in power at the time, the creation of an Indigenous law whose central issue was the attainment of Self-determination of the Indigenous people of Bolivia. Using this petition as a starting point, the government split the proposal issuing three laws: the Popular Participation Law, Educational Reform and the Forestry Law N°1700.

The second indigenous march in 1996, "**For Territory, Land, Political Rights, and Development**", was an action whose principal achievement was the approval of Law 1715 or INRA Law, which recognized the right of the indigenous native people to their Indigenous Territories (TCO, *Tierras Comunitarias de Origen*).

Thus the process of the restructuring of "indigenous territories" began. Under this framework, the Indigenous Centre of Native Communities of Lomerío (CICOL) submitted a demand for an area of 300,000 hectares from the national government through the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA).

On the other hand, internally as an organizational strategy, 16 years after its creation, the CICOL organization decides to broaden its field of action. Since then the areas of action are the following:

- Organizational Strengthening
- Indigenous Territorial Consolidation
- Natural Resources and Environment
- Production and Economy
- Education
- Health
- Gender

CICOL formed a technical group and named it Executive Technical Body (CTE), whose specific function was the execution, training and support in the execution of projects within the communities.

During 1997 and 1998 there were 3 main events:

The territorial consolidation of the TCO Lomerío through the formation of an Inter-institutional Commission (CICOL, APCOB, CEJIS, BOLFOR, and SNV) to facilitate the restructuring process of the Lomerío territory (1997).

The beginning of the Five-year Project CICOL/APCOB whose programs implemented Indigenous territorial management in Lomerío with the development of a code for the use of natural resources of each community, and communal plans and regulations (1997).

Two plans for sustainable forestry management were approved under the new forestry regime: Law N°1700 (1998).

Later in 2000, CICOL participated in the Third March of the Indigenous People from the Lowlands, for which, through a Supreme Decree, Besiro was recognized as an official language of the country.

In 2001 the Indigenous Territorial Management project began. It was a unique experience in Bolivia. An exclusive development model created by Indigenous Peoples: the Indigenous Territorial Management which, from the Lomerío experience, is the exercise of Indigenous autonomy.

This year, in the context of many changes, CICOL, 19 years later, decided to widen its lines of action:

- Organizational Strengthening
- Indigenous Territorial Consolidation
- Natural Resources and Environment
- Production and Economy
- Education
- Health
- Basic services



In 2002 CICOL participated in the Fourth Indigenous National March "**For Popular Sovereignty, Territory and Natural Resources**", which put forth the need for the realization of a constituent assembly. CICOL attained a representative, electing Madam Nélide Faldin Chuve as constituent assembly member.

In 2006, after a long process of restructuring, the consolidation of the Indigenous territory of Lomerío was achieved. This became a reality with the Executive Land Title for TCO; 259.188,7205 hectares in the name of the Indigenous people of Lomerío, whose legal and legitimate representative is the board of directors of the CICOL organization.

The characteristics of the land title for our territorial property is shown in Table 2 and Map 3.

All these consecutive moments in our history strengthened us as a people, and as an indigenous organization. We are conscious that we exercise self-government based on the management of our forests and territory. Our projection for the future is to

consolidate our territorial indigenous autonomy within the framework of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. To this end we have defined strategies that will allow us to reach our goal.

Table 2: Characteristics of the Land Title Deed

<p>Land Title No. TCO – NAL – 000114</p> <p>Bearer: CICOL.</p> <p>Property name: Indigenous Native Peoples of Lomerío.</p> <p>Surface area: 259.188,7205 hectares</p> <p>Type of property: Land of Communal Origin</p> <p>Type of Title: Collective</p> <p>Type of Legal Instrument: Administrative resolution</p> <p>Type title: Endowment</p> <p>Registration in Legal Office: 7032010000335 A – 1 of 23 October 2006</p>
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Source: COCIL Archives



