

STATE INTERVENTION IN INDIGENOUS ECONOMIES:
"THE CASE OF VENEZUELAN INDIAN COLLECTIVES"

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the organization of an unprecedented rural development program of Indian collectives in Venezuela. Based partly on a case study of two empresa communities, the dissertation critically considers the contradictory objectives, and the forms and level of efficacy of state intervention in indigenous economies, vis a vis these communities' own characteristics, needs, and active collaboration or resistance. The majority of data for this study was collected during six months of fieldwork in two empresa communities: the Bari empresa of Saimadoyi and the Pume empresa of Kumani. Data were also obtained through interviews and archival research in national and regional government offices. The fundamental questions relate to 1) the broad economic and political factors, both historical and structural, that influenced the genesis and transformation of Indian policy from welfare to development and 2) the impact that these collective organizations had on the lives of those who joined the program. The analysis is rooted in the theoretical debates on how state policies are generated in dependent capitalist economies, and debates on state-induced agrarian transition in Latin America--particularly in the context of ethnic Indian communities.

A mis padres, Rosa Elena Y Hector.

To Bob, the best companero.

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This is a study about the limits of democracy in a democratic society. It is a study about the extent to which the Venezuelan state has succeeded in extending democratic rights to the indigenous communities that inhabit the frontiers of the national territory. And it is about the way Indian communities participate as active social protagonists in the tug of war for state resources and fundamental rights. Specifically, this work is concerned with a state-sponsored rural development program among indigenous groups which was purportedly based on emancipatory principles of economic democracy and self-determination. My personal belief in such principles and my interest in learning how they are translated into action, provided me with the incentive to pursue this research.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE VENEZUELAN STATE, INDIAN COMMUNITIES and COLLECTIVIZATION

Behind an apparently simple "fascination" of governments and academics with rural development in recent years lies the reality of an ever-expanding capital accumulation process which inches into the last frontiers of Latin America. Massive development programs, often supported by international agencies, have paved the road (sometimes literally) for the penetration of capital into these frontiers. There, capital encounters the last indigenous communities. The process of capital penetration is uneven and polymorphous. It has transformed communities in these frontier areas in varying degrees and in different ways. Some have remained "relatively autonomous" in their everyday reproduction, while the survival of others has become highly dependent on their participation in commodity production--either as buyers or sellers of commodities, including their labor.

For the most part, rural development projects and agrarian reforms--let alone massive, capital intensive projects--in contemporary Latin America have not targeted the more isolated, or "corporate" Indian communities as their key clientele.¹ Rather, these programs have focused on those agrarian groups and classes that are better integrated into the capitalist market of both labor and agricultural commodities. In Venezuela, the thrust of programs for Indian communities has consisted of educational and

social relief programs administered under the paternalist orientation of the Catholic church, in a growing partnership with the Venezuelan government.

Nevertheless, the planned or unplanned impact of economic development on indigenous communities in Latin America, and Venezuela specifically, has often produced profound transformations in the social and economic structures of these groups.² Most notably, they have experienced new levels of proletarianization, or semi-proletarianization, as they become more dependent on outside commodities and have lost control over significant portions of their land base and resources. With the possible exception of a few small groups or bands in the more remote areas of the Venezuelan territory, most Indian communities participate, either as individuals or as a group, in the sale of labor power and food commodities in the local and regional market. The extent to which this takes place and its consequences varies significantly from group to group. The main point remains, however, that in the rather recent capitalist expansion and industrialization experienced by nations such as Venezuela, the accompanying transformation of the countryside has reached the last Indian tribes--more often than not as a secondary effect than as a clearly intended objective.

In the 1970s, progressive anthropologists and other concerned individuals all over the world began to raise the alarm about the destructive effects of economic development projects on Indian

communities, including the erosion of their own economic base. This brought about a new concern with alternative, grass-roots, development. States often responded by paying at least some lip-service to the vocal denunciations of these social scientists through the organization of new programs and new official rhetoric that bespoke of Indian "self-determination", and "self-efficiency". But, most importantly, it was reflected in the participation of militant social scientists as consultants or advocates for the independent development projects of indigenous groups.³

In Venezuela, amidst serious charges of land invasions and genocide linked to state and private efforts to expand the agricultural frontier, Congress mandated the organization of an Indian Development program to be housed within the institute in charge of agrarian reform, "Instituto Agrarian Nacional," (IAN). This was without doubt an unprecedented event in the history of Indian affairs in Venezuela, and in fact rather unique in Latin America as a whole. By the late seventies, however, some were already arguing that this program was but a newer and more direct mechanism used by the state to incorporate Indian communities into the process of capitalist development. Moreover, criticisms focused on the organization of Empresas Indigenas (collective production enterprises) which were the main axis of the Indian development program. Several anthropologists argued that this collective "design" contradicted the Indian communities' leadership structures and traditional ways of organizing their production. Such contradictions, they contended, would inevitably lead to poor

program performance and, worse yet, social disorganization and cultural death.

This dissertation focuses on the Venezuelan Indian development program. It examines two intimately related questions. The first focuses on the particular economic, social and political factors that determined the apparent change in and the general evolution of Indian policy during the 1970s. The new policy--not always explicitly or clearly articulated--seemed to move away from a narrow focus on Indian education and social welfare to a concern with the modernization of Indian rural economies. Eventually, the form this modernization policy took was that of the organization of collective production units.

Two major categories of factors are considered particularly crucial in the evolution of this new Indian policy and the economic development program in particular. One is the important role played by the "state" in facilitating impeding the process. The second is the particular social and economic configuration of the different Indian communities and social groups participating in this process.

The second question, or set of questions, has to do with the overall impact that these collective enterprises and the Indian program in general have had on the lives of those who joined the program. How are Indian⁴ communities transformed by their participation in these types of development programs? How does the Indian's view differ from that of outside agents regarding what

this cooperative can do for them, for the preservation of whatever socio-economic and cultural patterns they deem crucial to their existence, and for the transformation of those economic, political, and social conditions they view as a threat to that existence? And ultimately, could this type of project, despite its origin as state policy, lead to meaningful, grass-roots development which, as Clay (1987:2) stated, "...is not separated from everyday life and strengthens the community by enhancing its ability to identify and work collectively to solve local problems and to defend its own interests."

I focus most closely on two empresas: the empresa of Kumani organized among the Pume or Yaruro group in the state of Apure; and, the empresa of Saimadoyi organized among the Bari in the state of Zulia (see Figure 1.1). The primary data for this study was collected during six months of field work in these two empresa communities and from government archives. For a more detailed statement on the field research see Appendix A.

I. Collectivization and Cooperatives: Basic Definitions and the Venezuelan Versions

Before elaborating on the two questions posed above, it will be useful to arrive at some basic working definitions for, and fundamental distinctions between, such economic forms of organization as "collectives" as opposed to cooperatives, and subsequently locate the empresas Indigenas within these categories. It is to Boguslaw Gallecki (1975, 1973, 1987) that we owe much of

FIGURE 1.1



Venezuela, Location of Bari and Pume empresas

the analytical clarification of collective organizations vis-a-vis other forms of farm organization. According to Galleski, collective farms differ in such important aspects as the degree of socialization of property (means of production), labor, and distribution of output. "From this point of view collective farms may be placed on the continuum ranging from aggregates of family farms linked by certain forms of cooperation, to the fully integrated collective operation" (1987:104). As examples, Galleski placed the Soviet "Toz" form of organization at one pole, and the Soviet communes of the 1920s and Israeli "Kibbutzim" at the other pole of the continuum.

Most cases of collectivized farms fall somewhere in between the two poles of this continuum and thus one observes several combinations of family-based and collective production. Some authors favor the term "cooperative" for those cases that fall at the lowest end of the socialization continuum; for example, cases where production takes place at the level of independent households but utilizes the cooperative's services in areas such as credit solicitations or marketing of their products. The term "collective" is then reserved for those cases in which independent household production has totally disappeared and given rise to such organizations as state farms.⁵

In Venezuela, the *empresas Indigenas* constitute a variation of the "*empresas campesinas*" (peasant enterprises) model elaborated within the juridical proscriptions on cooperation in general allowed by the agrarian reform law.⁶ The term *empresas campesinas*

was used loosely before 1973 and included peasant organizations that never achieved a significant degree of collectivization. However, in 1973, during the administration of Carlos Andres Perez, these organizations were redefined and given unprecedented levels of state support. They were designated as a "higher" form of cooperative, and, at least on paper, came to approximate more closely the ideal type of collective than had been the case with any of the previously established peasant organizations.⁷ The official definition of these organizations follows:

An *empresa campesina* (peasant enterprise) is a non-profit civil unelected society constituted and organized by agrarian reform beneficiaries who have a collective title to land. The land, capital, and labor belong in common to all the members. Members assume, and share equally, the responsibilities for administering the benefits according to the amount of work contributed" (CIARA document cited in Cox, 1981).

These empresas campesinas were seen during the early to mid-seventies as the latest answer to the Latin American agrarian and peasant questions.⁸ The arguments supporting this new enthusiasm for collective enterprises were very similar throughout the continent. In Venezuela, proponents of the *empresas campesinas* within Perez's administration cited a number of advantages these organizations had over the family-farm model favored under the earlier phase of the agrarian reform. Among such advantages were the possibility of avoiding risks related to micro-crop failures; the benefit of economies of scale; more efficient and economic means of distributing credit and other state resources, and, improved opportunities for incorporating these larger production

organizations into complex agroindustrial processes. (Cox, 1981; IAN-CIARA, 1976). The proponents of these organizations (which included the President of IAN at the time) also emphasized social and cultural goals, especially the notions of democratic self-management (autogestion) and egalitarian distribution of work and outputs (Cox, 1981). This latter emphasis was largely reflective of the intellectual climate of the time and particularly the arguments for participatory democracy.

The pro-Indian individuals or "indigenistas"⁹ hired to manage the IAN Indian development program, and outside Indigenistas (often anthropologists, sociologists, and lawyers) working with them, had argued from the beginning for the establishment of economic organizations in Indian communities based on communal principles. They believed these principles were more consonant with these communities' own social and economic organization. They were however constrained in their options of economic organizations allowed within the proscriptions of the agrarian reform law. Consequently, they chose to adopt the model of *empresas campesinas*, but hoped to adapt it to the particular characteristics and needs of the different Indian communities as the program developed.

The IAN indigenistas also stressed collective ownership of land and means of production, and the collective organization of the work process. Much more so than with the *empresas campesinas*, however, the *empresas Indigenas*, as conceived by the Indigenistas, were to generate a permanent balance between family (or eventually community-based subsistence production and collective production)

destined for the market. Furthermore, the emphasis was to be placed on social and cultural goals, with only relatively modest goals for economic productivity. The small surplus expected to be produced by these empresas was to be in accordance with consumption needs that had to be satisfied through the local market. This included a few food items and small tools (see Clarac and Valdez, 1976 and Heinen, 1981a).

In summary, the empresas Indigenas fell somewhere in the middle of the collectivization continuum devised by Galeski. For this reason, I will use the terms "collective" and "cooperative" interchangeably. Distinctions such as simple vs. complex or expanded forms of cooperation will refer to the distinction between indigenous forms of cooperation limited to individual tasks, and the more encompassing form of cooperation introduced by the new collective organization--in this case the empresas Indigenas.

II. Structural and Historical Forces in the Evolution of Cooperatives and Collectivization

The first question posed in this dissertation refers to the nature and structural location of the various forces that shaped the creation and evolution of a development program among Venezuelan Indians with its emphasis on the organization of collective enterprises. I have identified two major factors which I believe account for the particular evolution of this program. One is the "state" as a major actor in the articulation and implementation of this policy. The second, is the Indian

communities themselves as active, even if less powerful, actors in this historical process. A more valid way to understand these factors however is to see them as complex categories which must be carefully disaggregated in order to assess their impact in the transformation of Indian communities. It is to the examination of these two categories of factors that I now turn.

A. The State and Rural/Indian Economic Development

In Latin America, the state, as opposed to the peasantry, has been the major actor behind collectivization and rural development projects in general, and the success rate of these projects is low. Stavenhaggen (1975), de Janvry (1981), Fals Borda (1977), Huizer (1984a), and Zamosc (1986) have documented the collapse and parcelization of cooperatives, and the eventual disillusionment with collectivization programs. Writers link this abysmal record to the fact that such projects have been consistently tied to the national political and economic imperatives of capitalist development. In other words, cooperative movements, like other programs of agrarian reform in Latin America, have been molded to serve political functions such as pacifying the countryside, or economic functions such as increasing productivity of cheap foodstuffs. In this manner, the questions of subordination of the peasantry to the capitalist market and their participation in highly inegalitarian economic and social structures have been relegated to a subordinate position. For example, in his analysis of Mexican collective ejidos, Bartra (1976) shows that reorganization of the peasantry into ejidos by the Mexican

government during the late 1960s, was intended to avert a serious economic and political crisis should the decomposition and proletarianization of the peasantry continue unabated.

Zamosc (1986), writing about Colombia, contends that institutionally supported efforts to mobilize the peasantry, and the organization of "empresas campesinas" (peasant cooperative enterprises) during the late 1960s, were part of a larger state economic and social strategy to resolve a severe crisis of poverty, unemployment, and capital accumulation.

Fals Borda, (1977:15)¹⁰ in summarizing the classical works on the subject, concludes that in "Latin America, the cooperative movements have generally been stimulated by political motives: they are like a medium to pacify a rising people...they have taken place primarily during economic and political crisis or in the middle of threats of a rural uprising; or when fears about the 'threat of communism' have emerged and the impact of the Cuban revolution is being measured."

Although somewhat less critical of government goals, those who have studied Peruvian collectivization during the early 1970s write of the ultimate subordination of peasant empowerment, self-determination, and equal distribution of rural resources, to issues of productivity and efficiency--both political and economic (Huizer, 1984; Kay, 1983; Long, 1978).

Critics of the Venezuelan Indian *empresas* have also tied the birth of this program to broad economic and political goals of the

state. Generally, they view the program as a concerted attempt by a variety of state agents to transform the Indian population into either a full- or a semi-proletarianized peasantry¹¹ contributing their cheap food and labor to the capitalist market. The program has also been seen as a mechanism of political control that allegedly thwarted a spontaneous Indian movement, and which, through clientelist politics, created an Indian leadership tied to the empresa's administrative bodies and state-supported Indian Federations.¹²

However, the rather insignificant place that frontier or more isolated Indian communities have occupied in the overall pattern of Venezuela's economic development raises serious questions about the overall validity of these assertions. Most specifically, it challenges one to explore the apparent analytical extrapolation from the study of rural development among the more integrated sectors of the peasantry to that of the possibly unique historical situation of Indian communities within the state and the economy.

I suggest that the first task in the consideration of the role of the state in initiating and implementing a new policy for Indian communities must be to make explicit the theoretical assumptions about "the state" and state policy-making with which one is working. In other words, it is necessary to understand what is meant by "the state" as that active participant in the elaboration of new policy orientations; and most importantly, to understand the various structural requirements as well as social forces and

political processes that shape state policies at different historical moments.

This is all the more important because even those who argue that grass-root economic development is the only route toward meaningful forms of economic democracy recognize the relevance of some form of state support for these projects.¹³ In fact, the literature on collectivization and cooperatives invariably recognizes the significance of "state commitment" to these collective forms of production as a key ingredient of success--particularly in third world countries.¹⁴ But as the few works cited above suggest, state support for collectivization does not necessarily equal a commitment to the transformation of the agrarian structure to increase equality. This historical fact has often been translated, in theoretical terms, into a discussion about the constraints placed on collective organizations existing within a capitalist vs. a socialist context. The UNSRID studies that Fals Borda directed, for example, concluded that the capitalist market inevitably undermines the development of true cooperatives in Latin America. Yet, the experience of socialist countries, both in eastern Europe, as well as experience in Africa and to some extent even Nicaragua, suggest that, for many complex reasons, there is no necessary equivalence between collective agricultural production and emancipatory goals (Deere, 1986; Galleski, 1973).

The analytical and historical tools adopted in this work are

of course those that contribute to the understanding of the capitalist state as it operates within the Venezuelan context. A major concern in the examination of such a state will be to establish the constraints limiting state action and policies of the sort considered here. Some of those constraints have to do with the presence of particular classes in the state and with external constraints emerging from a predominantly capitalist world economy. To that extent the discussion should, at least indirectly, contribute to the broader discussion of whether the capitalist context places unique constraints on the evolution of cooperatives toward economic democracy and the elimination of exploitative relations in the countryside.

B. The Venezuelan State, Classes, Parties and Changes in Indian Policy

Authors concerned with explaining the origin of the Indian development program and of the *empresas* specifically have not always been either very explicit or sufficiently consistent about their conceptualization of the Venezuelan state and the policy-making process. At times they seemed to have adopted a rather narrow "instrumentalist" view of the state and directly trace the Indian program to the conscious actions of individuals representing dominant economic interests. At other times, the emphasis seems to come closer to a "relative autonomy" view of the state whereby the new policy results from the actions of state agents with enough foresight to integrate the demands of Indians into state activities in the interest of social peace and ultimate preservation of

dominant political and economic relations.

According to Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo (1983), for example, the changes in Indian policy circa 1970 resulted from an internal struggle within state and COPEI party factions regarding the interpretation and implementation of this party's rural development policy, especially it touched with the frontier areas. These areas had acquired a special significance around this time because of a growing state and private interest in expanding the agricultural frontier and developing the rich mineral deposits located in the area. These were also the areas where the majority of the Venezuelan Indian population resided. Accordingly, the "desarrollistas," situated primarily within the National Border Council, and thus charged with articulating a new border policy coherent with these "dominant economic interests", favored a policy of colonization and development of these areas, and subsequently of territories traditionally considered Indian territories. To the extent that Indian populations were at all considered, their participation in the process of frontier protection and development was posed in terms of individual families integrated into the COPEI's integrated rural development programs.

On the other hand, there was the "neo-Indigenista" faction whose members occupied executive posts within the Instituto Agraron Nacional (IAN), which was, charged with the agrarian reform component of the rural policy, and the Comision para el Derarrollo del sur (CODESUR), a new agency created to oversee the overall policy of economic development in the Venezuelan southern

territories. According to these authors, the COPEI faction of neo-Indigenistas, apparently more concerned with the political fallout of the desarrollista perspective, favored a "more subtle" approach to frontier development and Indian integration, one that was also more atuned to the new Latin-American views on the Indian issue and which selectively incorporated into its ideological justifications terms such as "self-determination" and self-development.

The indigenistas proposed to achieve their aim of "controlling" the Indian population through a two-prong-economic and political-strategy. The political strategy was the well-tested method of a top-down organization of Indian Federations and a national Confederation which would essentially operate under the umbrella and with the blessing of the COPEI government. According to Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo, these Indian Federations were explicitly "designed by criollo Indigenistas in order to control a threatening and massive Indian movement which did not have a visible leadership", while COPEI gained a new political constituency. But these authors saw in the leadership of the Empresas Indigenas a still more effective means of control. This leadership, they allege, was created by these same Indigenistas with the "hope that they learn how to channel economic and social change in the direction wished by national and/or international economic interests..." (1983:513).

In what they attribute to a case of "bureaucratic inefficiency," the strategy of the desarrollistas, despite the

dominance of this group within the current regime, was ultimately defeated and the Indigenistas successfully created a political space for Indian-specific development programs. However, these critics argue, this brought COPEI an unexpected windfall as the Indigenista development program not only averted any possible confrontations between Indians and criollos, but the tenets of such a program were coherent with national economic interests-- especially as stated in the National Plans. Despite changes during the following administrations of the opposition party AD, the program continued and ultimately the de-mobilization of the Indian population was largely completed.

The scenario presented by Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo seems reasonable enough. Especially when evaluated against the historical backdrop of similar state-peasant relationships. However, their argument suffers from several theoretical and empirical weaknesses. I will only point to a couple of problems here.

It is never made totally clear, for example, why IAN Indigenistas and their allies were so intent on controlling the Indian population. However, the implication seems to be that their location within the COPEI party (not strongly documented) and within the state's structure (though not all pro-Indian program elements were), indicates that their interests are perfectly coherent with those of other party and state agents.

Parties and political structures are thus ultimately characterized as monolithic entities within which, despite a lack

of consensus about concrete strategies, the interests of individual social actors are homogeneous and ultimately correspond with dominant national economic interests. In addition, as their argument progresses, their tone becomes increasingly conspiratorial.

The central problem in explanations such as those provided by these authors, lies in their dismissal or at least their inadequate consideration, of structural and political limitations to policy formulation and developments emerging from Venezuela's economic and class structure. The authors are certainly aware of the larger changes occurring in Venezuela's pattern of development and capitalist accumulation. However, the connections they establish between such changes in the economy and the state are overly simplistic and fail to capture the complexities and contradictory nature of the policy-making process. According to the underlying logic of their argument, "dominant economic interests" are broadly identified, yet within the context of a class analysis. Political parties in power articulate policies address these economic interests while supporting their own political position and their party and state agents unproblematically carry them out. The only opposition to such a dynamic lies outside of the state. In this context, policies result primarily from political decision-making among state agents who unproblematically and homogeneously represent dominant "national" economic and political interests. Their argument suffers from an extreme politicism.¹⁵

Instrumental and even conspiratorial theses are not totally out of the question when considering the ways in which the dominant class and state agents impose their agenda on a particular society. But first, this is something that has to be demonstrated; and secondly, its proof lies partially in the consideration and subsequent discarding of alternative explanations. A way out of what are essentially mechanistic explanations is to seriously explore Venezuela's accumulation pattern and the specific types of demands it places on the state at different historical conjunctures, regardless of individual motives of state officials. As we do so, however, it is imperative to also discern (not simply assume) the nature of class forces and interest groups embedded in state and party structures.

In considering the factors that shaped Venezuela's new Indian policy and development program in the early 1970s one must examine much more closely the structural location and political space occupied by Venezuelan Indians in the overall pattern of social and economic relations. Two related issues immediately come to mind. One is the negligible contribution of most Indian economies to Venezuela's capital accumulation process and the high risks and costs associated with a state-induced modernization program of such economies vis a vis a more integrated peasantry. Secondly, the evidence of a "massive" Indian movement is minimal at best. At this point then, neither economic nor political motives as discussed by Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo seem to be sufficient for explaining the genesis of the program.

This is not to imply that once the reality of a new Indian policy was apparent to different class and political actors, such a policy was is not subject to different structural and political constraints that may, in fact, bring it closer to the dominant interests represented in the state. But this is exactly what must be explored. In Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo's argument, these constraints are glossed over and the only limits to Indian policy considered are those emerging from bureaucratic inefficiency or political decision-making. At the end of their argument they do consider why, despite the apparent capacity of state managers to direct policies toward national goals, programs like the Indian development program produce disappointing results. At this point they entirely switch their focus to the internal characteristics of the Indian communities and argue that the "traditional" structure of these communities were substantially incompatible with the *empresas Indigenas'* design.

There are very legitimate reasons for looking at the limits to state policies and development programs as emerging from the local environment within which they are implemented; and a major part of this dissertation is dedicated to such analysis. However, this complements but cannot substitute for the analysis of structural and political constraints operating at the broader level of the state itself. Before I explore an alternative approach any further, I will review another author's interpretation of the events that led and followed the genesis and evolution of a new

Indian policy in the 1970s.

Andres Serbin (1983) offers a more theoretically sophisticated analysis of the formulation of the new Indian policy which was established by the 1970s. He correctly starts his analysis by stating his main assumptions about the Venezuelan state and the process of state policy formation and implementation. Working within a "Gramscian/Poulantzian" conception of the state, Serbin argues that in peripheral societies like Venezuela, political society is dominant vis a vis civil society. The undeveloped or restricted nature of the capitalist market (and thus of civil society) in these societies, places the weight of the system's legitimation on the state apparatus. In this manner, the state becomes extraordinarily interventionistic. It seeks to buffer the highly deleterious effect of these societies' pattern of capitalist development through the selective incorporation of members of the subordinate classes and groups within the standard clientelistic practices that characterize the Venezuelan state, and the various regimes which have prevailed in the last decades. The Venezuelan state, promotes, through its control over oil revenues, the reproduction of political parties and officially backed popular organizations as the main vehicles for clientelistic arrangements and thus selectively channels resources to different constituencies.¹⁶

Given this scenario, Serbin sees the new Indian policy's primary objective as one of formally and systematically incorporating the increasingly restive Indian population into the

corporatist and clientelistic arrangements of the Venezuelan political system. The ultimate goal being to strengthen the legitimacy of the entire political system. Serbin subsequently explains how the two major components of the Indian program, i.e. the Indian Federations and the Empresas Indigenas served--and were ultimately constrained in this scope by--these specific and general purposes. The state-supported Indian Federations mediated the "definitive" incorporation of the Indian population into the political clientele of the party in power. Similarly, the empresas Indigenas were mechanisms of economic incorporation which not only helped legitimize the democratic nature and general benefits of the system, but in his view, inexorably transformed these traditional economies and subordinated them to the Venezuelan capitalist mode of production.

In my view, Serbin is correct in focusing on the issue of legitimacy as an important factor influencing the direction taken by this policy and state policies in general. But his analysis suffers from some of the same limitations found in Arvelo and Perozo's argument. I will discuss only those points that in my view are most problematic and conflict with my own analysis of the Venezuelan state and policy formulation processes.

First of all, like Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo's, Serbin's analysis remains confined to the political sphere. To be sure he justifies this by dismissing from the beginning the relevance of the economic realm and thus the relevance of classes, especially

dominant classes, as major social actors in the process of reproducing peripheral societies. In these societies, "the weight of social relations is born in the political camp, and specifically, in the workings of the state" (1983:29). Class forces embedded within the political structure such as the state and the parties are never considered. Almost no one would disagree with the fact that the state and party structures in countries like Venezuela tend to play a much larger and interventionistic role than found in more advanced industrial societies. However, this assertion must be approached with caution and cannot be equated with a blanket dismissal of class dynamics as embedded within these political structures and thus determining political processes.

Much of what Serbin assumes also needs to be explained and empirically corroborated. He ultimately does not adequately support his main argument that maintaining the system's legitimacy was the major force behind a new Indian policy. For one thing, legitimacy questions are only important to the extent that there is a potential for the disruption of the larger process of capital accumulation and the reproduction of the system as a whole. I have already expressed doubts about the extent to which a largely isolated Indian population constituted enough of a threat as to, by itself, provoke a major policy shift. But only through a concrete examination of Indian participation in the economic and class structure can one support or dismiss such an argument. In addition, he tends to emphasize the potential electoral weight of the Indian constituency as the more immediate reason behind COPEI's

support for the policy. Although there are no exact figures, all accounts indicate that only a tiny minority were in any position to participate in elections then and now.

Secondly, his argument that the new policy served to enrich the hegemonic ideology already based on populist and nationalist tenets, by imbuing it with notions of "traditional" Indian values is also vague and questionable as a major explanatory factor behind a new policy formulation. No doubt this can result from such a policy, but it is not clear how these ideological factors lead to new policies.

His conclusion about the process of economic incorporation of Indian economies into Venezuela's capitalist process also needs to be empirically corroborated. This cannot be simply deduced from a broad and implicit vision of the inevitable consequences of capital penetration (whether induced by the state or not) in the countryside. As I said at the beginning, the penetration of capitalist relations in the countryside takes place in a highly uneven fashion and produces different results. Most importantly, one has to establish which of these Indian economies could in fact be properly characterized as "traditional-subsistence" economies before to the organization of the *empresas Indigenas*.

Much of the problem with Serbin's argument lies in a creeping functionalism with teleological undertones. He attempts to deduce the ins and outs of concrete state activities from the very broad "functional prerequisites" of the peripheral state. This he does

by focusing primarily on the legitimacy requirements of the state. Despite his attention to concrete Venezuelan parties and regimes he tends to conflate levels of analysis and does not clearly distinguish the structural from concrete historical conditions affecting, and resulting from, the policy process. His analysis is also teleological because he deduces from those policy outcomes that he argued occurred, the "motives" behind the new Indian policy.

Serbin's thesis does not suffer from the over-simplistic instrumentalism and conspiratorial overtones of Arvelo-Jimenez' and Perozo's. He seems to recognize that part of this process is not the result of conscious intervention on the part of homogeneous state agents, but happens "behind the backs" of social actors immersed in the day-to-day political process. He acknowledges, for example, that regardless of the intentions of the neo-indigenistas or the radical proclamations of the Indian Federations, the outcome is the political incorporation he describes. The problem is that, as I just argued, while recognizing some structural limits to policy formulation and outcomes he ultimately reduces such limits to the state's or the whole political system's legitimacy requirements. In his view of the Venezuelan state, classes, even dominant classes, are largely absent from dominant political and economic relations. Being primarily an export economy, the center of Venezuela's capitalism lies outside its boundaries and thus the state largely displaces market forces as the organizer of social relations. When taken to its logical extreme, this line of

argument can lead, as Munck (1981) has correctly pointed out, to an over-politization of the analysis. Despite its possible validity for some concrete historical cases, it cannot be elevated to a special structural character defining all "peripheral" Latin American formations across time and space.

In the specific case of Venezuela, an oil-exporting economy has engendered a significant process of internal capital accumulation and industrialization which increasingly organizes class forces and fuels new levels of class struggles. The state is definitely a center player in that process and civil society is weak relative to fully-industrialized nations. But there are clear signs of the increasing economic and political power exercised by financial and industrial fractions of domestic capital on state activities. The "desarrollistas" themselves are nothing else than one of these fractions acting in a politically organized fashion. Similarly, several authors have shown how FEDECAMARA, the association of Venezuelan industrialists from which many of the desarrollistas came, has served as a major vehicle for imposing these classes' interests in state policies. Hence, policy analyses must consider the relative weight of these different economic classes as well as their political power.

In conclusion then, the arguments presented by both Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo and by Andres Serbin, regarding the genesis and evolution of a new Indian policy in the 1970s offers some important and highly plausible explanations. But they ultimately suffer from

a rather narrow politicism and fail to explore more thoroughly the connections between Venezuela's accumulation pattern, the location of different classes and groups within it, and their relative impact on state activity.

Before turning to the next section in this chapter, I would offer one more possible reason as to why their explanations suffer from such shortcomings. Focusing just on the Indian Federations, it appears that both of these analyses have been--consciously or unconsciously--informed by the more researched situation of the state's and specifically the Accion Democratica party's efforts to shape the Venezuelan Peasant Federation (FCV) as well as the most important labor union in Venezuela, the Federation de Trabajadores Venezolanos (FTV). In both of these cases, however, we are dealing with fractions of the working class that, especially at the time in which these organizations emerged, played a significant role in Venezuela's process of accumulation and, relatedly, were key constituencies for the ascendancy of Accion Democratica as a dominant party--against both the oligarchichal-dictatorial regime of Perez Jimenez and the potential competition from the communist party (for accounts see...Powell, more recent: LAP and Ad. The tactic of co-opting spontaneous popular movements is of course not unique to Venezuela or Latin America. Nor unique to non-Indian movements of course. Examples from US: labor Unions in the 30s; examples from Latin America: Munck). At this point in the analysis, and judging simply by the data they present, a similar argument cannot be made about the Indigenous population.

C. A View of the Venezuelan State and the Policy-Formulation and Implementation Process

(1) Different patterns of development impose different objective demands on the state with regard to both maintaining an adequate environment for accumulation and for doing so without threatening its own legitimacy and that of the system as a whole (Hirsch, 1974; Offe, 1975; Habermas, 1975, Held and Krieger, 1983). During accumulation crises, such demands appear particularly naked. The demands, their impact, and proposed solutions from different social classes' and groups' point of view, become more frequently and more visibly included in the public discourse.

Venezuela's pattern of accumulation had been characterized in the last decades by an oil-exporting economy that sustained an expanding industrialization process. During the late sixties and early seventies, there appeared clear signs of an accumulation and general socio-economic crisis. Caldera's regime, influenced by financial and industrial capital representatives, i.e. by desarrollista forces, drafted new plans to re-structure the economy, including the relationship between industry and agriculture; between the cities and the countryside, including portions of Indian territories.

(2) However, the state, peripherally or otherwise, is not a monolithic entity. It is constituted by classes and other interest groups hierarchically arranged and balanced in different ways during different historical conjunctures (Poulantzas, 1978). State policies then, are never the result of a pre-established consensus

but their formulation and implementation is a contradictory process riddled with conflict. At the end, state policies are the material expressions of class and interest group struggles, compromises, and accommodations.

These contradictions are not simply political in nature and independent from the class contradictions and relations of production consistent with Venezuela's pattern of development. Class contradictions are embedded in state and party structures and squabbles that take place within and across parties are not divorced of class content and/or of consequences in class terms. When examining the formulation of a new Indian policy in Venezuela, one must attempt to relate the struggles between the Indigenistas and the desarrollistas to the particular balance of forces and the form that class conflict was assuming at this particular time in Venezuela. In this sense it is not necessarily logical to assume that both of these factions at the end represented similar interests. But within the state structure's hierarchical arrangement of class forces, it seems at least equally probable that the objectives and potential consequences (not simply the strategies) of the Indigenistas' project, by design or by default, and not just initially, but throughout the policy process, conflicted with dominant economic interests so clearly represented by the desarrollistas. In this vein, one would be closer to an understanding of why the program, despite a popular conception to the contrary, faced so many obstacles from the beginning, i.e. why

"state commitment" was not clearly forthcoming.

There is no question that the state is an arena of inter- and intra-class and competing interest group struggles. It is clear that the "state" attempts to mediate in these struggles, often by incorporating some measure of subordinated classes' and groups' demands, despite the opposition of some class fractions or elites. At the end, state activities responding to such demands cannot conflict with the dominant social relations associated with Venezuela's pattern of capitalist accumulation if the state is to continue to be a capitalist state. But, as I have expressed repeatedly, state policies and activities designed to incorporate and ultimately subordinate non-capitalist class interests to the workings of the state, are not simply the result of clever manipulations of state agents with clear political visions and motivated by their self-promotion. They emerge out of struggles and compromises between competing class and group interests (Poulantzas, 1980; Bowles and Gintis, 1982).

One does not need to resort to neo-functionalalist arguments which deduce "motives" behind specific state actions. In the day-to-day conflictive process of policy formulation and implementation, attempts will be made to "functionalize", to squeeze these activities within the parameters of dominant economic policies and political interests. The extent to which these attempts succeed also depends, once again, on the balance of forces and the nature of class and group conflict within the state. There are no a priori guarantees except in the long range when the capitalist

state, short of a revolutionary transformation, is able to maintain its identity as a capitalist state. (Yet that "identity" is not a fixed object. And the transformations that may have occurred as a result of class struggles are not inconsequential in terms of the future of the capitalist state and of the capacity of groups to mount new protests).

(3) Political parties and other political organizations do play an important role in the mediation and selective filtering of competing class and interest group interests. And as Serbin correctly asserts, this is especially so in countries such as Venezuela where the state plays a relatively larger role in the preservation of the system's legitimacy. Parties become important ingredients toward this end because they reproduce themselves through the effective incorporation of new constituencies via clientelistic arrangements that are supported through state resources. But party dynamics are themselves constrained by the specific development model and the particular balance of class forces found in society. In Venezuela, the relative economic and political significance of peasants and workers during the fifties and sixties attracted the attention of Accion Democratica which made great efforts to incorporate these classes into their parties while constraining their independent organizations. In hindsight it seems logical to conclude that COPEI in the 1970s, also went after the Indian constituency in order to establish a base among rural classes which it sorely lacked. However true this may have

turned out to be--something that remains to be examined--the structural location of the Indian population both in the economy and in the political arena, does not fit well with a vision of dominant political organizations avidly promoting this process.

In Venezuela, political parties are also no longer the only major vehicles for channeling class demands. At the level of the dominant classes we have seen the emergence of movements such as that of the desarrollistas (which ultimately supported Caldera), and most importantly, of the more permanent organization of industrialists, FEDECAMARAS. It stands to reason then, that when considering class forces and mobilizational capacities as factors influencing state activities, one must go beyond the narrow world of party politics. With regard to the political organization of popular classes in Venezuela, there is no question that these remain largely subordinated to party politics and still primarily under AD. However, this cannot be read as the unilateral triumph of these parties or of a populist state. The efforts of these parties themselves to mobilize these classes for their own purposes has had contradictory consequences in the form of these classes' new levels of politization. This point is particularly relevant when examining the organization of the Indian Federations.

D. An Alternative Proposition for Explaining the New Indian Policies and Its Constraints

The question still remains as to why then were the Indigenistas successful in introducing an Indian-based program within the state when this population was neither politically nor

economically very significant. I believe Serbin is on the right track when he speaks of the reproduction of legitimacy "for the system as a whole" as a major incentive to congress and other political actors in supporting the Indigenistas' demands.

But rather than focusing on the Indian population by itself, I suggest that one consider two additional factors. One is that the Indian population was, for better or for worse, increasingly and instrumentally portrayed as part of the Venezuelan "peasantry."¹⁷ (This fact is often used by critics of the program to demonstrate the intentions of state officials, including IAN indigenistas to subordinate Indian economics.) COPEI came to power with a congress controlled by the opposition party Accion Democratica (AD). Through its control of congress AD was mounting a successful campaign against the implementation of the new Integrated Rural Development Programs or PRIDAs. These programs, popular throughout Latin America at the time, represented a major turn away from the earlier emphasis on the social benefits of the agrarian reform programs of the sixties to an emphasis on of economic growth. They were also considered key in the strategies for re-structuring the economy and addressing the accumulation and socio-economic crisis. AD, fearful of COPEI's eating away at what had been its pet constituency for years, the peasantry, stressed the deleterious effects of this new program to the peasantry and stirred up the Venezuelan Peasant Federation (Herman, 1980). When the Indian land invasions and genocide occurred in Apure, the Peasant Federation, independently skeptical of the new programs, but stirred by its

party AD, quickly pronounced itself in solidarity with its Indian brothers. The AD-controlled Congress jumped on the band wagon and legislated the organization of a new Indian Program. This could, in fact, have been perceived by some COPEI officials as weakening the necessary support required to implement the new rural policies.

Secondly, COPEI had just experienced a serious conflict within the party between a left and a center-right faction. The left, formed primarily by young intellectuals, including some of the Indigenistas, had denounced the "aristocratic" past of COPEI and sought to make the party more responsible to the popular classes. Venezuelan intellectuals played an important role in the genesis of the two dominant parties and also tended to gravitate toward the more progressive AD. (Herman, 1980).

I would suggest then, that it is only by examining the nature of the association of the Indian rural population with the stronger peasant class and both intellectual and party allies, i.e. the specific balance of class forces at this particular juncture, that one can begin to explain the genesis of a new Indian policy. Indian populations by themselves constituted no major threat or offered no major contribution to the preservation of the system's legitimacy. However, this is not true of more politicized and economically relevant classes.

Besides political parties, and class-based organizations, institutional apparatuses such as church can and in the specific case of Indian affairs, do, influence state actions. It will thus

be helpful to look at the role played by the church during the Christian-Democratic regime of Caldera and beyond. While traditionally the church has "acted" as an arm of the state in controlling the Indian population in Venezuela, its own institutional requirements have also at times, placed it at odds with state policy. A major tenet of a new Indian program was the preservation of Indian territories. This fact, coupled with the internal changes the church itself was undergoing, proved to be important contributing factors--if not by commission, at least by not interfering in the development of the new program.

With changes in the patterns and requirements of capital accumulation, there are often changes in the state structure to accommodate the new requirements. In the last decades, Venezuelan governments have been increasingly concerned with establishing a solid presence in border areas, a fact that goes hand in hand with its concern to expand the agricultural and industrial frontier and to develop resources found in these regions. The military has played an important, and new, role in the development of border policies and, as within the other political structures, the policy process has not been devoid of internal struggles. While some elements in the military, especially earlier on, favored the colonization thesis of the desarrollistas, others viewed the notion of development of Indian community with particular sympathy. The historical evolution of this debate must also be evaluated in all its implications.

Throughout the formulation and implementation of the Indian

program, there are also efforts to effect changes in the bureaucratic structure in order to accommodate the new Indian policy. This adds a new dimension to the conflictive nature of the Indian policy process, however, as the responsibility for programs is placed with new agencies while old ones are retained--and the power of policy implementation reverts back and forth. These changes also tend to coincide with changes in political party dominance. Parties in power surely attempt to undermine the opposition party's policy decisions by endowing new agencies and the party's clientele with more leverage. But these decisions are often constrained by a lot more than the narrow needs of the party and cannot be imposed with impunity. Struggles for the control of state programs by different agents are impregnated with class content. Attempts of AD to transfer power back to the old office for Indigenous affairs, OCAI in 1977, came at a time when the entire rural development policy of Carlos Andres Perez was coming under fire and new signs of crisis in the economy had appeared. This meant that there would once again be a realignment of forces in the struggle to re-assign state resources. Bureaucratic changes affecting Indian affairs, I would suggest, reflected changes occurring at the national political and economic level. Thus it is in this relationship with the larger economy, and corollary changes in legitimacy requirements, that one should interpret the different administrations' moves to undermine and empower different state agencies. This extends not only to agencies more directly involved

with servicing the Indian communities, but also with credit agencies and agencies at different levels of government.

In summary, it should be clear by now that constraints to policy development emerge from a multiplicity of factors arranged in various "layers of determination" i.e. both structural and historical factors constrain policy development. At the broadest level, the limits of policy are set by the accumulation and legitimacy requirements of a particular society. But the content of such policies depends largely on the historical composition, struggles, and forms of political representation of the various social classes and competing interest groups. In this sense, it is not impossible to conceive of certain historical conjunctures in which spaces can be created within the state for the representation of subordinate groups. But again, such spaces widen and narrow in the continuous struggle among antagonistic groups and classes, and depend largely on the political and mobilizational capacities of each class or interest group--such as ethnic minorities. In Venezuela, the capacity of groups to mobilize the support of political parties can be especially important--albeit a double-edged sword. Although popular organizations tend to fall under the control of Venezuelan parties and the state, the evaluation of their impact on policy processes should not be totally subsumed to party wishes.

The Indian program was no doubt affected by the fiscal and administrative constraints of the Venezuelan state and the level of priority assigned to social and economic demands for state

resources coming from various classes, class fractions and competing interest groups. These constraints are imposed through such means as the re-organization of the state's bureaucracy and/or the control of key agencies and budgets by individuals or groups representing different interests. But the effectiveness with which they accomplish that task over time depends in turn on their fiscal and administrative capabilities. The "uneven development" of bureaucratic structures, and potential inefficiency definitely have a place in the analysis of the Indian program's diverse results. But such influencing factors must be adequately located within the larger composite of factors. In this sense, it only represents some of the more concrete influencing factors.

Policy processes must then be examined as such - as processes. In this regard it is particularly important to distinguish between two key stages in such processes. The formulation stage and the state of implementation. Each is filled with contradictions emerging from similar and dissimilar sources. At this point it is useful to recall that the two main categories of factors identified earlier as determining the genesis and evolution of the Indian program, were factors located at the level of the state and at the level of the Indian communities. Both are represented at the two stages of this process--albeit in different ways and to different degrees--and thus their presence is felt both at the national, and at the local level of program implementation. In this manner, constraints emanating from the state and party structures spring up

from national and regional locations, each exerting its own unique influence. The earlier chapters concentrate primarily on the impact of broader state forces on the formulation of the program and Indian policy. The impact of such forces is however noted in later chapters dedicated to the individual case studies. In this context, the regional and local expression of state activities are combined with national-level forces in impacting the policy implementation process in each of the two cases.

Particularly important for this work, is the fact that constraints also originate at the level of the individual Indian units and communities. And it is in the implementation stage that such constraints become most visible, especially since the Indian component was rather minimal during the formulation of the policy and the organization of the program at the national level. This is the type of constraint emphasized by authors such as Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo. But unfortunately they do so at the expense of ignoring the other constraints. And, in addition, they assume an inevitable contradiction, as does Serbin, between Indian economies and the internal structure of the empresas Indigenas. Such contradictions are largely historical and thus their existence must be empirically established. The next section outlines the key issues that must be examined when considering the transformation of the policy process as it interacts with individual Indian economies and societies.

III. Indian Communities

A. Structural and Historical Conditions

Even the most ardent critics of collectivization projects recognize that, at least at the regional and local level, one may find variable results because external factors (such as state support and market forces) unequally impact individual groups and regions. These differences can be more accurately attributed to the particular combination of factors (structural or contingent) operating at the macro-level of the Venezuelan society. Among the factors operating at the regional and local level that are generally considered to affect the organization and functioning of production cooperatives, are the pre-existing organization of production, type of land tenure, available skills and resources, political organization and mobilization capacity, supporting cultural and ideological practices, and the specific form (design) assumed by the new economic organizations and its adaptation to pre-existing community structures and social processes.

Within this category of factors, the issue that acquires special significance in the context of Indian cooperatives is whether pre-existing communal forms of production and socio-cultural practices facilitate or impede the transition to more complex forms of socialized farming (Gros, 1987; see also Painter, 1986). The debate goes back to Lenin and the populists who argued about the Russian communes alleged "backwardness" and conservatism as an obstacle to modern socialized production.¹⁸ In its modern versions, students of collectivization widely believe that pre-

existing forms of cooperation, collective ideologies, and communal ownership of means of production such as land, may be an important factor in the transition to higher forms of collectivization implied in these modern programs, but few studies have been concerned with exploring this connection.

The acknowledgment of such a connection is also most often made in reference to that category of peasants that resulted from the fragmentation of precapitalist communities and whose forms of cooperation are viewed as isolated relics which today are mixed with more "capitalistic" elements. However, the debate over the effects of pre-existing communal forms and practices acquires new meaning when applied to at least some of the Indian communities targeted under the empresa program. At least some of these communities are arguably closer to the category of [pre-capitalist or re-constituted] cohesive villages, and are characterized by a wider and more integrated array of collective socio-economic and cultural practices. Even in those cases where drastic transformations have occurred in recent years, Indian communities constitute an excellent laboratory to explore the limits of pre-existing communal forms as facilitators in the transition to complex collectivization. In other words, the examination of these special cases could bear fruit for those concerned with the larger issue of linking spontaneous with introduced forms of cooperation.

Some of the thorniest questions arise when one considers contemporary Latin American Indian communities. At issue is what

exactly is "communal" within the present communities, and which of these forms and levels of spontaneous cooperation are most significant for new cooperative arrangements. Two key, and highly interconnected, elements often considered in the determination of forms and levels of collectivism are land tenure, and the socialization of work."¹⁹ Most discussions revolve around the organization of work in these communities, and specifically whether work is exclusively kin-based and confined to the household, or whether there exists community-wide mechanisms of production which would presumably be more compatible with the cooperative's structure (empresas Indigenas in this case).

In the recent Venezuelan debate between proponents and critics of the empresa program, the central issue has been whether or not failures were due to a "design" which incorrectly assumed that Indian production was communally organized, or whether there was a problem of implementation—meaning basically a lack of state support.

Proponents of these collectives have spoken in very general terms about "communal property and exploitation of the land" being part of the "Indigeneous cultural world." (Clarac and Valdez, 1974) and of how the existence of "mutual help" and reciprocity networks supported collectivization (Heinen, 1981).

On the other hand, F. Morales and Nelly Arvelo Jimenez (1981), two of the staunchest critics of the empresa program, researched three different groups of the Carib families,²⁰ and concluded that, although land is held communally, the basic unit of consumption and

production is the extended family. Therefore, the organization of production worked against more extensive forms of collectivization.

A few points are in order concerning the Venezuelan debate. First, proponents of the *empresa* were too vague about their conceptualization of traditional communal arrangements. Much of this vagueness was due to the already mentioned dearth of studies, a fact which both sides recognized. Unfortunately, in practice, researchers often assumed the homogeneous presence of communal patterns in Indian communities. On the other hand, Morales and Arvelo failed to appreciate the significance of community-wide cooperation in the clearing and burning of fields. As Roseberry (1986)²¹ points out, the fact that the household was the main unit of production in traditional peasant societies does not mean that it was always identical with a residential unit, nor that there were no other community-wide relations of production also crucial for the overall socio-economic and cultural reproduction of these communities.

What both sides failed to consider is the varied forms of socio-economic organization in contemporary Indian communities which have resulted from the uneven penetration of capital and state agents into Indian areas. Such penetration may have resulted in the reduction of production to the minimal level of the family, and the concomitant undermining of traditional leadership structures (often identified with the authority of the elders). In other cases, penetration might have generated new forms of

cooperation and communal practices. In fact, in the two cases considered here, uneven penetration appears to have had these divergent effects.²²

An additional concern relative to the transition from simple to complex forms of cooperation is whether such a transition is attempted in an abrupt, totally top-down, and radical manner (i.e. jumping from very minimal forms of mutual assistance to full collectivization). One problem is that top-down, abrupt collectivization programs (starting with the Russian Kolkhoz) have ineffectively handled the tension between family and collective production (see Galles, 1973). But as the experiences of Hungary, Santo Domingo, and others make clear, this is not an unsolvable problem. There is no necessary "ideological" opposition on the part of the peasantry (although there may be on the part of the analysts of the peasantry) to balance more traditional forms of kin-based economic strategies with new forms of collective work. The key to whether different categories of rural toilers will successfully and willingly collectivize has a lot to do with the degree of control they are allowed to exercise over the transitional process, and their own evaluation of the benefits which will accrue from such a transition (Petras and Haven, 1981; Williams, 1982).

The above discussion indicates that both sides in the Venezuelan debate on *empresas indigenas* are inadequate because they stress one or another cause of the *empresas'* problems. The thesis maintained here is that problems arise due to a combination of both

unequal support from the state throughout the implementation of these projects, and the poor adaptation of the collective's design to the real conditions of each Indian community.

B. Long-Term Impact and Sustained Stability of Empresas Indigenas

The long-term survival of these cooperatives and how they continue to change and adapt will depend on the ongoing combination of broader, politico-economic forces, and the capacity of these communities to mobilize their resources and adjust their socio-economic and cultural patterns of survival to those broader changes. In this regard, there are two final points to be made. One concerns the lessons we can draw from the literature on the peasantry regarding the various "roads" of transition followed by peasant production units as a whole. The second is a reminder of the specificities of at least the fraction of those Indian communities that are relatively self-sufficient and may continue to be so through the organization of collective organizations such as the empresas Indigenas.

Regarding the first point, a flurry of new studies on peasant transition and re-interpretation of old data has led scholars to widen the "roads" of transformation that can be traveled by different categories of peasants. However, most of the discussion centers on the issue of independent producer's incorporation into the capitalist economy, and thus it does not directly address the fate of cooperatives. However, as long as cooperative production remains peasant production the discussion has some useful insights

to contribute. One key issue to keep in mind is the documented capacity of peasant enterprises to achieve sustained levels of capitalization and new forms of "relative autonomy" vis a vis the larger capitalist economy.

Complementing this part of the literature is the discussion on cooperatives per se. Here, the literature is a bit more empirical and it is from specific cases that one can draw most of the inferences about the possible "roads" that, cooperatives and collectivization most generally are likely to follow in Latin America.

I already painted, through the analytical eyes of several authors, a picture of parcelization and abandonment of cooperatives, which has been common to Latin America. But I have also pointed to cases where cooperatives have been largely successful. This brings us to the second point to be raised in this final section.

Of utmost importance for this study are the cases of Indian communities in Colombia and Ecuador whose success in this area is largely due to their unique configuration of internal characteristics. These characteristics are similar to those exhibited by the Bari of Venezuela and have been mentioned in the peasant literature as criteria for relatively autonomous groups (see footnote #21). In this type of Indian community, cooperative production organizations are but one element in an integrated set of communal arrangements and cultural patterns which validate them.

Among groups like the Pume, however, the sudden organization of an extensive cooperative organization with significant expectations in terms of coordinated work patterns can be a highly destructive force.

ENDNOTES

1. This is not to suggest that Indian groups have not before been directly or indirectly affected by national agrarian reform programs. See for example Stavenhagen (1977) and the article by del Pomar (1967). I am referring here to the very special cases in which the program is designed specifically for Indian communities as opposed to an all-encompassing category of peasants. Also, the main category of Indian communities I have in mind is that of frontier and more isolated groups which have retained some degree of autonomy from the national society. As we will see however, one of the cases studies here did not quite conform to that definition, and it was in essence a deviation from the intended clientele of the *empresas*.
2. See various issues of IWGIA (International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs) Documents; Shelton Davis (1976). Various issues of the Anthropology Resource Center (ARC) Documents and Newsletter, and Global Reporter.
3. See Diaz-Polanco (1982) and other articles in same issue of *Latin American Perspectives*, IX:2.
4. The term indigenous and Indian, as well as native or ethnic groups will be used interchangeably here.
5. This is the way in which Young, Sherman, and Rose (1981), conceptualize the distinction between cooperatives and collectives.
6. See the Ley de Reforma Agraria of 1960, published in IAN (1981).
7. It is often remarked by students of these Venezuelan *Empresas campesinas* that in most cases collective patterns faded very quickly and production at the individual level replaced — often encouraged by state activity -- collective production.
8. The first question is often used to refer to the economic issue of productivity while the latter refers to the social-economic situation of the peasantry within the agrarian structure.
9. The term commonly used in Latin America to refer to those individuals, usually anthropologists, who became identified with the struggle of Indigenous communities. For the various ideological positions see Bollinger and Lund, 1982; Diaz Polanco (1982). For an analysis of Venezuelan *Indigenista* factions, see Serbin (1983).

10. Translation supplied.
11. Semi-proletarianized peasantry refers to those individual producers who due to the reduced size of their holding are no longer able to reproduce themselves without also participating in wage labor activities.
12. This is a simplified and combined version of several of those critics. See for example Morales and Arvelo-Jimenez (1981); Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo (1983); Serbin (1986).
13. See for example Clay (1987).
14. In a different article, Arvelo-Jimenez (1984) alludes to the personal and career interest of the Indigenistas as an underlying force in their decision.
15. This tendency is prevalent among other students of Venezuelan political structures, for example Martz and Myers (1986), and Kauffman (1977).
16. The argument here is similar to that of other political scientists such as Kauffman who have emphasized the clientelistic nature of Venezuelan politics. They also suggest a corporatist element as not inconsistent with such practices. The state's control over popular organizations, peasant and labor unions etc., facilitates the distribution of obligations between "clients".
17. See Shanin (1987a); and Goodman and Redclift (1981).
18. Galleski in particular (1973) elaborates this point more fully. He points to the logical connection between communal land tenure and socialized work. However, he also notes that degrees of socialized work will vary significantly between different cases.
19. The three groups considered were the Pemon, the Ye'kuanas and the Karinas in Venezuela. However, the authors did not conduct a parallel study of the empresa, only of the traditional forms of production and as far as I can determine at least some of the data was based on studies conducted as early as the 1970s.
20. Roseberry's argument is made in the context of a renewed debate in the peasant literature about the importance of family economy and its equivalence with peasantry or simple commodity production.
21. In the theoretical and empirical literature on cooperatives, the issue of appropriate conceptualization of peasant/Indian

communities is also considered one of the "internal" factors that will affect the particular rate of success enjoyed by different cooperatives. A reasonable consensus regarding the conceptualization of frontier Indian communities in contemporary Latin America, and Venezuela in particular, has been blocked by a theoretical and methodological impasse which confronted researchers during the early 1960s. At this time, it had become increasingly clear that the number of communities that could legitimately be identified as "tribal" (the "stuff" of which traditional ethnographies were made) had severely dwindled. Instead, as the articulation of independent producers with capitalist development become more and more apparent, the question of the "peasantry" had become most salient. Social scientists consequently switched their research focus from the former to the latter. One of the most important consequences of this switch was a sort of methodological and conceptual "freezing" in time of those communities that remained relatively autonomous from the larger society. This meant, in many cases, that change resulting from their (however minimal) relationships with outside agents was either ignored or considered external to the "ideal" model of these isolated communities (Gros, 1987; Silverman, 1987; Alavi, 1973). Similarly, the distinctions between "peasants" and Indian groups have been often exaggerated and overly-dychotomizing. On the other hand, those concerned primarily with the study of peasant economies might have, at times, succumbed to the opposite tendency of ignoring important specificities within the complex category of rural toilers.

With the possible exception of those groups situated the river heads, Indian communities in today's Venezuela, and much of Latin America, cannot be adequately conceptualized as totally independent social systems—much less through a vague category such as "traditional societies." The uneven penetration of capital and state agents into their territories has produced various degrees of transformation in the internal socio-economic organization of these communities (Diaz Polanco, 1982; de Janvry, 1981; Heinen, 1981; and Heinen and Coppens, 1986).

This means that we can no longer rely on traditional kinship analysis and ethnographies to tell us the whole story of these communities. Rather, such community-centered studies must be re-examined in light of the contemporary context of socio-economic external relations these communities have established to various degrees. It is at this juncture that the literature on the peasantry is especially illuminating. Particularly the discussions on the conceptualization of peasant vs. capitalist forms of production, agrarian transition and the transformation of the peasantry through the

advancement of capitalism. Non-capitalist peasant production units, may remain relatively autonomous, become subordinated to various capitalist elements, or become totally integrated (or subsumed) into the capitalist system (LLanvi, 1981, Zamosc, n.d.) A conceptual and methodological marriage of anthropological studies on native communities and, sociological (and anthropological) studies on the peasantry can thus enrich studies such as this one.

From this perspective, the dychotomizing distinctions between peasants and Indians give way to a view of these differences as placed in a continuum from more to less autonomous--without implying a unilinear evolution. Today, Indian communities will tend toward one or another pole of such a continuum. Those closer to lesser autonomous can be said to have suffered new levels of "peasantization." In the analysis of my two cases, the Bari and the Pume can be placed at opposite ends of the continuum.

However, to remain relatively autonomous means that certain cultural and ideological specificities can also separate this category from other elements of the peasantry. This can be seen, for example, in the particular value attached to the land and to integrity of territory by those communities that have not lost total control over their ancestral land. Similarly, patterns of work organization and distribution among dependent producers will likely be guided by different cultural proscriptions from those guiding independent peasant producers. In this sense, authors like Shanin (1987) leave such "uncaptured peasants" right outside the frontiers of his typology of peasants and peasant societies. I, too, recognize the importance of such specificities, and it is often those specificities that introduce the major differences in the analysis between the Pume and the Bari and their particular empresas' performance.

CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES: STRUCTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE INDIAN PROGRAM

It is widely accepted among students of Venezuelan Indian policy that 1969, the year COPEI came to power for the first time, also marked a new and radical shift in the Venezuelan state's policy orientation toward the integration of Indian communities into the national society. This shift is best summarized as an emphasis away from asistencialista or relief-type programs and toward more coherent programs of economic development. The change was not only qualitative but quantitative as both agencies and fiscal resources allocated to Indian programs grew considerably after 1969.¹ The most salient component of the policy and programmatic changes during the COPEI administration of Rafael Caldera was the organization of an Indian Development Program within The National Agrarian Institute (IAN). Most important of all was, the establishment within this program of collective economic organizations known as Empresas Indigenas.

This chapter examines the changes taking place at the state² level and their relationship to broader socio-economic conditions which set the stage for a new direction in Indian policy at the beginning of the 1970's. These conditions constituted fertile ground for a change in policy direction but also set new constraints. As established in the introductory chapter, the

Venezuelan state has played a major role in the organization and development of rural development programs. Such a role acquires a special significance with regard to the transformation of Indian communities' economies. The analysis of the state's role is, however, complicated by the plethora of competing actors and agencies that have had a direct or indirect impact on Indian policy. One of the main objectives of this chapter is to clarify the roles of these different actors and agencies and to uncover the intended and unintended consequences of their actions.

I. Changes in Economic Conditions and the Political Scenario

State intervention can appear in the form of corrective actions taken during crises of accumulation and/or legitimacy. Although in reality these two types of crises tend to occur simultaneously, it is possible to trace the separate developments or symptoms of each. Similarly, it is possible, in most cases, to discern whether state actions emerge primarily out of a concern with economic or political trouble signs. By the end of the AD (Accion Democratica) administration of Raul Leoni in 1969, the limitations of "import substitution" as an industrialization strategy had become apparent. Warning signs of economic decline were noted by public institutions such as the Venezuelan Central Bank as well as by the powerful association representing the Venezuelan bourgeoisie, FEDECAMARAS.³ As has been the case with other Latin American countries, the domestic market soon proved too small to absorb additional expansion of industrial production. Petroleum production had slowed because of to the expanded sales

from the Middle East. In addition, there were renewed problems of land concentration combined with a growing percentage of small, unproductive landholdings. Unemployment and underemployment in the rural sector had also continued to rise despite efforts at agrarian reform.⁴ Martz (1986) cites a U.S.-A.I.D. survey that concluded that "79% of all cultivated land was in the hands of fewer than 2% of all proprietors." The same survey indicated that only one-fourth of those listed as farmers or farmworkers owned any land at all.

As was the case in much of Latin America, excitement about agrarian reform in Venezuela was beginning to fade. A new wave of discontent emerged from the peasantry, including peasants within the reform sector who continued to lack basic necessities and credit needed to compete with an increasingly industrialized agricultural sector. An increase in imports of foodstuffs while oil revenues declined and food shortages occurred were equally worrisome. In addition, unemployment had begun to climb in urban areas reaching levels approximating those occurring during the Perez Jimenez' dictatorship. This happened despite downward swings in selective quarters.⁵

These new negative trends in the economy,⁶ combined with a serious split within AD that resulted in the exodus of that party's leftist faction, gave the Christian democratic Party COPEI the opportunity to capture the government for the first time in Venezuelan history.

Two important elements within COPEI's administration serve to frame the political and economic environment within which changes in Indian policy were to take place. One was the various pressure groups, representing different class interests, that had played a significant role in COPEI's electoral triumph and who became key elements in the evolution of Indian policy. The second was a specific set of economic and geopolitical campaign programs and policies that responded, in part, to the demands of those pressure groups reacting to changes in the larger socio-economic environment.

II. Classes, Pressure Groups, and Political Parties

A. COPEI, AD, and the Peasantry

Until very recently, COPEI was widely regarded as a party that had been traditionally allied with wealthy landowners and other important factions of the Venezuelan oligarchy, including the church and the military. This party has taken great pains to disavow that image, but the evidence suggests that, at least during its earlier years, COPEI, more than the other political parties, enjoyed considerable support from these pressure groups.

The party's roots are with a Catholic youth movement founded under Rafael Caldera's leadership. The group professed an ardent anti-communist ideology and defended the parochial school system against proposals by some AD members to abolish it. When Caldera and his followers founded Accion Nacional (the immediate precursor of the COPEI party) and later COPEI itself, they called each

organization the party of Venezuelan Catholics and vowed to defend the church (Herman, 1980). The party's electoral strength during the elections of 1947, 1958, and, to a lesser extent, 1963 was concentrated in the Andean states of Merida, Tachira, and Trujillo, home of the wealthy coffee-landowners and the oligarchical caudillos who ruled Venezuela until the 1940s. The party also had been, until Caldera's triumph, highly unsuccessful in gathering any support from either the peasantry or the urban poor, yet it fared better with the urban professional and business sectors.

Adding to COPEI's reputation as a conservative organization is evidence suggesting the party's close relationship with the military during both the "trienio" years⁷ and the early years of Perez Jimenez's dictatorship, a period when the military's main base of recruitment continued to be in the Andes (Herman, 1980). After the fall of the Perez Jimenez dictatorship, COPEI sought to control the rise of the more reformist and nationalist AD and as Karl (1987) points out, became the de facto ally of the "entrepreneurs, the oil companies, the U.S. government, the church, and the military." (1987:82)

Under Caldera, COPEI's cultivation of the support of these groups was imbued with a new sense of political pragmatism not different from that exercised by AD in its efforts to arrive at "pacts" with these different elites which were seen as indispensable to the survival of the new and fragile democratic process. In this sense it would be inaccurate to characterize classes and pressure groups as exclusively supporting either of

these two major parties. The Venezuelan class structure and the amount of power commanded by traditional elites such as the military, the landlords, and the church had undergone major transformations linked to the development of the oil-exporting economy; so had the political parties representing their interests. The society was clearly moving toward consolidation of a capitalist economy and its corresponding class structure. This had brought about, among other things, the growing politicization of the non-capitalist classes such the peasantry. Mobilization of these subordinate classes had been actively encouraged by the emerging political parties, and AD in particular, which opposed the interests of the old rural-based elites.⁸

By the late 1960s, COPEI was beginning to understand the need to cultivate the support of groups that had traditionally gravitated toward AD and COPEI's chances had, in fact, improved with AD's retreat from its more populist and reformist stands. This retreat was illustrated by, among other things, A.D.'s efforts to restrict the very mobilization of the peasantry that it had initially promoted (Hellinger, 1984). COPEI's new political requirements were also shaped by divisions within its own party. Its youth organization had experienced a serious three-way split among what could be summarized as conservative, liberal and leftist factions. Members of the latter faction still saw themselves within the social-Christian movement but argued for a dialog with Marxists (Calvani, 1976). Many of the individuals who were

directly or indirectly associated with this latter faction went on to embrace the Indian cause and to later participate in the development of the Indian development program.

However, just as new political organizations and pressure groups such as the peasant and labor federations were beginning to be taken seriously by all parties aspiring to national prominence, organizations representing traditional interests continued to some extent to rally behind, or at least be identified with, one party or the other. In any case, it is important to trace the role played by those traditional elites, such as the church and the military, as well as emerging pressure groups such as the "desarrollistas" (developmentalist entrepreneurs) during the election and administration of Rafael Caldera in 1969. The policy positions and actions implemented within specific state agencies, as well as the historically structured--albeit transformed--position of power now occupied by these three groups or elites, catalyzed the changes that occurred during the Caldera government regarding the state's relationship with Indian communities.

B. The Military and the National Border Council

By 1969 fears about military coups had greatly subsided in previously coup-plagued Venezuela. A "pact" between the military, a weakened elite group, and the main political powers and entrepreneurial forces emerged after Perez Jimenez's fall. The army was increasingly professionalized and its officers kept comfortable through generous material incentives. Its role shifted from that of repression to such functions as border security and

immigration control (Ewell, 1984). These new functions fit with Venezuela's new accumulation requirements and the interests of a growing industrial class. The oil economy had by this time generated a relatively significant industrialization process and instigated the search for new areas of investment. This, in turn, heightened the state's and private capital's interest in developing the countryside and, hence, in asserting control over land, minerals, and labor supplies in remote areas.⁹

In this role the army actively participated in drafting geopolitical strategies and policies, a role that grew significantly during and after the period when border disputes with Colombia and Guyana were renewed due, in great part, to the important oil and other strategic mineral-reserves located in both of these border areas as well as on the border with Brazil. During Caldera's presidency, there was a noticeable elaboration of the philosophical underpinnings and multiple dimensions of the border policy beyond a simple concern with territorial limits. This concern was correlated with the state's broader interests in formulating new economic policies to expand investment opportunities and avert a serious economic crisis.

To accommodate these new concerns, Caldera's government reorganized the old Frontiers Office or Dirección de Fronteras, and, in 1970, added to the office a new policy-making, inter-ministerial body called the National Border Council. This body began the elaboration of a more cohesive and comprehensive border

policy which went far beyond the issue of territorial limits and addressed the problems of "integrating the marginal frontier zone to the rest of the country through an active policy of populating the frontier and of integral development, with special emphasis on agricultural development." As a middle range goal the council was concerned with "irradiating the Venezuelan presence in these areas.¹⁰

Authors such as Heinen and Coppens (1986) have argued that the council was "a direct response to the Guyana uprisings of 1968 and 1969, which involved predominantly Indian populations and caused a large influx of indigenous refugees into Venezuela." (1984:369). In any case, the council, adopting a nationalist posture, expressed its support for a border-protection policy based on the consolidation of the "authohtonous" Indian communities occupying frontier territories.(8Min.) As Serbin (1983) correctly points out in his analysis of the National Broader Council's connection with Indian policy development, this organization--or at least certain individuals within it--evolved from a rather "developmentalist position placing great emphasis on colonization of the frontiers and the establishment of a conspicuous state presence in these areas, to a greater concern with the development of local Indian communities as a major vehicle for the protection of the frontiers. Many of the individuals who participated in the council were increasingly exposed to the Indigenista's ideological position and its so-called "inter-culturalist thesis."¹¹ For example, by 1978, a paragraph of the Border Council's declaration read, "A national

unity that encompasses the plurality of its diverse national communities, constitutes, against any uniformity, the best lesson of a healthy Nation." (Ministerio de la Defensa, 1976).

Other paragraphs of this document, however, still revealed that council representatives were equally concerned with the ultimately contradictory process of the indigenous groups' absorption of "Venezuelan national" values.¹² As authors such as Stavenhaggen (1977) and Bollinger and Lund (1982) have said, the promotion of an "indigenista" ideology, consisting of romanticized notions of the Indian past, has often accompanied modern Latin American states' efforts at national integration and forging of a national identity. Such "official" indigenismo, however, has generally remained couched in "modernist" views, and regards the integration of Indians in this project of nation-building as the Indians' increased capacity to assimilate national, "modern" values. In spite of the council's contradictory statements in this regard, its pronouncements in favor of the consolidation of Indian communities became important ammunition for Venezuelan Indigenistas and their arguments for economic and political development programs in this sector of the population. Conversely, and as I just stated, the arguments of the Indigenistas found their way more and more into the various policy statements made by the council.

C. The Catholic Church: Missions in Indian Areas and Ideological Splits

The Catholic Church constitutes the second pressure group linked to COPEI and is one with a long-established history of

intervention in Indian affairs in Venezuela. Like the military, the church came out of the dictatorship years with a tarnished image and, like the military, the church had arrived at a new "modus vivendi" with the new democratic forces. It worked to maintain an image of independence from COPEI, its traditional ally such a posture could benefit both the party and the church. In exchange, the institutional survival of the church, guaranteed initially by AD's previous administration, continued to be strengthened by the Caldera administration (Levine, 1977). Caldera, for example, left the Law of Missions untouched, despite his alleged interest in abolishing it and transferring all rights concerning the conduct of Indian policy from the church to the state (Heinen and Coppens, 1986).

The cornerstone of church involvement continued to be in education, not only in Indian areas but in the nation as a whole. During the Caldera government, most state legislatures continued to make important budget contributions to the parochial educational system that included schools in Indian areas.¹³ However, as a side effect of the continuous efforts to complete the administrative regionalization of the country, which included the formal incorporation of frontier areas into a special educational region, the state reasserted its rights over Indian education during this period. Still, missionaries were increasingly hired as teachers by the Ministry of Education. The compromise was necessitated by a still relatively weak state that was unable to assume the totality

of important ideological and economic functions through formal education, and which are necessary components of the bourgeois project of national integration.¹⁴

But as with the other political and ideological apparatuses, the Catholic church was experiencing internal transformations more in keeping with the political mobilization of subordinate classes and their allies and with the calls for social Justice made by church members since Pope Pio XII. Ideas borrowed from the intellectual current of modernization were, however, comfortably integrated into the Catholic Church's doctrine of social justice and were prominently articulated by those associated with the Christian Democratic parties such as COPEI (Ewell, 1984). Out of this came the so-called "theory of marginality" elaborated by a group of Jesuit scholars lead by sociologist Roger Bekemans. The theory "envisioned Latin American society as composed of two broad segments...", one modern and one backward, "representing the contemporary reflection of `traditional, pre-Columbian' situations. This duality was attributed, in part, to the neglect of the poor by the dominant classes, but, more importantly, to the absence of appropriate socialization into modern skills and values (Portes and Canak, 1981:237).

Clearly, then, like the nationalism of official indigenismo, the social justice doctrine of the Catholic Church was not totally able to break with the evolutionism of bourgeois modernization theories. Yet this constituted an important improvement over the raw neo-colonialism and paternalism of the previous era by shifting

the line of action from relief assistance and religious conversion to development of skills and secular education.

In Venezuela, Catholics became actively involved in ideological debates over the desirability of a more activist role for the church in improving the conditions of the urban and rural poor. The split within COPEI's youth organization mentioned above was very much nurtured by these debates. Some Catholics went so far as to found participatory projects such as cooperatives and other community-based economic and political organizations. Priests, primarily from abroad, began participating in community work among the poor in Caracas' slums. At times, such participation was punished. In one case, the Caldera government ousted a Polish priest for engaging in "illegal" political demonstrations in support of the inhabitants of the barrio where he worked (Levine, 1977). Conservative church members also came under serious criticism from the well-educated Jesuit group that ran the Venezuelan Jesuit research center (the Centro Gumilla). This Jesuit group openly promoted dialogues with the Venezuelan left, praised elements of Marxist analysis of capitalism, and directed poignant criticisms, through its prestigious journal SIC, against powerful business interests.

It is difficult to trace a direct connection between these new strains in Catholic thought and COPEI's position on the state's responsibilities to Indian communities. However, it is clear that the new church doctrine had an impact on middle class intellectuals

and the youth movement in particular. This was best evidenced through the increase in written pronouncements from the missionary sector supporting a change in government policy¹⁵ At the local level of church missions, the splits between the conservative and progressive elements of the church were more evident, and the church's support for new forms of government intervention and its particular relationship with the military, varied from mission to mission.

In addition to ideological changes within the church, there were other important reasons why it would generally support new forms of state intervention in Indian communities. The church's institutional survival was intimately tied to the preservation of the missions which in turn were tied to the very preservation of Indian territories and identifiable, permanent Indian communities. All along, the church had fought planned and unplanned colonization of Indian areas and the exodus of Indians from their communities in search of better forms of subsistence. Undoubtedly, all of these factors contributed to a favorable disposition of the church toward new government programs that would, in fact, assist it in halting the disintegration of remaining Indian communities--even if this carried the cost of sharing more control over Indian areas with the state.

D. The Desarrollistas and COPEI

The desarrollistas made up an organized political group representing the industrial and financial bourgeoisie who appeared on the national scene around 1965. Their most prominent leader was

Pedro Tinoco, an influential member of FEDECAMARAS, who was linked to national and international banking interests including Chase Manhattan Bank (Herman, 1980). The conservative Movimiento Desarrollista was formed to support the presidency of Rafael Caldera and to elect its own representatives to congress and the state legislatures. Pedro Tinoco was eventually named to the key position of Minister of Finance, and other desarrollistas were also elected or appointed to different posts in the Caldera administration.¹⁶ The desarrollistas' proposal for injecting new life into the troubled Venezuelan economic model was to promote the expansion of capital- and technology-intensive industries as well as to promote large-scale development projects, many in Indian areas. This plan entailed significant increases in state expenditures and "rationalization" of the public administration in accordance with the new economic development goals. The latter was to be accomplished by, among other mechanisms, the regionalization of the country into "development poles," an action that would also affect the political, economic, and juridical status of many Indian communities and their territories.¹⁷

One area where the desarrollista orientation was to be put in practice was agriculture. During his campaign, Caldera had adopted as one of his themes the improvement of agricultural production by moving away from what he said was the bankrupt "socially-oriented model of agrarian reform." Instead, he concurred with the desarrollistas' inclination toward rural development through the

integrated rural development programs, generally known as IRDPs in Latin America and PRIDA in Venezuela. It is necessary to have a clear image of what these programs were about and what their overall accomplishments were in order to understand their connections and contradictions with IAN's Indian development program, which was, in fact, initiated under PRIDA.

III. Agrarian Crisis, Geopolitical Requirements: Corrective Policies and State Agencies

In the 1970s, in the aftermath of the wave of agrarian reform programs and experiments with the green revolution, came a new realization that neither the agrarian crisis nor rural poverty had been solved. Various authors believe that the agrarian reform programs of the 1960s were designed not so much to benefit the peasantry but to dissolve the pre-capitalist "latifundia" (combination of large estates and small peasant holdings) system and expand the commercialization and capitalization of agricultural production. The programs also had the separate political goal of "pacifying" the peasant sector (De Janvry, 1981). Many also believe, and I agree, that the IRDPs of the 1970s were aimed at reconciling political and economic demands within the agricultural sector. They were established to 1) preserve a semi-proletariat labor force needed in the transformed agricultural sector, while reducing the upward pressure on wages; 2) stem the exodus of peasants to urban areas; and, 3) maintain the middle and upper peasantry, re-creating a type of "petty bourgeoisie" that would preserve the state's legitimacy among the politicized peasantry

while guaranteeing the continued production of cheap wage foods.¹⁸ These programs were heavily funded and promoted by international organizations such as the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB).

A. PRIDA and the National Agrarian Institute

The Venezuelan PRIDA program explicitly emphasized economic goals, and most specifically addressed the problem of food scarcity and increasing food imports. However, the program's content and the fight between A.D. and COPEI that ensued over its implementation show that political and social goals similar to those cited above--e.g., stemming new peasant mobilizations and the rural-to-urban exodus were at least of some importance to state officials promoting this program. Specifically, funds for PRIDA, coming from both the IDB and the Venezuelan government, were to be used to transform agrarian reform "from a social process of distributing the land, to an economic process that would increase production--credits, housing, electricity, water, roads, warehouses." (cited in Herman, 1980).

The program in Venezuela followed the generic recommendations of the IDB which proposed consolidating those peasant units that constituted "the best bet" (Gusti, 1984) by providing them with renewed mechanisms of credit, commercialization, and infrastructural assistance. Also, keeping in mind the growing social problem of unemployment and underemployment in the countryside, the program sought to provide "amenities" such as water and health care for those peasants on the verge of total

proletarianization and thus ready to migrate to urban areas. Unfortunately, as far as I could determine, there are no studies focusing specifically on Venezuela's PRIDA programs. Most of the conclusions drawn about this program were therefore pieced together through a number of general analyses of agrarian policies during Caldera's administration and in Latin America as a whole. A Central Bank publication of 1977, (Gimenez Landinez, 1977) for example, noted regrettably, that the program became a substitute for, rather than a complement to existing agrarian development programs. Others note that the program failed to avert the serious food crisis of 1972-1973 -- which was a clear signal to the next administration that a yet more radical program of agrarian development had to be undertaken.¹⁹

PRIDA was housed within the National Agrarian Institute (IAN) which was strongly identified with the earlier phase of agrarian reform. This facilitated the blurring of the agrarian reform and integrated rural development goals noted above.

The fact that Venezuela's peasantry was highly politicized and well-organized meant, however, that whatever Tinoco's plans may have been, a share of the nation's petro-dollars had to flow toward the peasant sector--even if the desarrollistas' own notions of economic development significantly determined how the money was to be spent. For COPEI this latter consideration carried a significant weight in light of its new efforts to gain a political base among the rural classes. Aware of the potential inroads that COPEI could make in the traditionally AD constituency of the

peasantry, the latter strongly opposed PRIDA until a compromise was finally reached in 1971²⁰

Initially, PRIDA, with its strong desarrollista bent was seen as not only promoting more capital-and technology-intensive rural projects, but also as employing a strategy based on colonization rather than development of local, particularly Indian, peasantry.²¹ It was a strategy for promoting "the best bet," and Indian peasants were traditionally considered too unskilled and too removed from commercialized farming to be considered seriously as beneficiaries of such programs. In addition, none of the areas that fell within the project's scope had significant Indian populations. Once again the Indian communities were left on the sidelines of Venezuelan agrarian reform.

PRIDA did not therefore contribute, as had the other factors examined thus far, to a change in the formulation of Indian policy. However, it will soon become clear that as part of COPEI's actions to maintain a favorable capital accumulation environment, the program had unintended consequences and set off demands for the inclusion of Indian populations in this new phase of rural development programs.

B. Conquest of the South and CODESUR

The second program espoused by the desarrollistas--and which, like PRIDA, was to play a significant role in the events leading to and helping form IAN's Indian program--was the "Conquest of the South." This grandiose idea was conceived by Caldera's

administration to facilitate access to the yet-untapped mineral resources of Venezuela's southern frontier. The latter included the large Cedeno District of the Boliva State and the Venezuelan Amazonia Territory. Together they constituted 26.5% of the national territory. It is here that the majority of the Venezuelan Indian population resides, constituting 60% of the southern region's total population. This project must be understood within the context of perceived stagnation within the Venezuelan capitalist and state sectors, of the industrialization process and the general crisis of capital accumulation. Proposed solutions to this crisis consisted partially in locating new sources of exports and intensifying the integration of marginal, unincorporated areas and populations into the national development plans. The Conquest of the South was created for this purpose, and CODESUR (Comision para El Desarrollo de Sur) was charged with its implementation.

The program's economic tone fit the desarrollista perspective and thus emphasized capital-intensive projects with heavy participation of the state in matters of finance, infra-structure development, research, and mineral exploration. The Conquest of the South carried implicit political goals as well, as did PRIDA. Framed by a crass version of the theory of marginality, it contemplated providing social "amenities" to improve the health, educational, and, to a lesser extent, the economic status of the local Indian 'marginal' and non-Indian population--again to avoid an undue exodus of the local population and potential labor force. Yet the primary emphasis of CODESUR was initially placed on

colonization schemes. As Coppens (1972), an outspoken Venezuelan anthropologist, remarked at the time, the Conquest of the South was limited to "opening new economic spaces without any kind of minimal protection for the Indian communities against the 'colonizing' plunder of their ancestral habitat" (1972:383). In many ways, it complemented PRIDA's goals of capitalist development in rural areas.

CODESUR was equally instrumental in fulfilling ideological requirements of the state--especially regarding national integration--and it sought to promote, through formal education and special propagandistic campaigns, the rise of nationalistic feelings among these frontier populations²². Thus, in its beginnings, CODESUR exhibited an ideological position that was far removed from the cultural "interculturalist" thesis of the radical indigenistas. As one of its "sub-objectives," it contemplated "informal education tending toward the transculturation and gradual and voluntary incorporation of the jungle Indian population..." (Ministerio de Obras Publicas, 1974). Finally, CODESUR also contributed to the Venezuelan state function of maintaining order and control over these frontier areas and their "citizens" through the organization of several military-civilian centers in the region.²³

Clearly, the goals of these two programs were, not coincidentally, coherent with the policy changes that were occurring at the level of the National Border Council. Like PRIDA,

the Conquest of the South was going to provoke a series of unintended consequences which fueled the call for a new Indian policy. In addition, the non-monolithic character of these state agencies meant that, as with the National Border Council, there were individuals who favored an Indian-specific program and who were to take advantage of the political opening generated by the forces and changes in the general socio-economic environment analyzed above. The rest of this chapter deals with the intended and unintended responses to COPEI's policies and the emergence of the Indigenistas as a new pressure group during Caldera's administration.

IV. Problems of State Legitimacy: The Indigenistas and Responses to COPEI's Policies

Almost no time had passed after the Conquest of the South was proclaimed until the Ye'cuanas, the second largest Venezuelan Indian group residing in the Amazonian territory, were faced with an invasion of private speculators searching for the mineral riches of the area and claiming to be promoting tourist ventures. The invasions provoked a wave of denunciations from a few Indian leaders and provided a cause for indigenist anthropologists.

The ominous consequences of the Conquest of the South, compounded with PRIDA's general neglect of the Indian population--constructed--became the arena within which the desarrollista and new indigenista debate over the future of Indian communities in Venezuela was to be played out. The desarrollista position was most crudely expressed by a Venezuelan historian, a member of the

Movimiento Desarrollista, who said "it does not seem possible to develop the Indian, to civilize him... one must have hope that in the very near future--when the jungle has been conquered and when all its soil has been covered with towns and cities, not a single group would remain that speaks Caribe or any other aboriginal tongue" (Cited in Arvelo, 1972:145). The impact that this mindset was having on those interested in benefiting from the Conquest of the South was illustrated by the candid words of one colonist who declared to a national newspaper that the "development of the South could not be slowed by a handful of Indians" (cited in Coppens, 1972).

The response to the desarrollista orientation toward these development programs came from those individuals associated with the "new indigenismo"--a current that sought to oppose the integrationist policies and attitudes of the "Patzcuaro" period.²⁴ These individuals were found not only in intellectual settings but within COPEI, the Catholic church and the National Border Council, (Valdez, 1980). But those who offered the most organized response opposing the desarrollista attitude were social scientists, primarily anthropologists, working in Venezuelan universities, research institutes, and even the state bureaucracy. In 1968, these social scientists had formed the Venezuelan Society of Applied Anthropology (SOVAAP), the organization that facilitated the ascendancy of Indigenistas as pressure group.

Before examining the specific responses to COPEI's policies

and the final content of the Indian Development Program, it is important to review the ideologies informing the responses of new Indian leaders and, most importantly, of the progressive intellectuals who carried their cause into the national political arena.

A. Ideological Foundations of Venezuelan "Indigenismo"

What some have labeled as Venezuelan neo-indigenismo was not a phenomenon unique to this country. Its roots, as well as its internal contradictions and sometimes conflictive ideological positions, must then be traced to a larger Latin American pro-Indian movement. The split in the movement became most defined in the course of the organization of the *empresas Indigenas* and the new Indian development program.

Bollinger and Lund (1982) have traced the development of Latin American indigenismo and its various expressions throughout the continent. Indigenismo, as they note, has been a sort of catch-all term applied to official and non-official actions and positions identified with the plight of Indian peoples. It encompasses a long history and a wide range of philosophical currents and policy objectives which intersect somewhat with class positions but do not perfectly correspond to class divisions. What Bollinger and Lund call "officialist" (or integrationist) indigenismo has at one point or another been embraced by different Latin American governments with large Indian populations. This is the kind of Indigenismo found in Venezuela during the populist, nationalist administrations of AD which preceded and immediately followed Perez Jimenez's

dictatorship. Its essence has been the expedient exhaltation of Indian cultures as a justification for the consolidation of Latin American nation states. At times stressing separation, at times integration and "mestizaje," this form of indigenismo acquired its most clear expression in 1940 during the Patzcuaro Interamerican Congress and the organization of the Inter-American Institute of the Indian. At the time, the congress made the most explicit recommendations yet to Latin American states, urging them to form Indian affairs agencies or institutes and develop policies of Indian integration based on respect for Indian cultures. Following those recommendations, the short-lived government of Accion Democratica organized the "Comision Indigenista Nacional" or Indian Commission in 1947.

In opposition to the integrationist and assimilationist underpinnings of officialist or "bourgeois" indigenismo there emerged a counter-current that Bollinger and Lund label "radical indigenismo." This is essentially a mirror image of bourgeois indigenismo. It sees industrial society as a decaying system, and in the Indian societal models, an alternative. It contrasts the superior value systems and notions of collectivity and spirituality of Indian societies to the materialism and individualism of the industrial West. The rejection of western values and ideologies extended to Marxism as well. This particular current re-emerged in the 1960s and gave those leaders fueled the emergence of an international Indian leadership and intellectual allies. The

Barbados meetings of 1971 and 1977 were unique in the almost unprecedented participation of Indian leaders as major representatives.

However, social scientists, and especially anthropologists working in Indian areas, also embraced this new form of radical indigenismo and continue to be a major force in the policy process affecting the Latin American Indian population. But this is not a homogeneous movement and internal divisions have emerged which place the individuals associated with the Patzcuaro movement in somewhat of a continuum between more or less orthodox views regarding Indian culture and separation from or connection to other class and ethnic groups in the course of their socio-political development.

It is with this new tradition, and particularly with the precepts set forth by the Patzcuaro Congress, that Venezuelan indigenistas identify and which have also influenced the new rhetoric of official indigenismo in this country. The internal cleavages within the Venezuelan indigenista are also reflective of the internal contradictory positions found within the Barbados' group. For one thing, Barbados retained much of the romanticism or "populism," and even anti-Marxism of the time--the latter often understandably, given the evolutionism that prevailed among orthodox Marxists. It continued to hold a fundamentally redemptive vision of Indian communities and it remained profoundly historical and dichotomizing in its vision of the Indian communities' relation to the national societies that engulfed them. It continued to

explain the internal logic of Indian communities by mere opposition to "western industrial society," and it suggested a future when Indian communities, liberated from oppressive western influences, would resume their autochthonous development.²⁴ Change, and the various modes of articulation with external agents, were often ignored in analyses informed by this perspective, or were treated as mere appendages outside of the "ideal" model of Indian communities.²⁵

The "Declaration of Barbados I," however, included a series of important, progressive policy recommendations upon which SOVAAP's own recommendations were based. Both SOVAPP's concrete recommendations for the Venezuelan situation and the Barbados guidelines constituted the ideological foundation of IAN's Indian development program later on. The document denounced the common situation of colonialism, despoilment, and disintegration faced by Indians all over Latin America. It also marked a new orientation toward Indian affairs that promoted autochthonous ethnic development, self-management, and the consolidation of "communal power." It rejected the Patzcuaro principles of benevolent assimilationism that had been based on the thesis of cultural relativism which saw Indians integrated into national society as "full citizens" rather than as independent cultures and societies.²⁶ The indigenistas of Barbados maintained instead that integration should be accomplished not at the individual level but through projects modeled after, and supportive of, the holistic

sociocultural organizational principles of Indian communities. This recommendation was obviously based on the already expressed belief that Indian communal modes of socioeconomic organization offered distinct advantages over the stratifying tendencies of capitalist-inspired models of development, as well as on the principle of respect for all cultures. They deserved, according to radical indigenista views, to be treated as societal models that could offer an alternative to a decaying capitalist system. In addition, Barbados I called on social scientists to serve as advisers to the organization of a genuine Indian movement and in the Indian struggle for self-development.²⁷

In Venezuela, the philosophical underpinnings of this new indigenismo was most explicitly defined by the anthropologist Esteban Emilio Mosonyi, who eventually played an advisory role in the development of IAN's development program. He defined this new philosophical approach as an "intellectual current which, through a series of publications, details a totally new Indigenist policy, based on the consideration of Indian groups as ethnic minorities"-- suggesting for the first time a relationship of unequal power as opposed to simply dissimilar cultures and epochs--"with the right to develop their own sociocultural identity, without having to remain in a total state of tribal isolation." (Mosonyi, 1975:27)²⁸ Mosonyi continued, "The interculturalist position... advocates a pluricultural solution, within which every culture would develop its own dynamic..." (Mosonyi, 1972:45). Anthropologists like Gerald Clarac, who had been working with the government's Apure

Indigenista Center, also spoke of a new indigenismo of "liberation" as opposed to the official and missionary indigenismo of "domination" that had prevailed in Venezuela until the late 1960's (Clarac, 1974). Similarly, Valdez, a COPEI party member and lawyer who had a long record of working on Indian land rights issues, published articles on that topic attacking the `economic liberalism' that had continued to shape official indigenismo's land distribution policies favoring individual over communal property rights. Both of these individuals became major players in the development of the program and the establishment of new economic organizations or *empresas indigenas*. Clarac was initially the in-house anthropologist of the program, essentially the main position at that time. Later in 1974, when the program became independent from PRIDA, he was named program coordinator. Valdez supplied his legal skills in the elaboration of an economic model of development and land entitlement that would be guaranteed by existing Venezuelan laws, particularly the articles of the agrarian reform. He went on to head the office of Indian land grants created within the National Agrarian Institute parallel to the Indian development program. He also worked at CODESUR and there, together with other indigenista anthropologists, helped develop inter-agency agreements with IAN to support the organization of *empresas indigenas* and Indian federations.²⁹

In this manner, there developed a clear connection of Barbados' new indigenista orientation and official indigenismo.

This connection often met with harsh criticisms from other indigenistas who adhered to a more radical (not leftist) interpretation of Indian liberation.

These indigenistas, also associated with Barbados' principles and Venezuela's SOVAAP, stretched the implications of the interculturalist position and emphasized the 'superior' societal models of Indian ethnic groups, as opposed to 'western, industrial society' (Arvelo, 1974). In their view, the application of the principles of a new indigenismo to the organization of a state-promoted program amounted to a distortion of the principles and their use merely a new ideological justification of integrationist programs. As the analysis progresses, one can see the development of these antagonistic positions affecting the very development of IAN's program.

B. Indigenistas and the Policy Shift: From Welfare to Economic Development

By 1970 criticisms of government inactivity regarding the deteriorating situation of Indians had become significantly vocal. A documented act of genocide (known as "the Rubiera Case) against 17 Guahibo Indians from Apure, including women and children, provided the catalyst for a congressional investigation of the situation of Venezuelan indigenous groups. The social scientists associated with SOVAAP testified against government and religious organizations' actions or lack of action in Indian communities, focusing their complaints on the desarrollista-style programs and their disregard for the future of Indians living in areas targeted

for development.

As a result of this parliamentary action, the congress approved an Indian development program to be housed in the institute in charge of agrarian reform (IAN). The program was to function under PRIDA and thus be subject to the agrarian reform guidelines, but supposedly with the possibility of adapting such guidelines to indigenista principles. Some of the same social scientists who had participated with SOVAAP were hired as the program's staff.

The successful culmination of neo-indigenista actions in the IAN development program represented an apparent blow to the desarrollistas who had dominated the conduct of rural development through programs such as PRIDA and the Conquest of the South. This apparent triumph of the Indigenistas, however, was aided by a few conjunctural events that occurred by the early 1970s. By this time, the general influence of the desarrollistas within COPEI had begun to dwindle although it had by no means disappeared. There were several reasons for this. A very important one had to do with the growing dissatisfaction of some members of the bourgeoisie and influential political figures with the policies of the minister of finance.... 30 Simultaneously, the damaging campaign that influential intellectuals were conducting through the national and international press--criticizing the government's as handling of Indian affairs--threatened to weaken the party's and in fact the Venezuelan state's legitimacy among the subordinate classes and their allies. COPEI was confronting a particularly turbulent

situation on university campuses and was also attempting to be recognized as a party sensitive to peasants and workers. Finally, and as I mentioned before, COPEI had experienced a serious split in its youth organization and was clearly interested in resolving the conflict between these conservative and progressive factions. Conditions for a compromise between the two factions in COPEI, the desarrollistas and those representing the indigenista perspective were essential.

C. State Agencies as Locus of Control of Indian Policy: from the
Central Office of Indian Affairs to
The National Agrarian Institute

The shift from a welfare to a development orientation to Indian policy at the beginning of the 1970s also brought about the emergence of the National Agrarian Institute as the agency dictating the thrust of Indian policy. Up to this time, the responsibility for state programs in Indian areas and by extension, of general policy directions in this field, had fallen to the Oficina Central de Asuntos Indigenas (OCAI). This office was organized during the AD administration of Raul Leoni as an extension of the Indian Commission Technical Corps that was created during the AD administration of Romulo Betancourt.

Under the Indian Comision and OCAI, there had been established several Indian regional centers through which national funds were disbursed for various programs providing minimal technical and welfare assistance to Indian groups. The establishment of the centers and expansion of the Indian Comision to OCAI had alarmed

the more conservative members of the Catholic Church who saw this move by the historically anti-clerical AD as a strategy of the government to curtail the church's control over Indian affairs. However, for a long period of time, OCAI's funding was rather limited and the Catholic Church continued to obtain about 50% of the Indian Commission's budget for its educational and social programs throughout the 1960s.³¹ The regional centers during the early sixties, influenced by the ethnic movements of the time, had made some efforts at organizing self-managing cooperatives and other grassroots economic programs. However, by the latter part of the 1960s OCAI's regional centers concentrated their efforts in facilitating temporary employment and providing isolated social services to the portion of the Indian population that exhibited the worst symptoms of social disenfranchisement and poverty.³²

It was partly as a response to the paternalistic orientation to Indian policy which was most easily identified with OCAI's activities that SOVAPP's indigenistas made their demands. The decision of the Venezuelan government to authorize an Indian program within the Agrarian Institute at the start of COPEI's first administration sent a clear message to AD-organized OCAI that this agency would not occupy a major role in Indian affairs.

From this moment there developed an inter-agency competition for the scarce resources as well as bureaucratic jobs within the area of Indian policy. Such competition was often manipulated by party and administration officials and becomes yet one more factor influencing the evolution of the Indian development program.³³

The next chapter explores the final accommodation (compromise) between the various state fractions and agencies which culminated in some modest changes in the apparent policy shift toward economic development and in the design and implementation of existing rural development models. The chapter then reviews the content and overall performance of the program at the national level.

ENDNOTES

1. For a general historical review of these changes see Heinen and Coppens (1986). Up to this time, Indian policy objectives were heavily influenced by the Catholic Church's missionary interests in Indian areas, and heavily conditioned by the state's inability to extend its administrative functions into these frontier territories. In 1915, the Venezuelan state, still too weak to assert its control over the whole of Venezuela's territory, passed the "ley de Misiones" (Law of Missions) whereby it gave the Catholic Church extraterritorial rights over Indian areas with missionary outposts and the right to control freedom of movement over such territories. The law is still active today and invoked occasionally when it is politically expedient, to do so. In the 1950s, the growth of Venezuela's army allowed the state to increase its direct control over Indian territory and the dictator Perez Jimenez signed Decree No. 283 which requires that all individuals wishing to travel to such areas obtain a permit from the Venezuelan government, See Ministerio de Educacion (1979).
2. The term "state" refers to the analytical category of institutional ensemble which constitute the Venezuelan capitals and state apparatus. It is distinguished from the historical category of political regimes or specific administrations of governments.
3. See Cendes (1981).
4. Although this varies from region to region. Gutman and Van Kesteren (1978), Martz and Myers (1977), Hassan (1975) Herman (1977), Aranda (1984).
5. Hassan (1975) Quarterly Economic Reports for Venezuela (QER) (1968), (1969), (1970).
6. Specific indicators of this downtrend included disappointing growth in GNP since 1967; slow rise in fixed capital formation; and falling levels of oil production. QER (1968:1,3), (1969:2), (1970:1).
7. "Trienio" is the name commonly given to the democratic interlude of 1945-1948 in which Accion Democratica (AD) briefly took control of the government only to be overthrown by a military coup that placed Perez Jimenez in power.
8. See Cendes (1981), for a broad outline of Venezuela's class re-alignments at various key moments in its history. See Ewell (1984) and Martz (1980) for an outline of COPEI's ideological base and policy orientations.

9. See Aranda (1983) and Cendes (1981), for reviews and analyses of these developments in the Venezuelan economic and political structure. See Enloe (1981) for a brief historical analysis of the role of the military in state building and its impact on ethnic groups. See Carnoy--especially the essay on Poulantzas--for a more theoretical analysis of the state's task (--using instruments such as the army)--to establish national unity and delineate the boundaries "within which capital reproduction is to take place."
10. Calvani (1979) Translation supplied and emphasis added.
11. See Ministerio de la Defensa/Autogestion Indigena, (1977) and Arvelo-Jimenez (1984), for two different versions of the significance of the Border Council in shaping the new orientation toward Indian policy.
12. Article 1.4.6 of the frontier policy guidelines (Venezuela: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 1978) reads: "The participatory promotion and consolidation of Indian and [other] frontier communities must take place in settlements [poblamiento] harmonious with the triple equilibrium: human; socioeconomic and politico-administrative." The next paragraph is even more revealing of the state's integrationist objectives, softened by the interculturalist perspective within which it is phrased:"...such a process must be one of selective integration, that is to say, that on the one hand the nation incorporate all the human, cultural, and spiritual values of the frontier populations, but on the other, that process must achieve, among those populations, the gradual assimilation of the institutions and the most genuine values of the Venezuelan nationality."
13. See the Memorias of the Ministerio de Justicia and Ministerio de Education for budgets allocated for these purposes.
14. Several theorists of the state have examined the increasing importance of formal education with the advancement of capitalist relations. Althusser notes, for example, that training of the existing and potential labor force tends to be provided more and more outside production and within a formal educational system. Althusser (1971) and Poulantzas (1974) also note the function of the educational apparatus of socialization of individuals into hegemonic norms and mores while inhibiting alternative cultural systems of adaptation to material circumstances. Formal education becomes a vehicle, for example, to transform the individual's concept of time in accordance with the requirements of capitalist production. The presence of the missionaries in Indian communities have, intentionally or unintentionally, contributed to the

fulfillment of these functions. They have contributed to what Offe (1984) calls "passive" proletarianization, which is essentially the creation and maintenance of those sectors of the labor force that for different reasons are not at the time actively participating in production. However, the capitalist state constantly strives to gain control of these 'ideological apparatuses' and wrestle control from institutions such as the church which ultimately have competing interests and survival exigencies. The struggle between ruling political parties and the Venezuelan Catholic church, as well as the progressive involvement of the state in the native communities' education, provides supporting evidence for these arguments. For an essay on the socialization functions fulfilled by missionaries see Miller (1974).

15. See Venezuela Misionera, various issues.
16. A formal and reputable A.D. party leader, Prieto Figueroa, made the most explicit charges against the desarrollista-COPEI alliance and its support for big business and international banking interests. See Herman, (1980). For a description of the Movimiento Desarrollista and its right wing ideology (as espoused by Pedro Tinoco) see Martz and Baloyra (1973).
17. Regionalization is considered an important step in the advancement of capitalist states' bureaucratic consolidation. See Blank (1980) for a review of Venezuela's regionalization process. See Heinen and Coppens, (1986) for the effect of this process on the fragmentation of Indian territories and the Indian's loss of control over such territories.
18. These goals are generally accepted as standard, "implicit" goals of rural development by critical writers such as Gusti (1984), De Janvry (1984), Grindle (1986) and Galli (1981).
19. According to de Janvry (1981; 1984), the accomplishment of both goals preserved what he calls the "functional dualism" between peasant production and the capitalist sector typical of Latin American "disarticulated economies." Authors such as de Janvry (1981) and Samir Amin (1977) argue that in these export-oriented (disarticulated) economies, labor is only a cost factor because the demand function remains outside the system. These economies are thus socially and sectionally disarticulated, as there are no real linkages between the different sectors of the economy and thus no internal multiplier effects to speak of. The internal market, according to this logic, is basically insignificant for capital accumulation. Maintaining low wages is required not only by individual capitalists but by the system as a whole. One important way to accomplish this is to maintain a semi-proletarianized labor force that can, through its subsistence

production, maintain low wages. In addition, because capitalist production is so slow to enter agriculture and because in Latin America this has tended to occur primarily within the more profitable export sector, it is important to preserve middle and upper peasantry who, by exploiting their own family labor and having lower requirements for capital accumulation, can afford to produce wage foods to a degree not possible for capitalist firms. This analysis is historically correct in many cases, but it becomes highly functionalistic when it is elevated to a structural argument concerning the "blocked transition" of peasant economies, and, especially in the case of Amin, of dependent capitalism. As mentioned in the introduction, new peasant studies have successfully questioned this "Chinese wall" faced by the peasant sector and third world capitalist economies. Accordingly, these studies show that peasant roads of transition are not limited to the dissolution-permanence dichotomy; in fact, capitalized family farms, for example, emerge as a much more important sector of the peasantry than de Janvry and others sharing the world system perspective allowed for. In addition, the argument of a non-existent internal market must also be considered as a historical contingent rather than a structural necessity of Latin American economies. In fact, in countries like Venezuela, the internal labor market has become quite significant in some areas. Even in agriculture, national agribusiness has begun to link up the various sectors of production, marketing and processing. For a recent critique of this particular aspect see Wise (1987).

20. See Republica de Venezuela, IV Plan de La Nacion (1971), and the Memorias of Minisierio de Agricultura y Cria (1971).
21. See Clarac (1974; 1975), and Serbin (1983).
22. See the Memorias of the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) (1971; 1972).
23. See Coppens (1973), Ministerio de Obras Publicas. Comision para el Desarrollo del Sur (1974), Arvelo-Jimenez (1974).
24. This refers to the period which immediately preceded and followed the 1940 Inter-American Indigenista Congress which convened in Patzcuaro, Mexico. At that time, most analysts agree, there emerged a new orientation toward the incorporation of Indians into the state system. Such integration was still the main goal but it was to take place in the context of respect for Indian values and cultures. It initially embraced the principles of "cultural relativism," but as Diaz Polanco (1982) notes, such principles were soon abandoned in light of the contradictory emphasis on assimilation and acculturation.

25. See Bollinger and Lund (1982), and Diaz Polanco (1982).
26. This view of the new indigenismo was subject to the same shortcomings associated with dependency theory and the related thesis of internal colonialism. One of the most common criticisms of dependency theory is related to its tendency to explain third world underdevelopment by turning modernization theory upside down--i.e., as a consequence of imperialism--thus leaving much of the internal logic of these societies unexplained. These shortcomings of indigenismo and dependency are probably the result of the ideological and political motivations that characterized them. In both cases, a "liberation thesis" from a foreign or a national oppressor informed the scientific analysis. There was thus a progressive element in indigenismo and its critique of capitalism; but unlike dependency, as well as the orthodox Marxism that it opposed, it was forced to maintain its rejection of current Marxist analysis--or, for that matter, even recent liberal analyses grounded on material, historically structured conditions--given its main thesis that Indian thought and social systems constituted a redemptive alternative to western thought and social systems. In this manner it strangled its chances to overcome its conceptual shortcomings and became reduced to pure ideology. As an ideology it mainly applied itself to highlighting the structural or institutional differences that existed among Indian communities and not only westernized national societies but also other urban and rural classes --without, as I suggested in the introduction, rigorously dissecting the meanings of these assertions. Unfortunately, the political consequences of such ideological stands have been, in my view, very negative. Among them has been a notable resistance to participation in common actions with these "part-societies," thus succumbing to the divisive strategies of the dominant classes. As Foster Carter once said of dependency theory's influences on the political events of the sixties and their emphasis on "foquismo," "Bad theory, like bad medicine can kill you." (1978).
27. Bonfil et al.,(1972), Mosonyi (1975).
28. Translation supplied and emphasis added.
29. Interviews with Clarac, Venezuelan anthropologist and first Director of the Program (1985, 1987).
30. See Quarterly Economic Reports for this year, and Herman (1980).
31. For data concerning OCAI's budget during the early sixties see

corresponding issues of the Boletín Indigenista Venezolano and the Ministry of Justice's Memorias for various years.

32. For various analysis see Arvelo-Jimenez (1984), and Heinen and Coppens (1986). For OCAI's program of activities see selected years of the Boletín Indigenista Venezolano).
33. See Chapter 1 for a brief theoretical interpretations of this sort of inter-agency competition.

CHAPTER 3

THE EVOLUTION AND AGGREGATE OUTCOMES OF THE INDIAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In 1971 the Indian development program was formally organized. The indigenistas hired to run the program drafted as its main objectives the promotion of Indian cultural identity. More concretely, the program was to seek the promotion of socioeconomic and political organizations in which Indians would participate, not simply as objects of governmental benefits, but as active subjects in pursuit of democratic rights of self-determination--the "sacred right of all ethnic autonomous minorities" (Clarac, 1974). Four program areas corresponded with these early objectives: land titling, research to support the organization of culturally appropriate communal economic organizations (what came to be the *empresas Indigenas*), cultural development, and integral rural projects (PRIDA).

Despite having won an apparent battle in the organization of an unprecedented development program in Indian areas, IAN indigenistas soon faced a series of obstacles in their efforts to implement the goals articulated above and modified over time. This chapter begins with a review of the initial limitations and eventual compromise between the various state and Indian representatives which shaped the initial configuration and scope of the program. After this review, the chapter focuses more specifically on the program's early goals, subsequent performance

and those contingent factors that both opened new possibilities and established new limits in its evolution. The last section is a discussion of the entire evolution of the program as examined in the last two chapters. It re-inserts some of the broader historical and theoretical questions which have guided this examination. Its major purpose is to highlight the complexity of factors that continued to influence the implementation of the program and dismiss mono-causal explanations of the successes and failures exhibited by the program.

The program's history can be divided into two distinct phases, one from 1970 to 1977, and the other from 1979 to the present. In between, from 1977 to 1979, the program operated at a minimal level. This chapter will concentrate primarily on the first phase of the program. Because not all stages of the various processes generated by the program neatly correspond to these chronological divisions, the chapter will sometimes go beyond 1977. The next chapter, chapter 4, focuses on the changes in the program after 1977, and the broad economic and political forces that determined such changes. This latter period is of special importance to the analysis of the two empresa cases because it was after 1977 that both empresas were organized.

I. Structural Limitations to Alternative Models for Indian Development

From the beginning, the efforts to articulate an alternative model for Indian development within the confines of the state

bureaucracy, faced serious obstacles. The Indian Program was subsumed under the PRIDA projects which operated out of IAN. This meant, among other things, that the program had no independent budget line and was composed of a small staff of a sociologist, an anthropologist, and a research assistant. In 1972 an office for titling Indian lands was created.¹ Working under PRIDA, and the established agrarian reform guidelines also meant that most of the staff's energy was spent struggling to modify the desarrollista orientation toward rural development projects that had no provisions for the special needs and characteristics of Indian groups.

One particular limitation was the fact that PRIDA programs were primarily seen as colonization projects of rural development with emphasis on large capital and technological investments. The Indian population remained on the sidelines of such projects. Second, IAN had traditionally favored individual titles over the communal titles sought by the program staff and guaranteed to the Indians by the Venezuelan Constitution and the agrarian reform law. Most importantly, agrarian reform law allowed only a small number of economic organizational models to be used in rural development projects. Up to the early 1970s, credit unions (uniones de prestatarios) were favored over collective peasant enterprises (empresas campesinas). Finally, credit institutions had steadily resisted dealing with communal organizations.

The Indian program staff and advising anthropologists believed that the collective format of the empresas was better suited to the

traditional economies of Indian groups in Venezuela and came closest to the spirit of the "Barbados II" guidelines (Bonfil Batalla, 1978; Grupo de Barbados, 1979). But even the format of the *empresas campesinas* was problematic because it presupposed a set of statutes that were identical for all *empresas*. These statutes prescribed a basic administrative structure based on the western bureaucratic model of president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. This structure was thought to contradict the internal decision-making mechanisms of most Indian communities, which to a great extent continued to include traditional leaders in the decision-making process--albeit in varying degrees.²

The IAN indigenistas believed then, as did other indigenistas, that much effort had to be focused on research activities designed to suggest ways of adapting the existing *empresa* formats, and the interpretations of the agrarian reform law in general, to the concrete situations of different Indian groups.³

A. The Compromise with the *Desarrollistas*

In late 1971 and early 1972, the IAN staff conducted a series of meetings with Indian participants on leadership development. The meetings were part of a conscious effort to mobilize support for new forms of economic organizations among the Indian population and to create, *de facto*, an organized Indian leadership. This followed the recommendation of the Barbados meetings⁴ to designate "Indian promoters" who would actively participate with IAN program staff within both the state and Indian communities. In these

meetings, community representatives were given information about Venezuela's agrarian reform and their rights to benefits under the agrarian reform law. Indian representatives in turn had a chance for the first time to air their complaints regarding their current social and economic conditions as well as to express their views on IAN's proposals.

Addressing charges of a new "paternalism" formerly attributed to OCAI,⁵ Clarac defended IAN's program by alleging that, in fact, the indigenous populations, often through these meetings, had explicitly demanded state support comparable to that received by other rural groups. "There were orientations, demands, and concrete pressures on the state on the part of the Indians," Clarac said. In these meetings he said, "there emerged concrete concerns on their part, such as security over their land and the need to have economic organizations that would make them eligible for state support, as well as interest in some form of political (advocacy) organization."⁶

These IAN field visits, together with the one applied research project in a Warao Indian community conducted through an agreement with the La Salle Foundation, provided the fundamental guidelines for the design of the *empresas indigenas* and also of the Indigenous Federations that were subsequently organized. No comprehensive research projects were ever funded.

In April 1972, IAN organized a working meeting in Caracas and brought in those Indian leaders selected during the field visits. In addition, IAN requested the participation of regional chiefs of

PRIDA projects being conducted in areas with large Indian populations, as well as of SOVAAP and missionary representatives who supported a new orientation toward indigenist action (Clarac and Valdez, 1976). Immediately after this meeting the Second Congress of Indians of Venezuela took place, and IAN encouraged all participants of the working session to attend. What transpired was without precedent in Venezuelan indigenismo. Its significance must not be minimized. The overwhelming participation of Indian leaders was in sharp contrast to the experience of the first Congress in 1970, when most participants were state personnel and social scientists. Additionally, and most importantly, two major resolutions came out of the second Congress: to organize, for the first time, regional Indian Federations and a National Indian Confederation, and to pressure PRIDA to modify its desarrollista policy of colonization and to cooperate with the Indian program in its efforts to form Indian collective organizations.⁷

During 1972 and 1973, six regional Indigenous Federations and the nationwide Indigenous Confederation of Venezuela were founded. These organizations came to be known as the organized Indian movement. There is no question that the logistical and material support contributed by IAN and other affiliated state agencies, including CODESUR which housed a few sympathetic indigenistas, was of paramount importance in creating the conditions that allowed such a movement. In the 1973 "Conquest of the South" national meetings, the indigenous confederation presented its most organized

opposition to the desarrollista approach to development on the southern frontier. This opposition received wide media coverage and became the catalyst for the final compromise between the neo-indigenista perspective of IAN staff and the desarrollista-type programs of PRIDA and CODESUR. From then on there would be a relatively higher degree of receptivity toward the Indian program's proposal, and toward IAN's arguments that Indian communities were a legitimate constituency of the agrarian reform movement.

In summary, changes in state policies designed to deal with an accumulation crisis generated unexpected political problems for Caldera's administration. The embarrassing events surrounding the treatment of Venezuelan Indians brought into question COPEI's claims of a new commitment to the subordinate classes. This was also occurring at a time when caldera was attempting to effect a final truce with the leftist guerrilla movement of the 1960s and thus establish once and for all the legitimacy of Venezuela's new liberal democratic state. The limitations placed on the program in its early stages already confirm the primacy of political objectives on the part of congressional and party leaders who supported the idea of a development program among Indian groups. Caldera was also facing an AD-controlled congress which could further jeopardize the former's efforts to expand its constituency among rural groups and classes. AD, as I previously said, had a strong hold over the Venezuelan peasantry and its federation.

The desarrollista agenda of frontier development clearly revealed that in the process of capitalist expansion, it was Indian

land rather than Indian labor that was of interest to agencies such as PRIDA, CODESUR, and even the National Border Council--especially in the earlier formulations of such development policies. ⁸ This assertion does not conflict with program critics' views that COPEI's introduction of a development program among Indian peoples did not necessarily contradict these broader national development goals while possibly preventing more serious confrontations between criollo colonists and Indians (Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo, 1983).

However, the triumph of IAN indigenistas in this regard cannot be automatically interpreted as the successful maneuvering of what were for the most part COPEI sympathizers (the IAN and CODESUR indigenistas) to "control" the political mobilization of Indian groups, and, by extension, their independent demands for self-development. This is matter that must be empirically investigated. It remains to be seen then, whether economic and political interests of different social actors within and outside the state actually coincided. And, more generally, it remains to be seen, the extent to which national development or political objectives truly coincided with those of IAN indigenistas and their program as reflected in funding levels and other forms of support; as well as continued struggles and accommodations that occurred among different actors, agencies, and political parties in the course of the program's implementation.

II. The Program's Performance and New Limitations

This section reviews the content and overall performance of

the Indian program at the national level. The evaluation follows the four basic goals and program areas that were most clearly delineated during the years 1974-1975, following the most intensive period of negotiations with the desarrollista faction. These programs areas were listed in a comprehensive program report as:

1) "Research, promotion, and constitution of Indigenous collective economic organizations which were faithful to, and further consolidated, the traditional socio-economic structures of each ethnic group." 2) "Land grants with collective (communal) titles sufficiently extensive to allow for the integral development of the Indian communities." 3) "Support for and promotion of the organized Indian movement, in order to energize and channel the ethnic potentialities toward the conquest of their basic rights, as Venezuelans, and as autochthonous ethnic minorities." and 4) "Respect, promotion and fortification of the autochthonous ethnic cultures, as a necessary condition for the Indian's participation in the country's socioeconomic process".⁹

A. Collective Economic Organizations or the
"Empresas Indigenas"

Beginning with the new economic organizations, program documents reveal that 51 empresas were formed between 1971 and 1978. Of these, six were "inter-communitary" i.e., included several communities; and 45 were "communitary" or single-community empresas. These empresas encompassed 68 Indian communities and more than 1,500 families (IAN, 1983).

1. The Articulation of an Organizational Design for the New Empresas Indigenas

The development of a design for economic organizations that would be sensitive to the needs and characteristics of Indian communities must be examined in some detail. I already mentioned the fact that in the absence of formal research, IAN staff and IAN consultants conducted a series of "diagnostic" field visits in order to gain firsthand understanding of the situation of Indian communities, to promote the notion of Indians' participation in the agrarian reform, and to elicit reactions to the idea of indigenous economic organizations and political federations.¹⁰ In addition, in June of 1972, through an agreement with La Salle Foundation, a more complete diagnostic research project was conducted and a pilot "empresa indigena-campesina" was subsequently organized in a Warao community in the Orinoco delta.¹¹ Both experiences reaffirmed the conviction of indigenistas involved with the project that the empresa format of agrarian reform allowed the greatest flexibility for adapting these economic organizations to the specific conditions of Indian communities.

The general propositions and underlying rationale for what the indigenistas from then on called the empresas indigenas, to differentiate them from the empresas campesinas, were expressed in a several papers and documents produced by IAN and CODESUR¹²

Among the positive traits allegedly provided by the semi-collective empresa structure as opposed to, for example, the more traditional cooperative were: a high degree of community autonomy

in the decision-making process, or "autogestion"; the possibility of engaging in new economic activities without compromising the subsistence economy; and a "non-variable labor input," given the expected relationship of equivalence between the empresa and the community (IAN, 1975).

Clarac and Valdez (1976), maintained that an economic organization such as the empresa allowed for the practical reconciliation between the communal features inherent in Indian production and the "liberal economy's" requirement of production for the market. This statement was made in recognition of the fact that state support would likely not be forthcoming unless the Indian communities agreed to go beyond subsistence production and integrate themselves into the larger market structure. The whole orientation of rural development policy, especially as dictated within the new conception of PRIDA, was naturally oriented to resolving production and productivity problems in the countryside. These were not social programs. Credit mechanisms were designed to benefit individual as opposed to collective units of production, and they exercised significant control over all production decisions.¹³ The emphasis of the indigenistas, however, and of the Indians who agreed to form the empresas, was on the empresa's capacity to provide these communities with the minimum cash required for their acquired needs for industrially produced goods, as well as for education and health services outside the community. The introduction of marketable commodities such as cattle was also necessary to secure government credit and other forms of financial

assistance targeted for rural development projects (Clarac and Valdez, 1976). Dieter Heinen (1981a), a consultant for the program, also explained that a major consideration in the empresa design had to be the "control of imports" by consensual agreement on the part of empresa members. Examples were the machetes, salt, and hatchets that Indians now use routinely in their subsistence activities. Again, the emphasis was on small-scale production for both subsistence and the market.

Clearly no large-scale production was envisioned within these plans. Yet in order to receive the desired government support and protection from eviction under the agrarian reform law, more compelling reasons than basically maintaining a subsistence economy with small-scale production for the market had to be given to those who controlled IAN's, and most importantly, credit agencies' budgetary decisions. One of the anthropologists who has served as an adviser to the program and to Indian communities strongly disagrees with the notion that the empresas indigenas had been a well-thought out tool to control political mobilization or Indian production: "the empresas indigenas was a disparate concept; it did not even include other self-management projects that were autonomous from the state. In reality what existed were goals" (as opposed to the 'real empresas' defined on paper for primarily bureaucratic reasons). He adds.. we realized that the empresas and not the other associations would grant the indigenas the best protection..it was an ad hoc decision."¹⁴ In their view, these

economic organization provided the quickest and best-available means to prevent a further deterioration of Indian territory and socio-economic survival.¹⁵

2. Organizing an Indian Leadership at the Local Level:
The New Empresa Managers

By 1975, but mainly during 1976, already within a new AD administration, the general methodological propositions and ideas that IAN indigenistas arrived at regarding a new form of economic organization became the subject of another series of workshops and meetings with Indian communities. Such meetings also took place with significant logistic and even instructional support from agencies such as CODESUR.¹⁶ The courses covered the operational requirements of organizing and running an empresa indigena as well as planning for the development of secondary and tertiary agrarian organizations, i.e., organizations in charge of processing, transportation, and commercialization, and are normally considered integral components of self-development collective projects (Galleski, 1975). Also, the important issue of land titles, as well as other IAN program areas such as the organization of artisan production and leadership development, were again addressed, now as necessary subcomponents of the empresa structures.

The communities selected for this new round of empresa promotion¹⁵ were selected according to criteria adapted from the integral rural development projects. The IAN indigenistas were sufficiently realistic to understand that not all Indian communities did not have the necessary ingredients to initiate a

process of complex cooperative development.¹⁷ These criteria included the number of people who would benefit, the presence in the community of basic infrastructures, previous experience with associative forms of production, a sufficient level of agricultural development, and a cohesive leadership. Like planners of other rural development projects, then, the indigenistas had been placed in the position of supporting the "best bet" within the Indian sector. Disenfranchised Indian peasants and communities without a stable organization seemed unlikely candidates for state support.

Between March and November of 1976, IAN conducted seven workshops among 15 ethnic groups belonging to 109 Indian communities. As a result of these workshops, 47 new empresas, the largest number ever to be organized were constituted, four of which were inter-community empresas, benefiting a total of 1,498 Indian families (Clarac and Valdez, 1976).

3. The Adopted Design for Empresas Indigenas--Similarities and Differences with Empresas Campesinas

The organizational structure of all empresas consisted of a General Assembly, an Administrative Junta, and a supervisory council or "Comite de Vigilancia."¹⁸ IAN indigenistas contended that this organizational structure was mainly a bureaucratic requirement and that modifications within that structure to accommodate key traditional elements were possible. A case in point was the incorporation of elder traditional leaders into the supervisory council and the election of an administrative committee, made up of the president, vice president, treasurer, and

secretary, through a combination of consensual and majority rule.¹⁹

An important and rather neglected part of the empresa program and analyses of the program is the nature and degree of women's participation in empresa activities and related changes in their participation in subsistence and household activities.²⁰

There was a serious lack of formal participation of women within both the decision-making structures and the new market-oriented activities of the empresa. The absence of women in political participation, except through pre-existing informal means, resulted from the national agrarian reform law, which recognizes only men as heads of household and as official members of economic organizations such as the empresas. Women are represented by their husbands (Agrarian Reform Law of 1960). This obviously has important implications such as further tying women to the household sphere in a situation of dependency.²¹ Aggravating the situation is the apparent lack of awareness of IAN personnel of the need to address the special problems of women from a contemporary and well-informed feminist perspective. In fact Clarac and Valdez (1976), in their only mention of the program's activities for women in the empresa communities, specify that efforts to include women in the empresa are confined to the area of "cultural reactivation" and consist of sending women to courses on pottery making.²²

4. Financial Support for the Empresas

Earlier I cited the argument of some of the program founders that a registered and juridically recognized economic organization

would grant Indian communities the access to material support virtually denied to them until that time. However, program documents as well as interviews with Clarac revealed that such material support was often not forthcoming or was minimal when it did exist.

The program, while functioning under PRIDA until mid 1975, was not allocated its own budget for agricultural projects in Indian communities. PRIDA's budget for areas with Indian populations from 1970, at the beginning of the Indian development program, to 1974 was approximately Bs. 28,000,000 (the equivalent of about \$7,000,000). This was the largest amount of money ever invested in Indian areas before and after the Indian program was in full operation with its own budget. One must note that the budget was allocated to areas primarily, but not solely, occupied by Indian groups (Clarac, 1974-5).

PRIDA's support was significantly, if not totally, concentrated on rural development projects of a desarrollista bent. This implied that resources were mainly distributed to individual farmers as opposed to communities, and primarily to those already engaged in production of foodstuffs that were part of the wage bundle of proletarian and semiproletarian workers--beans, potatoes, and rice. As I contended at the beginning and as the literature on integrated rural development projects has made clear, the implied purpose of these projects was to "re-create" a disappearing peasantry that could, with state support, afford to produce the

otherwise nonprofitable wage goods, while capitalist production in agriculture was directed toward the more profitable luxury and/or export items.²³ IAN Indian Program staff struggled to obtain its own budget and thus insert its own indigenista orientation into official programs in Indian areas.

With regard to credits to the individual Indian communities, severe obstacles faced the newly constituted empresas. The Institute of Agricultural Credit (ICAP), founded by the COPEI administration to serve small producers, was reluctant to loan money to the empresas indigenas because these collective-type organizations deviated from traditional organizational structures followed by other subjects of agrarian reform. The Warao empresa of Hobure was finally given a small loan but "with much reticence and limitations."²⁴ Such limitations included bureaucratic inflexibility with respect to the exact amounts of money allocated per cultivated hectare. Most important, ICAP sought to impose restrictions regarding the type of crop that could be cultivated. Often, this meant mono-cropping production destined primarily for the urban market and requiring a significant increase in labor and capital inputs. This emphasis on individual vs. collective production switched suddenly in 1974, during the newly elected AD administration of Carlos Andres Perez. The Perez administration supported the notion of empresas campesinas as a way to reorganize a peasant sector that was "in a frank state of deterioration" (IAN, 1974). However, at this time IAN's Indian program was still quite young and it was not until 1976-1977 that the first phase of

organization of the empresas was completed. By this time, the general enthusiasm for these new collective organizations (both Campenianas and Indigenas) had begun to wane, and the indigenistas were unable to make a case for funding these new organizations²⁵

PRIDA was dismantled in 1975, and from then until 1977 the Indian program received no program budget. In addition, the Indian Land Office was also dissolved by 1976, and from then on land grant requests were handled by a single staff member in the general Land Office for IAN (1984).²⁶ During the first part of 1977, a large interagency meeting was planned and attended by representatives of all the government agencies involved in some way with the Indian development program and by empresa representatives who were eager to consolidate their economic organizations i.e. to receive the seed moneys to begin operating. In the week-long meeting, preliminary agreements were made between credit agencies and empresa representatives, which according to Clarac, would have meant the final consolidation of these economic organizations. As it was, Clarac, who was then director of the Indian program, was told before the conference was over that he, together with other staff members, had been dismissed from his job. This meant that for almost two and a half years the empresas were organizations that existed only on paper; all the planning and financial and technical assistance commitments that had been prepared were frozen. "The empresas were left completely alone."²⁷

Interestingly it was during this dormant period of the program that

the Apure empresa of Kumani, where part of my research was conducted, was organized in 1978 during the last months of Carlos Andres Perez's administration and just before to the presidential elections. In this last year, the Indian program received a budget for the first time, amounting to approximately Bs. 1,000,000 or \$25,000; but only two or three empresas were organized.²⁸

The next chapter covers the next period of the program in more extensive detail. At this point I will only summarize the most important outcomes of this latter period.

During the second phase, beginning in 1979, and after Clarac was rehired as director of the Indian Program, the staff devoted itself to reactivating the empresas that had been abandoned for two and a half years (IAN, 1984). In 1980 the program obtained a budget of more than Bs. 3,500.000, the largest budget received by the program in either of its two phases. For each remaining year within this second phase, the program again received Bs. 1,500.000.²⁹

Of the 51 empresas formed during the first phase of the program, IAN provided minor assistance to 33, although 17 new ones were organized (see Appendix C). New efforts were made to convince credit agencies connected with agrarian reform to extend benefits to the Indian economic organizations. In fact, credit became a new objective of the Indian program, replacing support for an organized Indian movement. The results were quite dismal. Only a little over Bs. 2,000.000 were allocated to IAN from 1981 to 1983 to distribute among 34 organizations, which encompassed more than

1,300 families (IAN, 1983)

B. Indian lands

The second and perhaps most urgent Indian program objective was to secure land titles for Indian communities. During this period the urgency for land titles was heightened because of renewed invasions into Indian areas, precipitated by the Conquest of the South. The organization of the empresas under agrarian reform was, in these circumstances, the only option for a juridical structure that would quickly secure a portion of those lands.

According to a 1984 IAN comprehensive report, between 1972 and 1978, 89 Indian communities with approximately 2,500 families received provisional titles to almost one million hectares (IAN, 1984).

The IAN indigenistas' immediate objective was to secure collective as opposed to individual land titles for the 1,600 Indian communities in Venezuela. The indigenistas succeeded in creating the special office of land titling for Indian groups soon after the start of the program in 1971 (Oficina de Dotacion de Tierras a Comunidades Indigenas). The general goal was to secure official allotment of lands "in a collective form and encompassing an area that guarantees to each group its possibilities of development in their original land base, allowing for the incorporation of new members and natural growth of the communities" (Clarac and Valdez, 1976).

The first obstacle IAN indigenistas confronted in trying to

address the land problem was a knot of contradictory legal proscriptions. Most of the area occupied by Indian groups had been transferred to the state as "empty" or "wastelands" (baldias). Within this context, the agrarian reform law of 1961 and article 77 of the Venezuelan Constitution (1961), which gave Indians rights to the lands they had traditionally worked and occupied, essentially contradicted the laws that declared those same lands to be vacant national territories. In addition, some of the Indian lands--even those that had been declared Indian reserves, such as the Sierra de Perija occupied by the Bari and the Yucpa--fell within with national forest reserves or parks, making it difficult for agricultural development projects to be conducted there.³⁰ Finally, in cases such as the state of Apure where the Pume are located, the entire Indian territory had fallen into private hands. Haciendas and cattle ranches crisscross all of the Apure state where the Pume and the Cuiva still live.

There were technical and administrative complications as well. There does not exist an adequate census or topographical survey of Indian areas. Whenever lines have been drawn, old maps and informants have been used, with highly contradictory results.³¹

Facing such obstacles and having limited time, IAN staff, according to Clarac and Heinen,³² decided not to try to immediately reconcile those legal discrepancies. They sought, instead, to guarantee at least portions of Indian lands through the conventional mechanisms of agrarian reform. The sentiment both Clarac and Heinen had expressed earlier when justifying the

organization of the empresas--that they were running out of time to stop the ravaging of Indian lands--acquired its highest urgency at this point. The normal procedure utilized by IAN, as the agency in charge of the implementation of the agrarian reform, was to ask the Ministry of Agriculture (MAC) to transfer to IAN unoccupied national lands under its administration. IAN, in turn, distributed such land for agrarian reform development projects. The juridical structure provided by the empresas indigenas, as a certified economic organization within agrarian reform, gave IAN the legal argument to request the transfer of selective Indian lands under MAC's jurisdiction.³³

All titles given to Indian communities, with two recent exceptions, were "possessory" (provisional) as opposed to "definitive"--the two modalities used under the agrarian reform law. Obtaining definitive titles requires a long bureaucratic process that may never reach completion.³⁴ This obviously keeps the Indian population in a vulnerable situation whereby titles can be rescinded depending upon the vagaries of state policy and changes in administration.³⁵ The office of land allotment was dismantled late in 1975, and no further changes with regard to the status of Indian land were achieved by the Indian program.

During the second phase of the program, between 1979 and 1984, 67 additional communities with more than 1,500 families received title to some 380,000 hectares (see Appendix E)(IAN, 1984). The office of land allotment was never reinstated. Instead the Indian

program, already into 1985, was allowed one staff position which specialized in Indian lands and worked within the general office of land allotments to the Venezuelan peasantry. During this period the indigenistas tried to resume their regulation of the Indian land situation, but most activities, were confined to administrative tasks such as organizing registries of existing titles and securing copies of the same. According to the individual in charge of Indian land allotments in 1985, a specific set of guidelines had been developed and implemented whenever possible. These guidelines included IAN's obligation to include community representatives in decisions concerning the traditional limits of their territorial boundaries.³⁶

But IAN's progress report of 1985, indicates that stumbling blocks continued to be thrown in the way of the IAN program, specifically in its efforts to address the Indian land situation. Today, Indians may be in a more vulnerable position than they were ten years ago as a result of the Guanai case.³⁷

C. Cultural "Re-activation" and Promotion of Native Crafts

The not so explicit objective behind this program area seemed to transcend pottery-making classes and cultural events. Instead, Clarac and Valdez in their "Propositions for a IAN Indian Development Program" proposed a series of activities that were clearly aimed at the articulation of an indigenista "counter-ideology." This counter-ideology included the promotion of collective organizations and self-determination as they seemed interested in promoting a new degree of "ethnic" solidarity (and

even fostering emergent forms of ethnicity) among the Indian communities. With regard to the non-Indian sectors, they sought to promote the view that Indian communities were capable of self-sustained development while contributing to the national economy (Clarac and Valdez, 1976). As an example, these two authors cite the case of Karina communities, located in the State of Anzoategui which have long been involved, as individual peasants under PRIDA's empresa model, in peanut production. According to Clarac and Valdez (1976) this is "a key site for this sort of [cultural promotion] activities because of the level of conflict between the Indian empresas and peanut cultivators, and the large producers of the same product who are interested in the Karina lands located in privileged agricultural areas, as well as in cheap labor." These local conditions, they argued, "turn supportive activities, such as a Karina cultural gathering, into a priority" (Clarac and Valdez, 1986). Emphasis was also placed on strengthening ties among the different Indian federations.

Clearly then, at least in its formulation, these cultural activities were to be intimately related to the political organization of the federations--and the empresas as well. It was obvious that IAN indigenistas understood that for this significant shift in policy to occur, the work had to to be done at all three levels--economics, politics, and ideology.³⁸

The "ideological" work took place de facto and simultaneously with various events organized with the participation of Indian

leaders. In an IAN progress report of 1983, only activities related to the creation of a pottery-making school in 1974 and the number of courses dictated figure under "accomplishments" for the first period of the program--from 1971 to 1978. For the second half, the report lists additional courses dictated, the establishment of 36 pottery-making shops at the community level, and agreements with the government industrial promotion agency, CORPOINDUSTRIA, for technical assistance and commercialization of the products. There is no mention of cultural events organized under this program area. Instead, IAN staff complained about the meager material and logistical support they received for fulfilling objectives here.

D. Support for an "Organized Indian Movement"

I have already reviewed most of the issues connected with the organization of the six Indian Federations and the national-level Indian Confederation of Venezuela, given that their creation was intimately connected with the birth of the Indian program itself. These federations and the national confederation constituted the heart of what the IAN Indian program staff called the "organized Indian movement."

According to the IAN indigenistas, the rationale behind the support for these organizations was basically that within a realistic evaluation of Venezuela's political reality, groups that remained outside of political parties or powerful pressure groups such as the Venezuelan Peasant Federation, had very little chance of having their demands heard, let alone obtaining state resources

to which they were entitled.³⁹ The movement received its strongest support during the COPEI administration of Rafael Caldera. When Perez came to power in 1977, support dwindled and turned into outright opposition to the promotion of the Indian Federations.⁴⁰

During the second half of Perez's presidency, which I have identified as one of little or no activity in IAN's Indian program, the old Central Indigenist Office (OCAI) was given new life. This intensified the historic rivalry between IAN and OCAI in their struggle to control the conduct of Indian policy. While the tendency of the Indian offices, functioning first under the Ministry of Justice and later the Ministry of Education, had been to promote relief-type programs as well as formal education, IAN indigenistas from the beginning espoused a policy of economic development and political organization in the form of the federations and the confederation. These differences deserve further analysis and I will return to them at the end of the chapter. Regarding the attack on IAN's involvement with the development of an Indian leadership, a concrete expression of OCAI's war on those activities was a discrediting campaign whereby IAN indigenistas began to be labeled as communists.⁴¹

The political and philosophical differences--not to mention the competition for state resources--between OCAI and IAN officials also opened a rift in the Indian leadership that had come out of IAN's organizational efforts. I am not sure, however, of the extent to which political differences were, in fact, the main

forces dividing this nascent and rather fragile leadership.⁴²

There were also individual problems not uncommon to a population group that has suffered such extensive social and economic disorganization. Many of the Indian leaders selected through the series of meetings held by IAN were simply those most fluent in Spanish and who had acquired some knowledge and skills in handling the relationship between their communities and the outside world. On the other hand, these were also the individuals most likely to have suffered the alienating effects of living in the outside society as Indian individuals.

During the second half of Pérez's administration, as part of the efforts to undermine IAN, and, by implication, COPEI's sway over the Indian peasantry, attempts were made to promote an alternative set of leaders who would be closest to AD and OCAI's position. In spite of such efforts, many Indian leaders came to the defense of IAN officials who had been fired and defended their views of Indian development, while criticizing the entire history of the state's degree of attention to the problems of the Indian population (Serbin, 1983).

Today, the activities related to maintenance of Indian leadership are no longer part of the Indian program agenda. They have totally disappeared from its operational plans. The Indian leadership, although much less forceful and visible, has tended to become somewhat more autonomous from the vagaries of these two political parties. In 1979 the new COPEI government of Luis Herrera called an unprecedented meeting of Indian leaders in the

Amazonian territory, but it was done at the same time that Indians themselves were organizing their own independent gathering in another part of the country. It was not until the "Guanai Case"⁴³ that visible expressions of Indian politicization would be seen again. After the Guanai case, new meetings were called by the Indian leadership with the support of indigenista anthropologists. The repressive forces of the state were mobilized at the time to invoke the decree #283 (Ministerio de Educacion, 1979) that prohibits access of non-Indians to Indian territory. Many sympathizers of Indian people were turned back and not allowed to participate in the gatherings in support of the Piaroa. These last events signaled what appears to be yet another shift in Indian policy, a shift from the populism and reformism that started in 1969 to new forms of repression in the 1980s. These last events will be reviewed and analyzed in greater detail in the next chapter.⁴⁴

III. Final Analysis and Conclusions: Evaluating the Alleged Policy Shift

In the last two chapters, I have tried to accomplish two major goals. One was to provide an analytical history of the economic and political forces that led to an apparent change in Indian policy in 1969. This was a change from basic assistance ("asistencialista") to economic development. Secondly, I have examined in detail the new policy orientation, focusing on its concrete form as well as aggregate outcomes. Despite the fact that this policy shift was

never articulated in a very coherent or consistent manner, the various reports from both IAN and OCAI, as well as the actual implementation of new development programs are ample proof that there was, in fact, a re-orientation of Indian affairs after 1969. In the next paragraphs I will offer a final assessment about the Indian program based on the national-level data presented here. I also will assess some of the harshest criticisms the more radical indigenistas have directed against the program and evaluate them in light of the theoretical notions and empirical information introduced in the last chapters.

I have argued that by the end of the 1960s clear signs appeared in the Venezuelan economy to signal a potential crisis of accumulation. Fedecamaras, the organization representing major capitalist interests within Venezuela, gave a clear mandate to the candidates in the coming presidential elections to increase the intervention of the state in the drafting and implementing of "heroic measures and a new strategy" to deal with the economic problems emerging from a slow growing oil sector, the narrowness of import substitution and the consequent shortage of capital (Economic Review, 1968 #3). Some of the projects considered within this new "industrial strategy," as it was called in the development plans (Perez Sainz, 1979), in turn threatened a latent legitimacy crisis among the rural sectors and the urban intellectuals--both were groups COPEI was attempting to attract to its political camp, being traditionally AD constituencies.

The two projects with the most direct participation in

frontier areas were "The Conquest of the South" and the integrated rural development program "PRIDA".

Couched within a "desarrollista" perspective, the capital and technological intensive character of these projects had an unexpected impact on Indian areas and provoked an equally unexpected wave of protests from Venezuelan anthropologists who had become the voice of the few Indian leaders who had emerged by this time. This situation threatened to create serious legitimacy problems and forced the COPEI administration to find different answers to a resurgent "Indian problem". These answers had to be consistent with the new political and economic reality and the demands of the Indian population, and their neo-indigenista allies, if a new full-fledged social and political crisis was to be avoided. The AD-controlled congress did not make matters any easier. The fact that this body seemed to once again "come to the rescue" of rural groups by both opposing PRIDA and supporting an investigation of the Indian situation, gave COPEI no choice but to enthusiastically embrace the new development program.

The IAN Indian program emerged then as a political concession to social pressures threatening to discredit the new Caldera government's nationalist and populist stance taken in an effort to distance itself from its elitist past and to neutralize the growing force of the left. After all, the government had campaigned on a program of concern regarding unequal distribution of wealth, and sympathy "for those who live in the margins of society."⁴⁵ But

even responses to legitimation crises are ultimately constrained by the objective requirements of the existing capital accumulation model. In the struggle between indigenistas and desarrollistas, economic arguments weighed heavily in the decision of the desarrollistas to integrate Indians into state supported development projects.

The crucial point to be made here is that up to this moment, no plans existed within the Caldera administration to redirect the existing approach to Indian policy. As I have said repeatedly, this was fundamentally a welfare approach, which had led to a "passive" sort of proletarianization for Indians under the tutelage of the Catholic church, and a more "active" proletarianization for those Indians whose communities were largely dismembered and had come under the "protection" of state programs such as the Central Office of Indian Affairs (OCAI). Even the COPEI administration's Conquest of the South and PRIDA programs were not primarily intended as policies of incorporation of Indians into the national society--although their unintended consequences definitely led to an accelerated process of incorporation via "active" proletarianization (Offe, 1984). This newly strengthened presence of state agencies in Indian areas was not motivated, as some radical indigenistas would like to argue, by the need of capital interests or "the state" to integrate Indian production and workers into regional and national commodity and labor markets. If these policies addressed the Indian question at all, it was because Indians once again were situated in land areas that were crucial

for this new stage of Venezuela's capitalist expansion.

Ironically, it was the neo-indigenistas' demands that forced the compromise which, in essence, resulted in the more direct policy of political and economic incorporation of Indians into the state via the empresas and the Federaciones Indigenas. But as authors such as Hall (1988) and Bradby (1975) have made clear, incorporation of non-capitalist areas into the capitalist sphere of development may not only respond to very different needs of capital and the state at different places and points in time, but its consequences are necessarily mediated by the concrete conjunctural circumstances within which it takes place--including the reaction from those who are the subject of incorporation.

Similarly, the dominant position of the National Border Council at the beginning, as critics themselves recognize, was also a desarrollista position which fundamentally opposed a border policy supported by local populations. Only the contingent presence of a vocal minority of council members who believed in the natural function of Indians as defenders of the border later provided additional support for the IAN indigenistas. The growing split in the Catholic church and its support for state programs for the poor also played a role in the change in direction of Indian policy.

Critics have also pointed out--and at times primarily emphasized--the political objectives of the indigenistas vs. the economic objectives of the desarrollistas. In their view, the

former simply favored a more subtle approach in controlling the Indian population. (Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo, 1983). If the indigenista orientation seemed to triumph over that of the desarrollistas, these critics argued, it was because of the existence of "an inefficient bureaucracy" and did not in any way represent the victory of a counter-integrationist position (Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo, 1983). These critics have accused IAN indigenistas of misinterpreting their writings and "having converted their ideas and objectives--self-government, self-determination, and liberation struggle--into hollow, manipulated concepts". They contend that an Indian minority saw this new indigenismo as "the most refined program of domination of all the programs designed up until the present" (Arvelo-Jimenez, 1984:113). Critics have thus interpreted the actions of IAN indigenistas within a highly conspiratorial framework, ascribing to them the role of providing the legitimacy the state needed to complete its colonization of marginal, frontier areas, and also having "astutely created an Indian leadership that gives an aura of legitimacy to its Indian strategies before the public" (Arvelo-Jimenez, 1984:112). No doubt there are some partial truths in the statements of the radical indigenistas. Going beyond the explicit objectives of social policy and programs, and deducing "implicit" objectives from the logic and specific limitations of capitalist accumulation and the nature of the state in Venezuela is a necessary and important task. De Janvry, (1981) for example, suggests such an exercise when evaluating rural development

projects such as PRIDA.

To adequately deduce "implicit" policy objectives presupposes, then, an equally adequate theoretical as well as empirical understanding of the Venezuelan state in this case. This understanding includes the particular logic and conjunctural circumstances characterizing Venezuelan capitalist development, the unique configuration of classes and their organizations, the linkages that exist between non-capitalist Indian societies and the Venezuelan capitalist economy, and finally the role of the state in promoting such linkages. A concise outline of these ideas was presented in the introductory chapter and is more useful-and rigorous-than say an internal colonialist perspective, for discussing the implicit and explicit objectives as well as the limitations and uneven results of the Indian program. Elements of this discussion are already interspersed in previous paragraphs, but I will summarize and elaborate on some final points.

I said that the radical indigenistas arrived at some partial truths. In my view, it is impossible to deny the tendency of capitalism to expand into non-incorporated areas and transform economic conditions in accordance with the logic of capitalist production. This refers, in part, to the advancement of the process of commoditization and proletarianization understood in its widest sense--i.e. not necessarily always equivalent with the establishment of wage labor but a process of a progressive loss of control over one's means of production.⁴⁷ But this is, as said

earlier, a process influenced a series of additional structural and historical factors having to do with, among other things, the particular needs of capital, the particular configuration of power relations within the state, the relative economic and administrative strength of the incorporating state,⁴⁸ the geographic and physical conditions of the targeted areas, and the internal characteristics political strength of the communities present in the area. All of these set new, often contradictory, criteria as well as limitations for policies of incorporation of new areas and the non-capitalist societies that may inhabit them. In the end, incorporation of non-capitalist areas is a very uneven process that is plagued with regressions and contradictions.

However, the theoretical vision of the state adopted here, directs us to some alternative explanations regarding the "ontogeny" and fate of new policy processes.

The state is not homogeneous, but is a "complex structure" in which conflicting interests representing society's power relations occupy different positions and are in constant competition. Such interests are, of course, not arranged according to pluralistic principles but reflect the hierarchical power structure of society in general. A series of contingent circumstances leading to a reconfiguration of forces within the state and the ascendancy of a political party in search of a broader political base allowed the IAN indigenistas to become involved in Indian policy formulation.

As Bollinger and Lund (1982) note, this became possible for several progressive indigenistas throughout Latin America as a

result of the campaign mounted by the Barbados' participants. Radical indigenistas tended to fall into the "hyper-functionalism" that beset orthodox Marxists when they contend that all social policy, even when it appears to benefit dominated classes, is the clever design of capitalists and the state to fulfill long-term accumulation needs.⁴⁹

The very real limitations that agencies and individuals higher in the administrative hierarchy offered to the development and implementation of the Indian program, should constitute irrevocable evidence of the lack of commitment to the program. Moreover, the program with collective enterprises and Indian Federations, in all likelihood represented a potential threat to interests within and outside the state.⁵⁰

The issue of limitations to social programs has special theoretical significance and I must explore it a bit further to understand the levels at which such limitations occurred and their implications for the long-term prospects of the empresas indigenas.

Analytically, the outer boundaries of limitations to state intervention in the form of economic or social programs are defined by the inherent contradiction that exists between the state's accumulation and legitimacy functions.⁵¹ The erratic and apparently "un-imaginative"--as described by some--nature of explicit Indian policies, which have been to a great extent politically motivated, is ultimately caused by their special vulnerability to changing economic concerns that affect Indian

areas. The traditionally low level of political mobilization among Indian groups, resulting from a series of factors such as isolation, state repression, control of the church, and their relatively small numbers, has not improved their odds of becoming a higher priority in the state's consideration of its own legitimacy. But even if Indians managed to increase their political power, the same contradictions would again set new limits to the structural transformations they may demand of the state. It is possible, for example, that collective enterprises may be tolerated as long as they constitute isolated experiments with relatively insignificant production and the enterprises are concentrated in production activities of low capitalist penetration, which will not be seen as a threat to capitalist production. This last issue is part of the second major question raised at the beginning of the dissertation i.e., it pertains to the long-term impact of those programs on Indian communities.

Data on integrated rural development projects all over Latin America, including Venezuela's PRIDA project, accurately suggested that these programs often contributed to the pacification of a restless rural population by implementing programs that ultimately benefited a very small portion of the peasantry while deepening their internal differences, i.e. widening the gap between the richer and poorer peasants and thus increasing the number of proletarianized peasants. It would not be hard to foresee a similar situation occurring with Indian empresas. In fact this has already occurred, It is obvious that clear limits have been reached

in terms of the number of Indian communities that are actually served and provided with what are highly inadequate material and technical assistance resources. As I showed in the discussion of program results, the budget that was finally allocated to the program was rather minimal, while peasant organizations were receiving often 40 times as much.⁵²

Analyses of the Indian program have often paralleled that of rural development projects in general, and have emphasized the political factor as a crucial "motivating" force behind it. Undoubtedly, political changes have affected the content and priority assigned to Indian policy. But one must also keep in mind that political parties and different regimes simply filter into active policies particular interests, demands, and objective exigencies of the economic and political system according to their own reading of such interests and exigencies. Such a reading is itself constrained by the particular configuration of class forces within which these regimes operate and by their perceived relevance for the party's social base.

COPEI was interested in opening up its own social base to include elements from the rural sector. The indigenistas seized this moment, and aided by other favorable circumstances, founded the Indian program. There is no doubt, that once these "compromises" have been reached, every attempt will be made by political and economic agents to reap benefits from such concessions. In the case of COPEI, the Indian program clearly

contributed to its political goals of enhancing its popularity among the rural sectors while having the added benefit of keeping a lid on any independent forms of political mobilization. In fact, AD's model of fostering the organization of peasant federations was very likely in the minds of party leaders who supported a similar organization for the Indian peasantry. COPEI actively supported the organization of these federations while providing little material incentive for the alternative economic organizations proposed by the indigenistas and kept them under the thumb of PRIDA. For AD on the other hand, and as the best proof of what I just stated, the existence of these Indian federations and the national confederation, created under the auspices of COPEI, was rather problematic. It is no coincidence that we see serious efforts by Perez's administration to undermine the existence of these groups while emphasizing the economic components of the program.

Economic reasons and constraints were also relevant. The presence in the COPEI administration of the desarrollistas represented an obstacle to the indigenista's economic goals. Because Caldera governed during a period of fiscal constraint, it became even more difficult for IAN indigenistas to justify virtually non-productive government spending. The economic situation of Venezuela changed dramatically during the government of Carlos Andres Perez. Agriculture became, after basic industries, the second major priority of government spending. This, coupled with Perez's broader social base and commitment to a

progressive administration, also proved beneficial for the indigenistas, at least at the beginning. They obtained enough support to organize more than 40 empresas. Public spending was again dramatically reduced by 1977, about the time that all material support commitments for the empresa communities were canceled and control of Indian affairs was transferred to AD-controlled OCAI--later re-organized into a new office of Indian and frontier affairs (OMAFIO. Both parties took their cues from the objective material conditions and the particular context of social forces within which they governed, and clearly adjusted their support for Indian policy and programs accordingly.

Explanations that stress the economic factor must also be approached with caution. Often such explanations have been colored by a functionalistic view of the necessary articulation of pre-capitalist and capitalist production necessary for the latter's survival. De Janvry's view of rural development projects is very much conditioned by such functionalist notions. On the other hand, studies of Indian communities such as Bradby's in Peru suggest that there is no permanent "necessity" for capitalism to articulate/subordinate with all remaining non-capitalist economies. "Necessity" is a contingent, historical phenomena that may appear as a result of changing requirements of different branches of capital, and, in fact, capital may be (at times) "perfectly indifferent to what happens in 'natural economies'" (Bradby, 1975). In other words while one can incontrovertibly assert a general

tendency for capital to expand to non-capitalist areas, neither the nature of that penetration, nor the extent can be absolutely predicted.

Neither can the outcomes of such attempts at incorporation and integration of non-capitalist Indian areas be predicted from policy designs and formulations. In this manner, the "motives" and results may range from subordination, and even re-creation of, non-capitalist forms of production, to their total integration into the capitalist mode of production (subsumption) to even physical extermination of entire Indian communities. But most importantly, the conflictive nature of the state apparatus and countertendencies emerging from subordinate groups and their allies make the smooth implementation of goals that fit the political and economic interests of dominant classes and parties an impossible task.

In the case of Venezuela, indigenistas are correct in pointing to a continuous advance of capitalist development into Indian areas, but policy activities--which include those of CODESUR and PRIDA--offer no evidence that such advancement was motivated by the needs of capital to secure new agricultural products and labor from the Indian communities. This, together with the information contained in national and regional development plans, suggests instead that the interests in these areas had to do with a desire to incorporate new lands and raw materials into Venezuela's capitalist development. The IAN indigenistas, by advocating an "articulation route" to incorporation, may have served the interests of capital, but that is not saying the interests of the desarrollistas who

openly represented capitalist interests and the interests of the neo-indigenistas were perfectly harmonious. Policy formulations, I said earlier, must once again be understood, not as the expressions of monolithic interests represented in the state, but as ultimate compromises among competing interests.

The recognition of possible "implicit" objectives and clear limitations at the level of the state is still insufficient for predicting the more specific as well as long-term outcomes of the Indian development program. Examining the policy at the implementation level, as Offe suggests, means taking into account the actions and reactions of those who are the subjects of such policies--as well as of their indigenista allies in this case.

Despite the apparently dismal quantitative results of the Indian program, one cannot deny the independent force established by what started out as an officialist Indian movement. Hardly a day goes by in Venezuela without the press dealing with concerns of the Indian community. Similarly, even though radical indigenistas, in many cases correctly, point to the reduction of the Indian land base through the legalistic process of titling under the agrarian reform, total land loss has possibly been averted by the legal maneuvering of the IAN indigenistas.

Focusing specifically on the *empresas indigenas* at the local level, the more radical indigenistas also contended that limitations existed at the level of design as well as the level of implementation. They alleged that the *empresas'* collective

structure and western-style decision-making system conflict with the traditional organization of Venezuelan Indian communities. The organization of *empresas* in these communities, according to them, constituted a unilateral imposition of a state that is committed to activities that are most beneficial to the capitalist economy.

These *indigenistas* concede that no research has been done that looks at concrete *empresa* communities and examines the changes in their organization of production as well as political and ideological structures. It is only at the concrete level of each *empresa* community that the question of incompatibility of modern and traditional designs for collective economic production can be answered. My case studies are a modest attempt to fill that research void. Other Latin American researchers, however, have already taken a position that contrasts with that of the radical *indigenistas* and believe that Indian peasants in Latin America have not had to be cajoled into joining government programs which, however reformist, may still represent an improvement for the selected few (Grindle, 1986). Petras and Havens (1981) also present a case that demonstrates that there is no natural resistance to cooperatives among Indian peasants. The failure of cooperatives has more to do with the kinds of limitations emerging from the state. I explore these alternative theses within the examination of my case studies in chapters 5 through 8.

ENDNOTES

1. IAN (1983); (1984).
2. Clarac and Valdez (1977); Interview with program Director (1985).
3. Instead of formal research, with one exception, IAN staff devoted itself to traveling around the country and holding numerous meetings with Indian groups in an attempt to obtain input into the design of new economic organizations and to deal with all aspects of agrarian reform, especially the land issue. (idem)
4. The Barbados meetings were organized in 1971 and 1977 by "radical" indigenistas who became important allies of Latin American Indians and who often had an important impact on Indian policy. These meetings signaled a break with assimilationist principles and an inclination to a romanticist view of Indian autonomy. However, the radical indigenistas played an important role in introducing the notions of emancipatory development projects and self-management. See Bollinger and Lund (1982) for an analysis of the ideological underpinnings of the Barbados Group. See Grupo de Barbados (1979) and Bonfil Batalla (1978) for an outline of the Barbados II former program Director (1977) goals.
5. Telephone interview with Clarac, 1987.
6. Interview with IAN officials (1986).
7. Serbin (1986); Clarac and Valdez (1976).
8. For an outline of CODESUR's goals and analysis see Coppens (1973).
9. IAN (1983). In the original report these were listed in a slightly different order.
10. Telephone interview with former Program Director (1987).
11. In his article of 1981, Heinen explains that this "hybrid" denomination of empresa campesina-indigena was not adopted with the intention of subsuming the Indian groups into the peasant category (a charge often made by the more radical indigenistas). Rather, he says, the term had to be adopted given the legal constraints established by the Agrarian Reform Law of 1960 regarding the types of economic organizations that were allowed within any program covered by the law.

12. For works detailing the characteristics and particular history of "empresas campesinas" see Cox (1981); Soto (1979); IAN and CIARA (1971).
13. Interview with Program Director (1987); Arvelo-Jimenez and Perozo (1983).
14. Interview with anthropologist, consultant to the Indian program (1985).
15. Critics believed that rather than preventing the erosion of Indian territory, the demarcation of Indian lands according to agrarian reform criteria de facto reduced the traditional land rights of most groups to a minimum area.
16. Interview with former program Director (1987).
17. These criteria are, after all, not dissimilar from the particular factors recognized by the literature on cooperatives as potentially minimal requirements for such organizations to succeed.
18. This structure was required by law, and its imposition on what some believed were the traditional leadership structures in these Indian communities was at the center of the controversy that later developed between the IAN and the more radical indigenistas--to which I will often refer to as "empresa critics". See IAN (1981).
19. Dieter Heinen was asked by the members of the inter-community empresa of Tujuumoto, made up of Ye'kuana and Sanema Indians, to conduct a basic evaluation and make specific recommendations for structural changes. In his evaluation, Heinen (1981) points to organizational adjustments in the empresa system and also adjustments that came with changes in the political and economic structure that had occurred prior to and independent of the empresas. One example was the individualistic forces within the production and distribution sphere due to the long-time insertion of Ye'kuana canoe builders in the market. Similarly there were already in the communities salaried Indian personnel, including teachers and nurse's aides, whose income did not enter the community's treasury. Through Heinen's recommendations, efforts were then made to have the better-off members contribute a share of their income to the empresa's general fund. In exchange, the individual males--heads of household who had control over this additional income--were given a larger role in the decision-making process that had been initially concentrated in the hands of elected members (Heinen, 1981). Clearly, then, it was possible to overcome limitations arising from the way the empresa design was implemented. Other limitations emerging

from the logic of the articulation of the Indian and national societies, may not be as easily overcome.

20. Heinen (1981) alluded to this but did not include it in his evaluation. This is a difficult area to research; it requires long stays in the field as well as a means of communicating with the women who tend to speak less Spanish than do the men. Yet some speculation is possible based on available information. In his evaluation of the Ye'kuana empresa of Tujuumoto, Heinen (1981) pointed to some preliminary issues regarding the introduction of time-saving technology in the processing of the manioc, a task traditionally done by women. As time-saving devices such as the mechanized manioc grater (ciguena) are introduced--and they are already in use in many communities--a woman's production as compared to a man's can be significantly higher, and problems may surface in gender relations. The introduction of technology may not be totally controllable through conscious, internal decisions. Increased economic integration in, and dependency upon, the market economy may require Indian empresas to progressively update their means of production in order to compete favorably with other producers.
21. With regards to the empresas' market-oriented economic activities, the example of Tujuumoto revealed that women's participation was also minimal, potentially introducing or reinforcing gender stratification.
22. This is not much of an advance from the period when Indian affairs were controlled by the OCAI agency. That office's program for women concentrated on "sewing and knitting" See the various reports on the "Activities" of OCAI and OMAFI in various issues of the Buletin Indigenista and mimeos. Judging from most recent reports coming out of IAN, at least on paper, there seems to be a growing sensitivity to the unequal participation of women in state-supported Indian development. See for example, IAN (1987).
23. See de Janvry (1984); Gusti (1984).
24. Interview with former program Director (1987).
25. See next chapter for a more complete review of the events that led to a cancellation of credit agreements for the empresas. By, 1977 reveal for example, figures from the Venezuelan Central Bank (BCV) that in the 1975-1976 credit year, only 37.6% of total agrarian reform beneficiaries had received any credit at all, and 44.3% had only cultivated one crop. IAN officials also remarked during several interviews that ICAP had introduced all kinds of problems due to its administrative inadequacy: seeds often arrived late or were rotten, there was poor distribution of cash benefits, and so

on. IAN indigenistas also failed in their efforts to establish an Indian office within IACAP. It was not until 1981 that a semi-official arrangement between IAN and ICAP was established and a small line of credit was specifically directed toward Indian projects. See IAN (1984).

26. IAN (1984). Interview with land grant officer (1985).
27. Interview with program Director (1985).
28. Restrictions in budget allocations may result from fiscal constraints by the state and as such are a common limitation the capitalist state confronts in its conduct of social policy. Such limitations also are clues as to the priority assigned to specific projects by different state apparatuses, and they illuminate the internal contradictions between forces hierarchically arranged across the various departmental layers of the state bureaucracy. In the final analysis of this chapter, I will discuss my ideas as to how these theoretical notions apply to the contradictory events that unfolded within the Venezuelan state as a result of the Indian program.
29. Interview with former Director (1987); IAN (1984).
30. For a brief review of Indian land problems see Heinen and Coppens (1986). For more detailed analysis of the legal situation of Indian lands see the various papers cited in the bibliography under IAN (n.d.), Coppens (1971), Dominguez (1986).
31. Interview with land grant officer (1985).
32. Interviews (1985).
33. Interview with IAN national office staff (1985).
34. The main distinction between these two, as the name suggests, is that possessory titles are given "temporarily" during a probation period to assure that the land is used for the intended purposes. Upon the completion of such period, which is arbitrarily determined by government officials in most cases, definitive titles can be obtained. Interview with land officer.
35. It is precisely the manipulation of these legal loopholes that in 1984 led to disputes stemming from the illegal invasion of Piara territory by a cattle rancher associated with North American and well-connected Venezuelan entrepreneurs--the "Guanay case." The affected Piara communities had provisional title, but the land had not yet been formally transferred to IAN in what had become a modus operandi between

IAN and the Ministry of Agriculture to avoid further delays due to pending cases. Should the Guanay case become a precedent to question all titles awarded prior to the formal transfer of the land from MAC to IAN, many Indian communities would again have no legal rights to their allotted areas. See El Nacional, various issues during 1985.

36. Interview with land grant officer (1985).
37. The program's director was eventually fired (in late 1985) as a consequence of his firm stand behind the Piaroa community involved in the Guanay case, and against the Ministry of Agriculture's decision to disavow the provisional title. This occurred as I was beginning my field work under his personally approved institutional support.
38. In the cooperatives' literature there has been an ongoing debate as to the significance of political mobilization as a necessary ingredient in the mobilization and sustained existence of cooperatives (See for example, Kanel, 1982). In reality, most Latin American state and non-state supported cooperative movements, or major rural development projects have, in general sought to mobilize cadres of potential beneficiaries as a means for achieving broad participation. Obviously, the motives behind such actions have varied according to the not always explicit goals of the projects in general. Latin American governments have been severely criticized for their sometimes blatant manipulations of local leaderships in order to earn support for agrarian reform or rural development projects. The radical indigenistas and other program critics later also used similarly harsh criticisms against IAN promoters of the Indian federations. A final analysis of this particular aspect will be developed later on in the dissertation.
39. Interview with Director (1985); interview with consultant anthropologist (1985).
40. Ibid.
41. Interviews with regional IAN offices' staff (1985). During my field work in Venezuela and after Clarac had been fired for a second time, I personally heard those accusations from MAC officials with whom I met. In addition, field personnel in the state of Apure also "confided" in me all sorts of innuendoes about the director of the former Indian program. It was clear that the war on IAN had been once again been declared during this new AD administration.
42. This is the thesis maintained by Serbin (1983).

43. This was the name given to the recent incident involving the invasion of Piaroa territory.
44. It also demonstrated the various ways in which the state mobilizes various "apparatuses" and strategies to maintain social peace and other conditions necessary for the normal functioning of the capitalist accumulation process.
45. See COPEI's government program (1969).
46. Offe (1984) also offers an important suggestion that partially overlaps and also complements that made by de Janvry. Speaking of evaluations of social policies in general, Offe maintains that these evaluations cannot be conducted solely at the level of design and policy outputs (statutes, public pronouncements, reports), but must include a thorough investigation of the process of implementation during which new obstacles and limitations may be revealed, and results may appear as "a social process ridden with conflicts for which policy only provides the rules" (Offe, 1984). Both authors, Offe and de Janvry, are, in different ways, reaffirming the point that program objectives cannot be taken at face value because competing interests may intentionally or unintentionally direct these programs to paths that differ sharply from those that were overtly or covertly advocated. Offe, however, given his interest in the internal workings of the state, is directing one to dig even deeper into levels of concreteness when examining policy formulations and to be aware of determining factors that mediate between the more general requirements of capital accumulation and state legitimacy. Such factors have to do with the reality of competing interests within the state--and the political system in general--and which ultimately give state programs their unique content.
47. See the discussion on peasant subordination on Chapter 1, and endnote No. 26 of the same chapter. See Bernstein (1981) for an explanation of the peasant's commoditization process.
48. See Hall (1988). Also Howe (1988) introduces the concept of "uneven administrative development" of the state which also points to the heterogeneous forms in which processes of incorporation of the agricultural frontiers take place.
49. This refers back to the largely outmoded instrumentalist position but which at times slips into the analysis of incorporation processes.
50. On the other hand, it is true that administrative limitations or bureaucratic rules can get in the way of the state's effective implementation of its policies.

51. Carnoy, on Offe (1984).

52. Interview with former Director (1987).

CHAPTER 4

MACRO-STRUCTURAL CONTEXT TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE TWO EMPRESAS: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES IN VENEZUELA AFTER 1976

I. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 delineated the general macro-structural scenario within which the Indian Development program came into being in the early 1970s, and traced the impact of structural and historical factors on the content and aggregate results of this program. Here, in chapter four, I focus more closely on the social, political and economic arrangements that were characteristic of Venezuela after 1977. These arrangements constitute the more immediate context within which the empresas of Kumani, created in 1978, and the empresa of Saimadoyi, created in 1980, were organized. The fact that these two empresas were organized in these particular periods is itself methodologically significant because the level of support that the program enjoyed in 1977-1979 was significantly lower than it had been in previous years and also lower than after 1980.¹

The task is again guided by the theoretical arguments and "analytical model" outlined at the beginning of this work and employed in the selection of key factors that make up the macro-structural and historical context of the new Indian policy and program. Particularly important are those arguments that enhance our understanding of Venezuela's pattern of capitalist development

and the state's mode of intervention (policy-making) in the maintenance of that pattern. The key elements in this development pattern, emerge from the relationship between agriculture and industry. It is not necessary to repeat those arguments here, but I would point to some key notions that are particularly relevant to the analysis of the "macro" scenario presented in this chapter.

First, the purpose of reconstructing the general political economic context within which these empresas came to be organized in Indian communities is not to conduct an exercise in narrative history. Rather, such reconstruction reveals, as it did in the consideration of the Indian program as a whole, the different "levels of determination" affecting the policy process and hence the mode of organization and subsequent results of these two empresas.²

Second, and regarding such levels of determination, it has been stressed throughout this dissertation that state commitment to a collectivization policy, and, more generally, to a meaningful transformation of the structural situation which negatively affects the Indian peasantry, is a decisive factor in the promotion and successive performance of the empresa program. However, such commitment is in itself constrained by the different objective requirements of the accumulation process, as well as subjective class demands or legitimacy requirements which confront the state at different historical moments. Contrary to state autonomy perspectives, state commitment to different forms of socio-economic

re-structuring is not solely, or even primarily, determined by ideological convictions or by the material or political interests of independent state agents and party leaders.³

Third, it is obvious that diverse political party interests, which shift in dominance during different administrations or within different state agencies--and even bureaucrats' self-interests--represent one important level of policy determination. But neither politicians nor bureaucrats can for long act in a structural vacuum. Their individual decisions are constantly shaped, constrained and even undermined by the larger accumulation and legitimacy requirements that face the state. Furthermore, their interests are not totally divorced from class interests, and what often appear to be squabbles between competing parties or self-serving bureaucrats are more often than not overt expressions of the underlying and competing interests of classes, class fractions, and of other major social and other inter-group's conflicting interests--often concentrated in separate agencies. In Venezuela, as I will illustrate again in this chapter, the relationship between class and political interests is often less than hidden as dominant class agents increasingly occupy key positions within the state apparatus.

Fourth, and as illustrated in the last chapter, the state's non-monolithic nature, and the related class and group struggles that define new levels of legitimacy, create spaces for the representation of subordinate class and group interests. These spaces widen and narrow in the context of such struggles and

depend, to a large extent, on the effectiveness of the different "weapons" each class, fraction, or group brings to bear. New commitments made by the state to such subordinate classes or groups may thus be unsuccessfully opposed by dominant fractions of classes at the national or regional levels. Limits to those commitments, within Venezuela's existing pattern of capitalist accumulation, are however sure to appear when legitimacy threats from dominant class fractions, usually occurring during economic compressions, are serious enough that the very survival of the democratic state-- and/or the desired accumulation environment are put into question. At this time, the state may resort to the use of repressive measures against previously incorporated subordinate groups, alone, or in combination with new strategies of cooptation and appeasement of such subordinate groups.

As in the last chapter, a key task in this chapter is to disaggregate, at the macro level, the various layers of factors that contributed to the changes in the Indian program and aggregate outcomes after 1977, and which in turn affected in unique ways the empresas that were founded after this date. This approach represents an alternative to the reductionistic tendency of collapsing a composite of influencing factors into single causes of policy shifts and program results. Such reductionism inevitably results in either statist, politicist, voluntarist, or economicistic explanations of policy processes.⁴ The more concrete set of factors is situated at the "micro" level of the communities

themselves. This includes not only the unique structural configuration of these communities and the specific application of state policies, but as I have said repeatedly, the consideration of the fact that these are communities of actors who can activate defensive or offensive responses to such policies and modify their outcomes. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

The data for this chapter come primarily from government reports and statistics, interviews with IAN officials, and published works on Venezuela's political and economic changes from 1977 to the early 1980s.

II. Macro-level Changes During 1977-early 1980s: New Constraints and Possibilities in the Organization of Empresas Indigenas

The Pume empresa of Kumani, located in the state of Apure, was founded in 1978, during the last year of Perez' AD administration at the same time, the Indian program had lost considerable government support. The Bari empresa of Saimadoyi, in the Sierra de Perija, was founded in 1980 at a time when the Indian program was experiencing a mild resuscitation under a new COPEI administration, which, among other things, brought the more experienced Indigenistas back to head the Indian program. The environment within which each of these empresas came into being was thus quite different. The differences are not confined to the more apparent competition between two political parties and their respective administrations' policy styles and philosophical bases. Consistent with this chapter's opening statements, one must instead look for the combined effect of factors such as changing economic

conditions and the related fiscal, social, and economic development policy decisions made by each administration. Particularly important in the latter instance was each administration's level of commitment to the transformation of the agrarian structure as expressed in such policy decisions, and more specifically, to the use of a collectivization formula for affecting the said transformation. The analysis of these economic and political factors is useful not only for understanding the different fates met by the two empresas, but for expanding our overall understanding of the prospects and limitations of state-promoted Indian development programs as a whole.

A. 1977-1979: The Interim Period

We recall from the last chapter that the organization of empresas campesinas was central to Perez' agrarian policy after 1974. It was on Perez' support for a collectivization solution to peasant productivity problems that the Indigenistas capitalized on and organized over 40 empresas Indigenas, even before the major drive for empresas campesinas had begun (see Appendix C). However, during the first quarter of 1977, Perez' administration suddenly withdrew its economic support for the Indian Program, fired its staff, and canceled the first credit agreements for the amount of Bs. 11,000,000, (Bs. 4.3=\$1) which would have supposedly consolidated the newly formed empresas--most of which still existed only on paper.

To understand these sudden changes in the Indian program it is

necessary first to understand the changes taken place at the economic level. In the last two decades or so, oil revenues had facilitated an expansive industrialization process in which the state had played a major role. National and foreign industrial capital have been the major beneficiaries of this trend, and their agents have occupied a privileged presence in state agencies, a fact that has become even more apparent since the oil boom of the middle 1970s.⁵ Correspondingly, the agricultural sector has been increasingly relegated to a secondary priority despite periodic efforts to revitalize it at times of food or social crises in the countryside. Most importantly, given the central role that the state occupies in capital accumulation and the preference given to industry over agriculture, major reductions in state revenues necessarily affect the latter more than the former--especially in what concerns the peasant sector of the rural economy.

By the end of 1976 and the beginning of 1977, it had become apparent that the economy was again experiencing a downward trend. The oil boom of the middle seventies had propelled an unprecedented wave of investment activity by the state which toward the late seventies had to be increasingly financed with foreign borrowing. This, combined with high levels of corruption, precipitated an unexpected budget deficit of Bs. 1.5 billions. At the same time, oil revenues had begun to decline, and export earnings in general declined while imports grew by 24.7%. In other words, there were new signs of an economic crisis of some significance toward the end of Perez' administration.

Of special significance was the fact that the country had experienced in 1976 a severe food crisis caused by adverse climatological conditions and a serious deterioration in prices.⁶ This acute food shortage forced the government to lift all import restrictions, including import duties, by April of 1977. This in turn led to the largest amount of food imports ever, accompanied by massive food airlifts from several countries.

This disappointing performance by a government that came to power claiming it would restore the viability of the agricultural sector and eliminate the need for food imports led to a new reevaluation of agricultural policy. Such reevaluation was particularly colored by a perceived situation of crisis confronting other sectors of the economy and the state.

It was clear that the economic bonanza of the early part of Perez' administration, a boom fueled by unprecedented highs in oil prices and government spending, was coming to an end toward the end of his administration. It was also clear that the industrial classes were determined to put up a strong fight to avoid sharing the cost of this new crisis as much as possible. Given the relative weakness of the state by this time, and the fact that 1978 was an election year, this was not a particularly difficult task. The direct presence of members of the industrial class in state agencies became more visible still. It successfully resisted a much needed radical tax reform and blamed government overspending and corruption for the crisis. Such accusations were not unfounded

but it was unquestionably this same class of industrialists who had benefited the most from the flurry of government spending that took place in the first years of Perez' administration; and many members of this class benefited from corruption as well. Conventional economic analysis set in once again and there was a major call from national and international economic institutions to reduce government spending. The agricultural sector, and more specifically the empresas campesinas program, would be particularly affected by this call. Agricultural policy was once again to be re-assessed and re-directed after 1977. As usual, the changes would not affect the entire sector evenly, and the changes in the Indian program after this time can be best understood as the impact of these overall changes on low-priority state efforts--which included more than the Indian program.

A comprehensive review of the Perez administration's agricultural programs show that despite attempts to re-incorporate the peasantry into the central plans to improve agricultural production, credit policies and financial packages benefited the larger producers and those connected with agribusiness in general. According to Herman (1986), 80% of the credit went to large commercial farmers and agroindustry in general, while only 10% went to small and medium producers; and 80% of national income went to the cities.

The Fondo de Credito Agropecuario (FCA) was the main agency to distribute credit founded during the Perez administration. However, it was structurally set up to channel credit through

commercial banks, and thus to benefit the larger and more successful producers who were the ones with credit records strong enough to have access to such banks. The IAN-ICAP agreement of 1976⁷ which established a means to channel funds for the *empresas campesinas* and borrowers' unions (*uniones de prestatarios*) was canceled by 1977. ICAP would resume its credit responsibilities to small and medium producers, including the peasant organizations, but, the budget allocation for peasant organizations declined considerably (Cox, 1981). The peasant organizations' own credit recovery rate compared poorly to that of individual small farmers (20.1% vs. 33.4%) which further eroded the enthusiasm for these organizations, and particularly for the collective formula of *empresas campesinas* (Cox, 1981).

The reorganization of the Perez cabinet revealed the increasing dominance of the industrial sector over the state's budget. For example, a prominent member of FEDECAMARAS, became head of ICAP; the left-leaning Minister of Planning, Gumercindo Rodriguez, was replaced by the pro-business Azpurua Marturet⁸; and most significantly, the pro-collectivization IAN president La Corte, was replaced by two subsequent Presidents who were openly unsympathetic to the program of *empresas campesinas* (*Autogestion Indigena/Dirigents Indigenas*, 1977). The pendulum in agrarian policy seemed to have swung back from any serious consideration of the peasant sector as the solution to this later version of the "agrarian question." Although support for agriculture diminished

in general, it was evident that the emphasis continued to be on restoring and expanding opportunities for the private sector's participation in agriculture and hence for the capitalist transformation of this sector. State expenditures in 1977, for example, already showed a concentration on capital improvements, primarily machinery, reflecting the continuous and growing trend in the mechanization of agriculture which would unlikely benefit the smaller labor-intensive peasant units of production.⁹ Figures also show a geometric growth in the participation of private commercial banks in the agricultural sector--but not in capital investments which were assumed by the state--but mainly in areas like livestock production.¹⁰ In terms of agricultural products, those connected with agribusiness continued to benefit most from financial packages. Livestock production, the key activity of most of the *empresas Indigenas*, was not a priority item in this regard and large state expenditures and registered productivity in 1978 found in this area had to do primarily with imports. As the 1978 election approached, prices were held in check, especially meat prices. Besides the fact that this price structure could affect the fate of the newly formed *empresas*, what is important to note here is that, up to this point, livestock production, especially in middle size units, was not a priority within government financial packages. This in itself could become an important "external" factor affecting the survivability of different types and size enterprises--very possibly with regional variations--and must be watched as the *empresas* develop. In other words, market conditions

are also bound to affect each empresa differently, thus increasing or hurting its chances of survivability.

In contrast to this effort to provide new incentives for capitalist investment in agriculture, which would ultimately benefit larger producers, and as Table 4.1 show, we begin to see the decline in numbers of and credit allocated to collective peasant organizations or empresas campesinas--at least in the short term, For the 1978-79 crop year the number of empresas campesinas declined by 159, while borrower's unions (credit cooperatives) increased by 174 (Cox, 1981).

This latest dis-incorporation of a major fraction of the peasant sector from agricultural development plans was facilitated by yet one more step in the decreasing significance of the peasantry as a powerful constituency in Venezuela. By this time, Venezuela's rural population was already under 25% of the total population, and rural development programs like empresas campesinas had produced new waves of differentiation and outmigration of the majority. These programs also fostered, in a typically clientelistic fashion, new corporatist arrangements with at least part of the peasant leadership which further weakened the tone of the opposition to the apparent dismantlement of the empresa solution. Despite these arrangements, the Peasant Federation expressed its dissatisfaction with the reduction of credit to empresas campesinas, not only because it represented another retreat from the agrarian reform, but because it further undermined the Federation itself which was partly financed with 5% of every

TABLE 4.1
PEASANT AND INDIAN ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS

	1976-1983							
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Peasant Economic Organizations* ¹	380	126	116	74	66	99	143	74
Indian Economic Organizations** (Empresas Indigenas)	36	10	5	--	--	--	17 ²	--

1 Includes Empresas Compesinas and Uniones de Prestatarios (UP)

2 The 17 empresas were organized between 1980-1983 and beyond. There was no breakdown by year available.

Source: * IAN Memoria y Cuenta 1976 and 1977
Anuario de Series Estadisticas
** IAN Memorias

credit received by the empresas (Cox, 1984).

In this complex political economic environment the Indian program, a low priority item in the government's agricultural policy given the insignificant contribution of this group to agricultural productivity, was almost fatally undermined. Just as the worrisome figures for the first quarter of 1977 were being released, IAN Indigenistas once again mobilized the Indian leadership and brought them together in a national "business meeting" to formalize their request for the Bs. 11 million credit from ICAP--a credit line ICAP had apparently already agreed to in an un-official manner.¹¹ One may also recall that the Perez administration had from early on discouraged an independent Indian Federation, which tied to the weakening of the peasant federation, made this latest move toward the Indian program politically feasible.¹² By this time, the state was clearly unwilling to commit any resources to the Indian Program beyond what was minimally necessary to preserve a sense of social justice, as well as "rural peace"--not only among Indians but the peasantry as a whole--and secure the basic survival of the Indian population. The rest of the history of the Indian program will show that, despite mild revivals, the program's economic and political limits had been set during this latest struggle between Indigenistas and more powerful state agents. (See Tables 4.1 and 4.2 and Appendix C for changes in financial support and number of organizations created during various years.)

Once the IAN indigenistas were fired, the more partisan office

TABLE 4.2

IAN INDIAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BUDGET AND NUMBER OF
COMMUNITIES SERVED

1978-1985

YEAR	NO. OF COMMUNITIES	BUDGET ALLOCATED (Bs)
1978	5*	1,112.000
1979	47	1,012.000
1980	96	3,499.998
1981	78	1,500.000
1982	90	1,450.000
1983	66	1,450.000
1984	50	1,232.500
1985	47	5,238.400**

* approximate figure obtained through interviews and indirect calculations

** By 1985, \$1.00 = approx Bs 16.00 vs. \$1.00 = 4.30 Bs in 1978

Sources: Interviews; IAN. Planes Operativos

of Indian affairs was re-organized in April of 1977 as the Ministerial Office for Frontier and Indian Affairs (OMAFI).¹³ It continued to be dependent on the Ministry of Education "but with faculty to coordinate Indian-related programs generated by all official and private organisms."¹⁴ This move of empowering the party-staffed OMAFI while undermining the more independent IAN office was consistent with the latest attempts from Perez' government to assert more direct control and limitations over Indian affairs.¹⁵ Eleven new government posts were created in Indian areas under this offices' supervision in 1978 and despite changes in language, the orientation continued to be predominantly relief orientation. This stirred new opposition from some Indian leaders and other activists which may have also helped the congress-mandated Indian program to operate even if at a minimal level.¹⁶ However, the so called "shift" in Indian policy appeared to have been exaggerated at best.

IAN's Indian program could now function safely within the newly established constraints. In 1978, an election year, it was given its first independent budget line for programs that were to be carried out in coordination with OMAFI.¹⁷ It is at this juncture that the empresa Kumani in Apure was organized--one of just a handful of empresas organized during this interim period.¹⁸ Despite the good intentions of those who worked for the transfer of the Santa Cecilia ranch to the Pume, and as I will show in the next chapter, this new set of "external factors" had a lasting impact in the development of this empresa. Among other things, the empresa

became a good illustration of the attempted return to the welfare as opposed to comprehensive development approach to government-sponsored Indian programs.

By the time the Bari empresa of Saimadoyi was organized in 1980, the economic and political climate had again began to change in some important ways, although it continued along the same paths of Perez' administration in others. I will examine this sub-period next.

B. 1980-1985 and Beyond: Resuscitation Attempts

When Luis Herrera of COPEI assumed the presidency in 1979, there was again a realization that the agricultural sector required some urgent attention and re-assessment. The end of the Perez administration had been marked by serious drops in agricultural prices and productivity and resultant growth in out-migration rates and lack of incentive for increased productivity. Confronted with an equally serious deterioration of oil revenues, the option of importing food to make up for the loss in productivity, available to Perez, was increasingly closed off to Herrera Campins.

The recurrent "agrarian question" returned with a vengeance and Herrera's team decided to once again attempt to salvage the most promising sector of the peasantry while continuing to support the modernization of agriculture and a growing role for agroindustry. In short Herrera, like all the others before him, was forced to come up with new/old ways to juggle these largely competing objectives within the context of a more difficult

economic environment.

Taking cues from both the agroindustrial and peasant sectors, the Herrera administration first offered specific support for the rural semiproletariat which continued to have an important role in providing cheap labor for larger enterprises (The VI National Plan for example, emphasizes explicit support for this sector, including new land distribution and support for subsistence production). On the other hand, as with Perez, there were new attempts to consolidate a middle peasantry, but within still tighter connections with agroindustry, through renewed integrated rural programs (now called PIRA and ARDI), and support for peasant organizations like *empresas campesinas* and borrowers' unions. Finally, and primarily as a result of a series of marches staged by dissatisfied peasants in the countryside in the first year of his administration, Herrera was forced to increase agricultural prices to benefit the small and medium size producers. He also eliminated subsidies and tariff exemptions to food imports established by Perez as a sign of his commitment to boost domestic agricultural production (Herman, 1986).

It is within this new politically sensitive environment and hopes for a small fraction of peasant sector that the Indian program was given new life. This included the re-hiring of the expert *indigenistas* and the program's largest budget ever (Bs.3.5 million) The *indigenistas* resumed the *empresa* programs and by 1981 successfully negotiated their first credit agreements with ICAP (see Table 4.3). Nonetheless, as expressed earlier, the rest of

TABLE 4.3
 ICAP-IAN SPECIAL CREDIT PROGRAM
 1981-1982-19831

REGION AND STATE	NO. FAMILIES	ETHNIC GROUP	NO. OF PROJECTS	TYPE OF PROJECTS	AMOUNT (BS)*	AMOUNT UTILIZED (BS.)
ZULIA REGION	149		11	Agricultural	379,450.00	379,450.00
Zulia	129	Yucpa	10	(Coffee, Cereals)	379,450.00	379,450.00
	20	Wayu	1			
GURAYANA REGION	769		13		1,477,035.1	1,462,710.1
Bolivar	91	Peson	2	Agricultural	217,000.00	217,000.00
	180	Ye'Kuana	1	Machinery	100,000.00	100,000.00
Araucuro	498	Warao	10	Agricultural (rice) and fishing	1,160,035.1	1,145,710.1
LOS LLANOS REGION	184		10		292,885.00	375,000.00
Amazonas	184	Piaroa, Guahibo y	10	Agricultural (various crops)	292,885.00	375,000.00
TOTAL	1,102	8	34		2,149,370.10	2,217,160.10

1. The IAN Memoria of 1977 shows Bs. 11,537.260 were initially included in the credit program for Indian Development. No Bs. were ultimately allocated.
 * \$1.00 = 4.30 Bs in 1981-1982. In 1983 \$1.00 = approx. 118s.
 Source: IAN Informe Integral, 1984

the program's history makes it clear that the limits set by Pérez administration regarding the participation of the Indian sector in the state would hold with minor variations till today.

Despite hopeful pronouncements, the agricultural sector experienced few successes during Herrera's administration. Producers at all levels were negatively affected, albeit in an uneven fashion. In other words, policies such as price liberalization, subsidy removals, and the diminishing role of the national marketing cooperative (CORPOMERCADEO) benefited the larger producers at the expense of the smaller. This was confirmed by the increased role of the private sector in agriculture as well as a new drop in number of peasant organizations created by 1983 (see Table 4.1), and statistics showing state credit going primarily to larger producers (see OCEI's series estadísticas from 1980-1985). On the other hand, cattle production was becoming established as an important domestic product and thus obtain increasing private and state support.¹⁹

These results were heavily conditioned by the serious declines in oil exports and prices, together with the privileged presence of large producers in key organizations, inside and outside the state, who could more easily control these dwindling government resources.²⁰ The Indian program's budget became fixed at the old level of the Pérez administration and experienced no major changes until 1985.

The economic situation of Venezuela continued to deteriorate during a new AD administration headed by Lusinchi. Foods began to

be imported at prices lower than those paid to domestic producers. However, shrinking foreign exchange reserves began to provide incentives for domestic production and 1985 was a boom year in agriculture. Government policy for this sector appeared more erratic than usual reflecting the transitional character of the economy as a whole. For example, early in Herrera's administration talk of collectivism and self-management had again made its way into AD policy pronouncements and the VII National plan, only to be quickly and firmly "filed away" (engavetados). However, toward the end of 1985, there was yet another effort to consolidate middle peasant producers and tighten their link with a growing agroindustrial sector through the now named "integrated" empresas campesinas. Similarly, a new group of "commercial" middle farmers who came primarily from the cities and who benefited--legally and illegally--from their participation in the public and private sector during the oil boom period, began to use their connections and entrepreneurial skills to harness a significant share of state and private support.

But despite the new emphasis on associative models of production in national economic policies, the Indian program seemed to be under attack once again as its Director forcefully protested a private rancher's illegal takeover of a portion of Piaroa territory in the Amazonian territory. He was again fired and replaced with a party loyal, connected with the Venezuelan Peasant Federation, and with no experience in Indian communities. Since

then, there have been several incidents which indicate a turn toward a more repressive rather than redistributive approach to the Indian question. These have gone from preventing Indian supporters from attending a national meeting in the Amazonian territory, to the recent support for extensive mining projects in Bari territory which threatens the very empresa the government helped organize.

III. Analysis and Conclusions

The sketch of post-1977 political-economic changes at the macro level of the Venezuelan society just presented was meant to accomplish two distinct but related purposes. One was to offer additional evidence, by examining a new historical period, supporting the arguments about state policy processes offered in earlier chapters. More specifically, it corroborates in a broad sense, how the Indian Program at its different stages of development is conditioned by a multiplicity of factors arranged in layers from more abstract to more concrete, and from more to less immediately determining. Secondly, and most importantly, the sketch constitutes the immediate background within which the two empresas studied here were organized and subsequently developed.

Within the Venezuelan pattern of accumulation which emerged in recent history, it is the relationship between industry and agriculture, between the city and the countryside--and the class arrangements which underlie such relationships--that is particularly relevant for the analysis of the Indian program. The Program, as we know, was conceived first and foremost as a rural

development program to be run from the agrarian reform institute headquarters. Although other components of this pattern, such as geopolitical concerns, have also influenced Indian policy, the program's limitations, at the broadest level, have to do with this structured relationship between agriculture and industry and by the policies that maintain such a relationship.

In this regard Venezuela's pattern of development, has not been very different from the one de Janvry and others have outlined for Latin America as a whole.²¹ In recent years this pattern has been increasingly tilted toward an oil-financed, export-oriented industrialization process, but which has still not significantly altered the subordinate position of the agricultural sector. Given that the main axis of socio-economic reproduction is found outside of Venezuela in export earnings, the internal market has until recently been quite insignificant and therefore wages have been kept low. The peasant sector has played an important role in producing cheap food products which make up the wage bundle, and it has provided rural enterprises with cheap wage labor. Capitalist investment in agricultural production has been very uneven and confined primarily to non-wage export and luxury crops. This dynamic interplay between peasant and non-peasant production is what de Janvry has referred to as "functional dualism." De Janvry's well known argument is that given this "disarticulated" pattern of accumulation (capital accumulation occurs outside), the peasantry is locked into the production of the least profitable products while at the same time becoming increasingly

proletarianized as prices drop and they are no longer able to reproduce themselves and their units of production. Concomitantly, the state's role has often been to prevent, through agrarian reform and rural development projects, the total disappearance of this important semiproletarianized and cheap food producing peasantry.

But some important caveats must be introduced into de Janvry's model before continuing the examination of the remaining levels of conditioning factors. First of all, it is no longer true that the internal market plays no role in Venezuela's capital accumulation process. Industrialization has generated some backward and forward linkages within the country's economy and a middle class, not totally dependent on government jobs, has clearly emerged and fueled the growth of the internal market and of the import substitution process. Wages are not simply a "cost" anymore, but they are important vehicles for internal consumption. All of this has not necessarily translated into an active dynamism of the agrarian sector, but some changes have been taking place. For example, as the historical sketches of the last two chapters illustrate, agroindustry and capital penetration in general have played an increasingly important role in this sector. Second, and most important, the classic picture of peasant differentiation painted by de Janvry does not portray accurately the heterogeneous developments taking place within the rural sector (an argument which others have made for Latin America as a whole). There is no question that semi-proletarianization and out-migration have

increased, while only a few peasant enterprises may have become large capitalist enterprises. However, as an exciting new chapter in the peasant literature has begun to point out, De Janvry and others have failed to take note of a growing presence of middle-size capitalized farmers who has emerged largely as a consequence of the import substitution process (Lehman, 1985; Llanvi, 1988). In other words, the largely functionalist argument about capital's necessity to first subordinate and ultimately eliminate non-capitalist peasant forms of production no longer holds.

Similarly, and in light of this evidence, one can no longer assume, in an equally functionalist fashion, that the state's role is to always and unequivocally maintain the logic of functional dualism de Janvry talks about. In fact, despite its erratic nature and undeniable failures, the above macro-historical context suggests that the Venezuelan government has not simply returned to these peasant-based policies time after time as a way of fulfilling its legitimating function. It has actually been struggling with a formula to promote the consolidation of at least a fraction of the most successful middle size farmers--while unquestionably engaging in strategies to preserve a still needed semi-proletarianized labor force. A formula that for reasons that should have become at least partially apparent by now, condenses many of the complexities, contradictions, and tensions which confront a liberal democratic state--and a dependent one at that--and which again defy simple causal explanations.²²

The strikingly erratic and contradictory agricultural policies

(at times appearing to favor the consolidation of a peasant sector, at times undermining their survival) also respond to the highly heterogeneous character of the rural sector--including the Indian communities--and the fact that the penetration of capital in this sector occurs not only in an uneven but sporadically. For all these reasons it is not always possible to determine specific state objectives a priori, they must be deduced from the examination of both structural and conjunctural factors. Although it is not automatic, those moments within which the state increases its support for the peasant sector should at least be potentially more beneficial for Indian development projects than when large capital-intensive projects become the core of agrarian policy. However, I already noted that in 1985 while a new version of peasant organizations was being promoted, the program was experiencing new opposition from above. This serves to remind us of the complexity of factors that determine policy decisions and specifically popular participation in the state--including the possibility of irrational or simply bad decisions on the part of public officials.

These policy decisions, and their impact on Indian development policies and programs are thus constrained by yet another layer and more concrete set of factors located within the political structure. These include the political parties and their specific legitimacy requirements, the relative strength of different social classes and groups in influencing the policy process, and the level of the state's institutional development, and administrative and

financial capacity to carry out policy.

The unquestionable salience of political factors in shaping socio-economic processes in Venezuela, and particularly the prominent role of the parties and the of the state itself in shaping such processes, has tempted many authors to give exaggerated weight to these factors at the expense of others.

In the analysis of the post-1977 period offered here, the role of the political parties, the electoral process, and of the Venezuelan state as a whole is duly recognized. Authors such as Silva Michelena and Sonntag (1979) are largely correct in pointing out the low level of development of Venezuela's civil society (when compared to western democracies) and the correspondingly large role of maintaining the system's legitimacy that is assigned to political institutions.²³ In this context, political parties have become the primary means of social representation and elections are more than just an exercise in electoral democracy; although as Sonntag and de la Cruz also emphasize, this is itself very important. They are key conjunctures within which legitimacy problems are corrected through the forging of new alliances--in which political parties play a major role--and reassessments of policy directions. It followed logically from this that major changes in the Indian development program would occur with changes in administrations.

As principle vehicles in the "management and transmission of class and group interests to state agents, and in building political legitimacy in general, both COPEI and AD balanced their

reading of the strategies necessary to support Venezuela's dominant development pattern with strategies necessary to preserve their power positions. The latter has included first and foremost the mobilization of constituencies for electoral processes, and the cyclical undermining of the other party's previous administration's programs. The ups and downs of the Indian program respond to large extent to the changing nature of these political strategies and legitimacy requirements as a whole. When peasant mobilization was high and the sector's political support was considered important COPEI and AD opened a space in the policy process to accommodate the new demands. It was partly this space that Indigenistas seized upon to create the Indian program. When fiscal constraints and competitive demands from dominant classes emerged later on, the state swiftly moved to narrow such a space.

But to recognize the role of political parties in determining social processes, is not equivalent to the argument that political objectives were the primary determinants in the organization and haphazard development of the Indian program--let alone of its ultimate results.²⁴ This would be erroneous on two counts. One, because the weakness of a Venezuelan civil society unable to generate its own legitimacy should not be exaggerated given recent developments previously mentioned, namely, the growth of an internal market and a prosperous middle class--to say nothing of democratic rights and new freedoms. State actions cannot be mechanically read as simple vehicles for system legitimation.²⁵

What can be argued is that the development of this civil society is still quite uneven and its benefits do not stretch to encompass groups like Indians and major sectors of the peasantry. That the state and political parties would move to establish that legitimacy among such groups is thus understandable. But this statement must also be qualified in two ways. First, I would dispute the rather explicit statements made by some authors that the Indian program was but a mechanism to incorporate an until then disenfranchised fraction of the peasantry into the electoral process and in so doing obtain not only more votes, but a new level of political legitimacy (Serbin, 1983). The Indian constituency was all too insignificant as an electoral mass. And second, while elections in Venezuela may alone support liberal and democratic claims among a great many people, they were, and continue to be, fundamentally meaningless in the lives of this country's frontier inhabitants. To the extent that the Indian program contributes to the legitimacy of these political institutions and the system (regime) as a whole, it would seem to do so through the statement it may make about the state's responsiveness toward the rural classes--and not necessarily toward the Indian population--especially at a time when agrarian reform had taken a definite turn away from social and toward a more transparent concern for economic productivity.

Secondly, it is erroneous to consider political factors as primary determinants of the Indian program because it obscures the other "layers of determination" operating at higher and lower levels of concreteness. At the more general level it obscures the

kinds of considerations parties must give to strategies conducive to preserve the overall accumulation environment vis-a-vis their own narrow interests. At a more concrete level, it obscures the complexity of the state's internal structure and the specific configuration of classes and groups, together with their mobilization capacities at different moments in time--with which the parties also have to contend.²⁶ Finally, these ups and downs of the Indian program and of the individual empresas are also shaped by the institutional capabilities--or lack thereof--and resources available to the state at a particular point in time.

In summary, this last discussion ultimately addresses itself to the larger questions of the state's role in promoting different forms of agrarian transition, and to the more specific issue of the state promoting such transition for a specific group: the Indian population. I have argued that the question about states' "motives" for intervening in Indian communities through rural development programs cannot be answered by either transferring popular explanations for projects conducted among the peasantry as a whole, nor by reducing such explanations to monocausal factors--whether they be political factors such as parties or a highly "autonomous" state pursuing its own interests, or socio-economic factors such as a logic of "functional dualism" between peasant and non-peasant production.

Regarding the second objective of this chapter, the layers of factors discussed here as determining the development of the Indian

program after 1977 also constitute the "external" factors which specifically affected the development of individual empresas organized after this date. Both of the empresas selected for this study were organized after 1977.

The leap from factors located at such a macro level of the Venezuelan formation to changes occurring within individual empresas is not easily accomplished and requires some qualification. The task is not to draw direct causal lines between events occurring at the macro-structural level and each empresa's internal organization--this is not only impossible but ultimately erroneous. But it is possible to extend the analytical model used here, and the theoretical arguments regarding different levels of factors and their impact on the policy process to the this most concrete level of individual empresas. At this level, a new set of market and non-market factors interact with, modify and are modified by at least some of the factors located at the more general national and macro-structural level. The task is then to uncover such combined effects with the help of the revelant analytical tools and arguments, and even modify the latter when necessary. This task will be developed throughout the next chapters but the ultimate synthesis will probably not be totally clear until the final conclusion when all the factors have been assessed.

At this point it can again be anticipated that differential levels of state commitment to rural transformation (including commitment to socialized collective organizations) and Indian

development--themselves constrained by factors located within the various layers of determination discussed here--will be reflected in specific differences in items such as state budgets, expert field personnel, and local support of individual empresa projects which will undoubtedly affect their organizational design and subsequent development.

ENDNOTES

1. Comparisons with individual empresas before 1977 are possible to some extent because of the existence of one or two partial evaluation reports of a Warao and a Ye'Kuana empresas.
2. This follows the analytical model which is explicitly and implicitly elaborated throughout this dissertation. The model has been informed by the methodological theses of several authors also battling with the question of how best to connect macrotheoretical notions and historical-structural forces to the analysis of micro-level social processes. Among others, see Elkin (1985); Kent (1983); Gulalp (1988).
3. Grindle (1986), for example, explains the origin of agrarian reforms in Latin America as responding neither to accumulation crises nor to the sharpening of class conflicts in the countryside. These reforms in her view, were instead motivated by the "development ideology" of state bureaucrats. The theoretical underpinnings of such a view are closest to the "state-centered" approach adopted by sociologists like Theda Skocpol, who utilize a historical-comparative approach to social policy. Skocpol (1980) and her 'associates' have carried the notion of state autonomy (or Poulantzas' relative autonomy) to its logical extreme and argued for complete independence of state managers and party structures in the determination of state policies. This narrow approach to state policy analysis thus ignores the structural constraints introduced by the objective (and contradictory) requirements of capital accumulation processes and the specific nature of class conflicts and struggle of a particular society at a particular time. (For a similar analysis see Levine, 1988). In the "analytical model" employed in this work, due recognition is given to political and bureaucratic structures, and even independent state managers, in shaping policy processes. But there is a clear recognition of the fact that such structures are not erected in a vacuum but are constrained by other "levels of determination." Most importantly, and as Levine (1988) says, Skocpol and her followers obscure the impact of inter- and intra-class conflict on these structures. Finally, notions of state autonomy often filter into some of the explanations given by empresa critics who tend to attribute undue foresight to state officials in their articulation and implementation of the new Indian policy.
4. See the notes on methodology in the preface and first chapter.
5. Perez Sainz and Zarambka (1979).
6. See the Informe Economico of the Banco Central de Venezuela

(BCV) (1977), and the Quarterly Economic Reports of Venezuela (QER) for the same year.

7. This is described in Chapter 2. It basically refers to the period when IAN acted as credit agency for the first time and took over from ICAP responsibility for credit for small producers. The agreement was short-lived in lew of major administrative and financial confusion.
8. QER (1977).
9. Credit for these categories increased by 103% from the previous year; see BCV (1977). Figures also show a geometrical growth in the participation of private commercial banks in the agricultural sector; except for capital investments which were largely assumed by the state, but primarily in large livestock enterprises.
10. Ibid.
11. Personal communication with Indian Program's former Director (1986).
12. This is in sharp contrast with the situation in 1972; see the last chapter.
13. This Office has traditionally been much more vulnerable to clientelistic arrangements than IAN'S Indian Program which has been commonly staffed by independents or left-sympathizers.
14. OMAFI (1977); my translation.
15. Among other initiatives designed to expand OMAFI's action area, and for it to resume the pre-IAN, assistentialist orientation to Indian affairs, 11 new Indigenista centers, now called "nucleus," were established in Indian areas. In the 1960s, these centers had been the bases from which official Indian policy was implemented. They concentrated on basic social assistance and vocational training. In 1975, at the same time when IAN assumed a central role in Indian affairs and largely succeeded in changing Indian policy's orientation from assistentialism to self-development, there was a new drive on OMAFI'S part to establish more centers or nuclei. Purportedly however, both agencies would coordinate their actions and OMAFI would concentrate on supportive educational activities. Twenty-two new nuclei were created at this time, and according to several public officials interviewed there was more inter-agency rivalry than cooperation. In 1978, when the IAN program was at its lowest, OMAFI organized new centers and adopted much of the language of IAN'S "mandate" to support development projects (see the Department of Education Memorias

for the years 1978-79). The role of OMAFI is made real clear in the documents organization of the Kumani empresa. Interviews with Pume members also confirmed that OMAFI took an active interest in recruiting potential leaders and members for the empresa.

16. See Serbin (1986); and Bonfil Bataalla (1981; 1982).
17. For example, the 1978 Memoria of the Education Ministry cites 60 development programs as part of their accomplishments.
18. Apure had also been a specially targeted area during the 1973 and 1978 presidential elections. See QER (1978). It is impossible to establish a direct linkage between any of these broader, "macro-level" events and the decision to organize an Indian empresa in the middle of criollo territory and among a group that was notoriously disenfranchised from the political process. In fact, one is hard-pressed to even logically connect these two levels in this instance. This again illustrates the complexity of factors that mediate between broader economic and political concerns and individual policy decisions. In the case of Kumani, besides those factors mentioned, it is very possible that the uneven development of party and state bureaucratic control allowed well-meaning individuals to use the campaign environment to sell state and party officials on this project. Or, it is possible, that in combination with the above, local party officials in pursuit of their own narrow interests believed--not necessarily correctly--that supporting land for Indians in the state would be a vote-catching action.
19. See Herman (1986); and BCV's Informe Economico (1987).
20. Ibid.
21. De Janvry (1981); Hein (1980).
22. Elkin (1985); Kent (1983).
23. Silva Michelena and Sonntag (1979).
24. This is Serbin's argument (1983).
25. Elkin (1985).
26. Although I would not go as far as Elkin (1985) in his argument against the state being an arena of class struggle, he is correct in pointing out that democratic institutions are not simply a source of legitimacy. The democratic state is an "intricate set of practices that are both claims for advantages and claims about how the community should be

ruled." (1985). The state I would say slightly modifying Elkin's argument, does not simply legitimize "implicit objectives" related to private capital accumulation, or particularistic claims shrouded in demagogic language and popular programs also designed to fulfill these objectives through strategies such as cooptation and divisionism. The content of a democratic state activities is also, at least part of the time, derived from wider claims about what is "just", or what is "beneficial" for the country as a whole. To the extent that these activities reflect more than particularistic interests of a dominant class, they are themselves legitimizing those claims, not simply acting as vehicles for something else. Venezuelan public officials who supported a program of *empresas campesinas* and *Indigenas* did not simply justified such support on the basis of this being a good formula to get the country out of the agricultural productivity slump in which it found itself. They also spent a great deal of time elaborating on the model of collective ownership and self-management as one which was more socially responsible and in agreement with democratic principles. Soto (1973), among other promoters of the *empresas campesinas*, spoke of a different kind of capitalism for Venezuela. In fact, one where capitalist principles were only some of the principles applied in the organization of production. He defended the "peasant-based" solution to the re-organization of agriculture based on a concept of mixed-economy and democratic participation of the peasants as the "motor" of the agrarian reforms. In fact, Soto went further in his attack of rural development programs such as PRIDA which in his view "look toward the development of integrated areas (areas integrals) with the particularity of constituting 'peasant elites' in a position of privilege vis a vis an immense mass of marginal peasants" (Soto, 1973:74). As Elkin says however, there is nothing to prevent someone from acting in a totally cynical fashion and cast about a popular doctrine only to pursue his own interests. And governments can do a lot of this. But again they do not act in a structural or social vacuum and popular classes take promises of democratization and economic improvement seriously. Especially when the state's legitimacy is partially maintained through popular actions as in the case of Venezuela. Of course, it also means that other objective and subjective factors can severely limit or distort the popular objectives behind such actions. This takes us back once again to factors having to do with objective requirements of the accumulation (economic productivity) process; there are also contradictions embedded in a capitalist, liberal democratic state, which are accentuated in third world capitalist countries such as Venezuela, and its supposedly "over-blown" state. These are fundamental contradictions between liberal principles such as private property and free-market society and about communal

property and public interests in general. The fact that the Venezuelan state is itself a major source of capital accumulation frees it--not always or totally, but at times--from some of the pressures that a capitalist class can exert when it is in total control of economic productivity. Collective organizations such as the empresas or marketing cooperatives contradict liberal claims. This is why they cannot be viewed simply as benefiting private accumulation--even if they are ultimately "functionalized" for that purpose. The fact that they confronted so much opposition from different layers of government and the private sector precludes us from locating them into black and white categories of capitalist or popular objectives.

CHAPTER 5

ETHNOHISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE BARI AND THE YARURO: FORMS OF PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

This chapter offers the reader a brief historical and ethnographic overview of the two communities where the study of the Bari and Yaruro empresas was conducted. The chapter is not intended to reconstruct the entire ethnohistory and ethnography of the Bari (see Beckerman, 1978; Pinton, 1965), or the Yaruro (Pume) (see Leeds, 1974; Petruccio, 1969; Mitriani, 1975). Beyond the ethnohistorical sketch, the chapter examines issues related to the internal characteristics of these groups and were discussed in Chapter 1 as the main criteria for the definition of these groups' internal socio-economic organization. In this manner, it serves as a baseline from which to re-examine those issues in the contemporary period and note their particular function and transformation throughout the development of the Pume empresa of Kumani, and the Bari empresa of Saimadoyi. It pays close attention to this issue of transformation from the very beginning of the groups' contact with white society. The intention here is to demonstrate the extent to which these groups are now--in differing degrees--far removed from their "tribal" origins. Hence, it is necessary to go beyond kinship analysis and to examine the types of external relations that are now an integral part of their reproduction as a social group.

I. The Bari

A. A Brief Ethnohistorical Sketch

The Bari are tropical horticulturalists of the Chibchan family who live in northeastern Colombia and northwestern Venezuela, an area that contains the rainforests of the southwestern Maracaibo Basin. They are one of the least acculturated groups in either Colombia or Venezuela, and hence, a group whose ethnographic and historical features have only begun to be understood (See appendix B).

Although absolute limits to the Bari habitat can not be established, some approximations are possible. The Bari inhabit the plains that border with the Andean cordillera in the South, the Sierra de Perija to the west, the Lake of Maracaibo to the east and the dry forests to the north (Lizarralde and Beckerman, 1980). Elevations of this region do not exceed 15,000 meters with the majority of the land where Bari have traditionally built their houses being much lower. There is a wet season lasting approximately from May through December, and a dry season that goes from January through March (My field visits were conducted during the rainy season). However rain falls all through the year, although less heavily during the dry season. Access to the area is difficult.

The Bari are commonly referred to as "Motilones" or "Motilones Bravos", a name that is purported to derive from the Spanish verb "motilar" (to cut the hair), and it alludes to the tonsorial habits of this group (Beckerman, 1975). The term motilon, however, became

increasingly associated with "wild" or "savage" as the raids and counter-raids that took place during colonial times between the Bari and the Spaniards, and which continued into the post-independence period, became rampant.

The result of these confrontations was that, today, the Bari control approximately 1900 Km out of the 16.000 Km or 12% of the territory they held in 1900 (Lizarralde, 1980). In order to best assess the current situation of the Bari it is thus worthwhile to review in somewhat greater detail the history of the reduction of the Bari territory as a result of their contact with various colonizing elements. To do this, I will mostly make use of recently published secondary sources.

Among others, Lizarralde and Beckerman (1982) have attempted to trace Bari history based on the availability of the information for different historical periods, and data describing major changes in Bari territory in the decades since 1900. Beckerman (1978) divides Bari ethnohistory into six different periods. The first runs from the first exploration of Lake Maracaibo in 1529 to 1622, when the first mention of the word motilon appears in a document representing the investiture of the first governor of the province of La Grita. It refers to "the nation of Indians who are called motilones, fierce and cruel people, who, for twenty years, committing murders and robberies, are impeding the navigation of the Rio Zulia..." (Nectarario Maria, quoted in Beckerman, 1975).

The available ethnographic information for this first period does not make totally clear whether the motilones mentioned in the

period's documents are the same Bari we know today--although according to Beckerman, the evidence points to that likelihood. What does become clear from historical documents is that there existed in the Maracaibo basin region a great number of different but interdependent Indian societies that were either destroyed or dispersed as their members were subjected to the Encomienda system. Somehow, the Bari was one of the few groups of the region that managed to survive this and later attempts by the Spaniards to take over their land and enslave their population.

The second period outlined by Lizarralde and Beckerman (1980) extends to the year of 1772, the year Alcacer (1962) marked the first "pacification" of the motilones. It is during this period that Bari resistance to Spanish encroachment became most fierce. The Spaniards hoped to control the Maracaibo basin region in order to establish commercial operations that included cattle production and cultivation of cocoa and sugar cane (Buenaventura-Posso and Brown, 1980). Documents reviewed by Alcacer (1962) reveal that the Bari were not only successful in thwarting the attempts of the Spaniards to invade their territory, but they, in fact, expanded their area of influence and are reported to have forced the owners of eleven cacao haciendas on the southern shore of Maracaibo to abandon them. Nevertheless, Beckerman (1975) points out, with convincing historical data, that these gains of territory by the Bari were not so much due to the strength of these groups but to the relatively weak social and power structure that characterized

the region. Penetration of the area had always been difficult and by the end of the seventeenth century, when access had begun to be less difficult, the power of the Spaniards had begun to decline due in part to the successful raids of English and French pirates.

"The Bari extension represents more an expansion into a vacuum than the active conquest of determinedly held territory" (Beckerman:1975:96). This vacuum was further enhanced by the decimation of competing Indian tribes by diseases carried to the New World by missionaries and other whites. The Bari seemed to have escaped the full effects of these diseases because of their widely dispersed settlement patterns, their sporadic visits to neighboring long houses, and their cultural response to illness, which was to confine themselves to their individual hammocks until no longer sick (Beckerman, 1975).

These fortunate set of circumstances did not prevent the eventual re-establishment of Spanish control over the territory. Numerous military expeditions were sent out to capture and subdue the Bari population though the Bari continued to raid and offer significant resistance to these attacks. Missionaries, themselves not exempt from Bari raids, had begun to set up outposts around Bari territory. By the end of this period the Bari, while not so subjugated, were surrounded. All neighboring tribes had been pacified.

The first "pacification" of the Bari took place at the beginning of the third period in 1772. It began with a peaceful contact mediated by a captured and cooperative Bari, and was

consolidated by a fuller expedition that followed the initial contact. The historical record suggests that the missionaries were never to be as successful with the Bari as they had been with other groups in the region. The captured Bari were constantly fleeing the missions and by 1818 abandoned them completely to return to their traditional land area. The Venezuelan independence wars had weakened the position of the Capuchin missionaries who were loyal to the Spanish Crown, and, in 1921, were finally expelled from the Perija region by the newly independent government.

The fourth period marks the return of the Bari to their original, though significantly reduced territory, and is characterized by a large void of ethnographic and ethnohistorical data. Only two important points of information can be extracted from this period. One, as they returned to the forest, the Bari took back with them a number of items gleaned from the Spaniards' material culture that would have a permanent impact on the Bari. These included metal tools, pots and pans, cloth and perhaps corn. Also important are the items they did not borrow, including the construction and use of canoes and alcoholic beverages (Alcacer, 1964). Other groups in the region, the Yucpas, for example, did adopt the use of alcoholic beverages and, as with the North American Indians, it has become one more enemy in their attempt to regain control of their lives.¹ A second noteworthy characteristic of this period is the general renewal of hostilities and confrontations between the Indians and white elements seeking to

settle in the area. Alcacer laments the return of the Bari to their "primitive barbarism", and the fact that the missionary is no longer there to defend the Bari from outside, hostile elements-- suggesting the continued encroachment of whites into the area (Alcacer: 1962, p.237)

. The entrance of American and Dutch oil corporations into the area around 1913 marked a new period in Bari history and in the reduction of their territory. At about the same time, Capuchin missionaries returned to the area after their expulsion shortly after Venezuelan independence. Their activities ceased at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, but resumed again with renewed force during the 1950's and 1960's when the final effort for "pacification" was made.

Beckerman (1975) and Lizarralde and Beckerman (1982) describe the activities of the oil companies in the area during the next 50 years. These companies entered Bari territory protected by their own armies in order to set up drilling equipment, transport oil workers, and build a steel pipeline on the southern edge of Motilonia territory, where an access road contributed to the increased penetration of white settlers into the area east of the Catatumbo River. The flurry of oil activity peaked by the 1940's and most of the Bari territory lost during this period was on the Colombian side. In contrast, between 1945 and 1959, the major loss of Bari territory took place in Venezuela and was no longer due to oil companies but to the influx of white colonists who began deforesting Bari territory for cattle ranching and other

agricultural activities. For the most part, the process of colonization of Perija was slow and most settlements took the form of small or medium-size ranches. Even so, by the 1960's most of the area had been taken over by ranches of various sizes (Llanvi, 1987).

The sixth and last period outlined by Beckerman (1975), begins with what has been called "the second pacification" carried out by Capuchin Missionaries and culminating in 1973. Lizarralde and Beckerman produced an article that constitutes an update on the Bari's situation up to 1983. However, other than the census data, information referring to the post-1973 period does not seem to have been collected in the field.

The renewal of missionary activity was headed by Father Adolfo de Villamanan from the Mission of El Tokuko, which had been established in 1945 for the pacification of the Yukpa. After several confrontations with local land-owners who feared the Capuchins' interference with their efforts to continue their advance into Bari territory, Father Villamanan appealed to the government and the media for support. At the same time, the Comision Indigenista (Indian Commission) came under pressure by AD party officials to organize a state-sponsored peaceful expedition of its own and in 1960, asked a leading Venezuelan anthropologist, Roberto Lizarralde, to coordinate such an expedition. Shortly after this expedition made its first peaceful contact with the Bari on July 19, 1960, the Capuchins made a successful one of their own.

In their article, Lizarralde and Beckerman mention, without much explanation as to why, that within a few days the government pacification plan was scratched and the anthropologists were not allowed to return to the area (Lizarralde and Beckerman, 1982).²

By 1964 then, both Colombia and Venezuela declared that the pacification of the Bari had been completed. The overall evaluation of that pacification has yet to be conducted. What is known is that the "tamed" behavior of the Bari facilitated the renewed encroachment into Bari land by hacendados, oil companies and colonists--a process that has yet to end. Between 1960 and 1970 Lizarralde and Beckerman calculate that the Bari lost approximately 21% of the land held in 1900, which left the Bari with 3.300 Km²

In 1961, based on the second article of the agrarian reform law, (1961) which guarantees the right of Indian people to make use of the land and water resources in the areas they presently occupy, an Indian "reserve" or zone of Indian occupation was established in Venezuela. The extension of land included in this reserve equals 1,492 Km², or 9% of the area the Bari held in 1900. The legal guarantees offered by this juridical form of an Indian reserve are not totally clear, and there are many obstacles to such clarification. For one thing, part of the Indian reserve overlaps with a Forest preserve that comes under a totally different set of legislative measures. (See Appendix D for a graphic illustration of the reduction of Bari territory at various historical points).

In 1974 the Colombian government also set aside what was left

of Bari territory for their exclusive use. Neither reserve is an absolute guarantee of the protection of the Bari's territory, but the effort has slowed down outside penetration--especially as the Bari become even more conscious of their right to this territory and its boundaries.

In Venezuela, at least, Bari are eager to report illegal settlements of neighboring Colombian homesteaders.³ But as Lizarralde and Beckerman (1982) remind us, the erosion of Bari territory has by no means stopped. In fact, they believe that the territory is in a gradual process of disintegration as hacienda owners and homesteaders continue to push from all sides of the reserve, including the until recently ignored western border.⁴ In the years that followed the 1960 "pacification," until the present, the Capuchin missionaries, supported by the Sisters of the order of the "Madre Laura," have remained in the Bari area and have founded a number of missionary outposts within the reserve. The outposts in the reserve, together with several other small hamlets or villages outside the reserve, have become the new communities of previously dispersed small groups of Bari families that had been for the most part living in the traditional longhouses. In Venezuela, these multi-family longhouses have been completely replaced by single-family dwellings. Of the four missionary outposts that were originally founded, two remain, Bokshi and Saimadoyi. The Empresa is located in Saimadoyi, where a major portion of the data for this work was collected.

The Indian census (1985) reported the Bari population of Venezuela to be 1,083 grouped in 35 different communities, the largest of which is Saimadoyi with a population of 276 individuals living in 42 single-family houses.

Both the Venezuelan and the Colombian Bari population--the latter reported by Lizarralde and Beckerman (1982) to be 475 individuals--have shown a substantial increase from post-1964 figures, which put the total Bari population at about 800 individuals. This figure is still below the pre-1960 estimates when the population was calculated to be around 1800 individuals. The drop is attributed to the effects of the "second pacification" which among other things, brought epidemics of influenza and smallpox into the area (Pinton, 1965; Jaulin, 1966).

B. Economic and Social Organization of the Bari

Until very recently the Bari were split into semi-sedentary groups of about 50 individuals who lived in single communal longhouses. Apparently, it was rare for more than one house to be built within the same land clearing, although a group often owned more than one house in its territorial range of 400 to 1000Km². Dwellings were built in the lowland forest and seldom on land as high as 600 meters. However, there was seasonal migration between lower and higher lands, depending on the amount of rainfall. The internal arrangement of the house reflected to a large extent the social organization of the community, just as the exterior reflected the economic organization and labor processes.⁵

Inside the longhouse or "bohio" as it is called in Venezuela,

"hearth groups" usually consisting of one or two nuclear families, not necessarily closely related, and maybe a few other individuals, had specific areas of the bohio for sleeping, cooking, and storing their belongings. Individual groups were subsequently responsible for the repairs and maintenance of that particular section of the bohio.

The bohio was surrounded by a communal field that was split into individual parcels corresponding to the hearth group divisions inside the house. The individual fields were not separated by any special devices, yet each hearth group knew very well which plants it owned (Beckerman, 1975). (See Appendix F for drawing of typical garden before "pacification.")

Kinship relations among the Bari were also extremely fluid and although they regulated social relations, which served primarily to distribute marriageable singles and to form alliances, these kinship rules did not, according to Lizarralde and Beckerman (1980), by themselves regulate relations of production. Social relations were organized within two categories known to the Bari as sagdojira and okjibara, which Pinton (1965) translates into ally and kin respectively (1975), and which Beckerman and Lizarralde (1982) translate into consanguineal and affine. The latter authors stress that these do not necessarily correspond to "real" consanguineal and affine relations. The Bari kinship system is fundamentally fictitious and fluid and it represents alliances more closely than it does true kinship relations.⁶ This description of

Bari social relations as two distinguishable categories has sometimes been confused with moieties. These two categories are also not to be confused with perfect halves or moieties.

The fluidity with which these alliances or kinship relations are made and the fact that they can be either abscribed or acquired, precludes the formation of a stratified society divided into two groups or lineages. The only rule never to be broken is that a man and his wife are always okjibara.

The system is simply a complex of dyadic ties, which explains why it does not refer to actual groups, and also why inconsistencies are permitted which would make formation of such groups impossible...There is probably no mechanism for compelling two people to make their tie consistent with anyone else's if they choose not to. A relationship between any two people is primarily their business, and not the affair of anyone else. Thus here as everywhere else in Bari life there is a cheerfully ad hoc approach to the world (Beckerman, 1975:50).

All authors who have undertaken the study of the Bari, whether historical or ethnographic, agree that there is among this group, a strong sense of privacy and autonomy between family (hearth) groups and great respect for individual property. Relationships between the genders and among the members of the group as a whole are perceived as being extremely egalitarian and a sense of harmony permeates the communities. (Alcacer, 1964; Buenaventura-Posso and Brown, 1980; and Pinton, 1965).

1. Labor Relations

The description of the bohio suggests a complementary relation between individual and communal divisions and activities among the Bari. This dual "foundation" of the Bari society is clearly

delineated all throughout their production and reproduction activities. Yet, once again, the rules are extremely flexible and there is plenty of room for individuals to organize themselves according to personal preference for any of the tasks that need to be done.

Although an examination of the care of the gardens and of the individual portions of the house each family occupies may deceptively suggest the presence of a household-based economy or a sort of "domestic mode of production," there are significant collective elements within Bari production and reproduction that defy such narrow interpretations of their economic organization. Houses are built by all future inhabitants. The land, as already mentioned, is held communally and on an usufruct basis. The gardens are communally-cleared fields even if individually planted. Furthermore, individuals are free to cross and even build pathways through other family parcels. Fishing, the second major subsistence activity is a highly collective enterprise. The whole community participates in the building of two stone dams, sealed with "mijao" leaves, between which the fish are trapped. Catching and distributing the fish is, however, an individual activity organized by hearth group.⁷ Special alliances can come into play and fish redistributed to hearth groups that were unlucky on a particular fishing day. Hunting expeditions are also communal where men, women and children participate. The man who kills the game is in charge of the distribution of the catch and today this distribution seems to take place at a wider community level than

the distribution of fish or other subsistence products.⁸

I should point out that besides the one or two communal fields, "subsidiary" fields or complimentary individual fields are also common. These are plots cultivated by single men or a small family group. Rather than exhibiting the variety of cultigens present in the communal fields.⁹ The three major subsistence activities, gardening, fishing and hunting, reflect a clear but also flexible division of labor by gender. The men, for example, prepare the field and do the planting while the women weed and harvest. Yet the men may assist the women in some activities--including processing food and child care. Men build the larger fish dam and the women the smaller; men catch the larger fish with spears, and women and children catch smaller fish with their hands. In hunting expeditions, women carry food supplies and the products of the hunt. Women make baskets and mats and men make hammocks and bows and arrows. But once again, it is the interdependency among the sexes that is most emphasized by the different authors who have written about the Bari. (see for example Pinton, 1965; Buenaventura-Posso and Brown, 1980; and Neglia, 1974).

2. Leadership and Political Relations

Traditionally, when a group decided to migrate and build a new house, the man who coordinates its construction and digs the larger holes is given the distinction of house's main chief or "natobay." He was usually assisted in the coordination of the building of the house by another individual or second chief called "duashina."

They each carried out specific responsibilities throughout the construction of the house, as did other members of the group. All authors stress that the responsibilities of the natobay did not go far beyond this activity and that of heading and coordinating fishing and hunting expeditions. The natobay's authority, like that of the second chief, was quite limited and his position was neither permanent nor hereditary. They clearly dismiss the possibility that the Bari were a lineage society.

It was common for the natobay to occupy the eastern part of the house and to lead with the rest of the members of that location, any expedition to the outside. However, as Pinton (1973) emphasizes, neither this, nor the other two parts of the bohio meriting specific names, correspond to a stratification system. Somehow they simply serve to identify the locations each family group occupies, probably to facilitate the division of tasks and to create a sense of order within the bohio, while also providing a form of identification for the individual groups and their members. These locations are fluid and they may change as individual families change houses.

The chief of the bohio was also to be found on the "front line" during any encounters with outside elements. His role was basically one of protecting the territory--including punishment of transgressors, and seeing that Bari material life was smoothly carried out. All students of the Bari agree that the chief's authority had no coercive powers and individuals were quite free to choose not to obey his commands. (Beckerman (1975) narrates an

instance during his field work in which the natobay announced in a non-demanding tone that it was a good day to go clean the field and proceeded to head out. Soon it became clear that not all felt that way and only a few trickled out slowly.)

Alcacer (1964) mentions that although the position of natobay is not hereditary, the chief names his replacement. Caballero (1974) says the second chief is the one who takes over in case of absence--whether it is temporary or permanent (death)¹⁰. The issue of prestige seems relatively clear and there does not seem to exist any system resembling a differential appropriation of resources by the chiefs or the elders of the community. However, Alcacer (1964) makes a note in passing about how the special prestige enjoyed by the chief entitled him to receive more of the "values" of the group. I don't believe this assertion is confirmed in any way to suggest an incipient tributary system existed. What has been better documented is the fact that upon contact, Bari chiefs were often seen from whites as having much more authority and were the receivers of gifts by the whites. Needless to say this introduces a new prestige-attainment mechanism.

One last aspect regarding the traditional political structures of the Bari is relevant for the analysis of empresa-introduced changes later on. This has to do with community-wide decision-making mechanisms and levels of participation. While Alcacer (1964) stresses the fact that nothing resembling advisory councils or deliberative bodies existed, Caballero (1974), based on

informants he used during his 1974 field work, contends such bodies did exist. The discrepancy seems to be due to the different times the two authors were writing. All evidence seems to indicate that there were, in fact, (there had to be) moments when important decisions such as moving to another location required part or all of the community to meet with the natobay. The higher degree of visibility and formality that Caballero attributes to what were probably very informal gatherings is probably the result of missionary efforts to constantly "rationalize" the various aspects of Bari life. One point both authors agree on is the fact that women did not seem to have much participation in these major deliberations. Buenaventura (1980) is probably correct in asserting that decision-making among the Bari is highly diffused and made by those men or women who are directly affected by the particular decision. Beckerman (1983) confirms this when examining the differential input that men and women have within the different types of subsistence activities; for example fishing decisions are made by men; an activity where women's labor is not as productive. The reverse is true for foraging.

Finally, networks of food sharing among families seemed limited and sharing took place only upon request. Both men and women participate, depending on what is being shared.

3. Recent Changes

I have already alluded to some of the changes in Bari society introduced by white settlers and missionaries. In the paragraphs that follow I will summarize the most important changes experienced

by the various Bari groups in Perija. I will make use of both secondary information and my own observations while visiting the community of Saimadoyi. In Chapter 7, I will examine the contemporary socio-economic organization of the Bari of Saimadoyi specifically, as the immediate structural and historical context within which the empresa was organized.

Settlement patterns and type of housing are among the first changes that had a very significant impact in Bari social organization. In Venezuela the communal houses no longer exist, a change that came at the insistence of missionaries who convinced the Bari of the advantages of individual family dwellings. A major impact of the disappearance of the bohio was the transformation of the role of the natobay. No longer named for his ability to direct the construction of the bohio, the natobay in many Bari communities has been transformed by the missionaries into a western-style leader who has been given increased decision-making responsibilities. Subsistence activities continue in almost the exact manner as before. However, the Bari have for some time taken jobs as temporary wage laborers in local haciendas, which makes cash for commercial foodstuffs available. This will weaken subsistence activities but not necessarily eliminate them as we know from the peasant experience. In Saimadoyi and other communities, there has been a slow introduction of cattle for either subsistence or market purposes. The priest in Saimadoyi, for example, purchased in the course of several years, a few head

of cattle that he distributed among the different families.

The collective fishing expeditions still take place among the Bari. In Saimadoyi this happens twice a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Obviously these pre-set days indicate that the criteria that previously governed the decision to fish, namely lack of protein and rainfall, no longer operate. Once again, in trying to "rationalize" Bari use of time and space, but seeking to avoid accusations of destroying Bari culture, the missionaries have "strongly suggested" the changes mentioned. In my interview with the priest of the Saimadoyi community he says that they used to be on Sundays "but he changed it."

Formal education has made its way into communities like Saimadoyi which has an elementary school operated by nuns but with the participation of some (one now, two previously) Bari teachers, and it includes bilingual education. Some Bari have begun to study at the high school level in mission schools outside of Saimadoyi.

II. The Yaruros (Pume) of Apure

A. Brief Ethnohistorical Sketch

Ethnohistorical and ethnographic research about the Yaruros is sorely lacking, and what exists is often contradictory and incomplete--much more so than with the Bari. One possible reason is that missionary activity among the Yaruro was not as systematic and long-lasting as it has been with the Bari. Although no one has yet analyzed the historical record in all its possible dimensions, the missionary documentation does not seem as extensive as it was

with the Bari.

The first attempt to conduct extensive research on the Yaruros was done by Vincenzo Petruccio in 1933. For a long time that remained the main source of information about this group. More recently, Anthony Leeds (1961) embarked on a similar project and contradicted several of the assertions that had been made by Petruccio and those who based their work on Petruccio's studies.

Perhaps the single most important element of contention has to do with the earlier classification of the Yaruros as a hunting and gathering tribe and that agriculture was recently introduced into their society. Actually, the reliance of the Yaruro on aquatic game, placed them within the meso-Indian fishing societies (Leeds, 1961). The implications of this are important as the socio-economic organizations and types of political structures vary sometimes quite significantly between hunting and gathering and horticultural groups. Mitriani (1973) agreed with Leeds in his position that authors who wrote of an absence of horticulture among the Yaruro labored in error. These errors resulted from an insufficient examination of the historical record of the 17th and 19th centuries; the fact that Petruccio did his research in a restricted area and during the dry season only; and the perpetuation of the errors on the part of American authors who based their explanations on Petruccio's work alone. In addition, Kirchhoff, Steward and Faron seemed to have misquoted or erred in the translation of a quote by Gilij (1965), who alluded to the use of "fresh" corn by the Yaruro. It was translated by the authors as

"green" corn--the type used at times by hunting and gathering tribes in the initial stages of practicing horticulture.

Mitriani's work is the most recent and provides a convincing re-examination of the historical and ethnographic evidence that supports the classification of the Yaruros as a horticulturalist group.

I will offer a brief summary of the history of the Yaruros, a description of the area they inhabit, which will help us understand the major features and transformation in their mode of production and social organization.

The Yaruros have inhabited for centuries the southwestern Venezuelan savannas ("llanos"), and are today confined within the limits of the Apure State of the llanos area (See Appendix B). Their settlements were traditionally (and to a large extent still are) found in the riverine areas bounded by the Arauca-Cunaviche on the northern part of the state, and where the empresa is now located; the Capanaparo - Riecito River in the center; and the Capanaparo River in the southern part of the State. The 1980 Census places the Yaruro population at 3,859, all but 22 of whom live in Apure.

The earliest records of this group came from Fray Jacinto de Carvajal who in the 17th century recorded 105 tribes located in the riverine areas of the Apure state and the Orinoco tributaries between the Apure and the Meta rivers. The only interesting piece of information that I can detect from Mitriani's mention of this

record was the suggestion of the formation of Indian confederations at the time, which seemed to be organized under the authority of one chief for the purpose of warring with other tribes. Other evidence, however, suggests that the Yaruros were not a warring tribe but might have been subjected to attacks by other tribes in the area, even prior to colonization. This can begin to account for the simplicity, semi-nomadism and small size of the Yaruro society as it has been described by different authors.

The entrance of the Capuchin Missionaries to the Apure area, and the Yaruro territory specifically, takes place relatively late. The first reference of a missionary town mentioned by de Carrocera (1972) cites 1768 as the year when the Capuchins organized the town of San Jose de Leonisa de Cunaviche, not with Yaruros but Otomacos, a tribe now extinct. Several other mission towns were founded in the years prior to Venezuelan independence. However, as far as I have been able to determine, none were formed with Yaruro populations in the fashion of Saimadoyi; or as happened with other tribes in Apure. Individual Yaruros were taken to mission towns and priests did have some Yaruro settlements as their responsibility, but as a whole, missionary activity among the Yaruros was not significant.

That is not to say that Yaruro society was not influenced by its contact, however brief and indirect, with white society. Aside from the missionaries' presence, perhaps most significant was the growing penetration in the area by whites searching for cattle and for ranch land. For a long period of time, the Indians of this

area were engaged in severe clashes with the white cattle ranchers who tried to claim traditionally occupied Indian lands. In fact, Apure is the state with the worst reported instances of Indian genocide in Venezuela--the latest one of occurring in 1967. Of all the tribes that inhabited the Apure llanos, only the cuivas (Guahibos) and the Yaruros remain. Their story does not differ from that of other Indian tribes who entered into contact with white civilization and whose fate was slightly more fortunate if, as in the case of the Yaruros and the Cuivas, they inhabited or retreated into more remote areas. According to Mitriani (n.d.), the traditional area of the Yaruros was more to the south of the state, in the Capanaparo and Cinaruco region. White penetration began in the northern part of the state. But eventually the pressure was also felt from the south and west, and toward the end of the 19th century, and the beginning of the 20th, the Yaruros found themselves increasingly in conflict with the new settlers. According to Mitriani, it was about this time that Yaruros began to settle into northern territory and became progressively incorporated into the cattle economy as cheap laborers.¹¹ Paradoxically, from the beginning of white penetration of the area, there were numerous reports of massacres of Indians by white ranchers. Petrullo (1969) himself reported a whole village of 150 Yaruros wiped out during the period of his field work. This is explained by the fierce competition for land in the area. Even as late as the 1970's, informal reports were heard of individuals who

engaged in what had become a local sport by the name of "Cuivear" or "Guahibear", a verb used to mean "to hunt cuivas or Guahibos."¹²

The transformation of Apure into a major cattle producing region for the nation had a devastating effect on the lives of the Indians in the state. With the war of independence, the missionary influence in the area virtually disappeared and church lands were often awarded to those private individuals who fought in these wars. Contrary to the situation of the Bari, the missionaries were not successful in retaining control of these areas, and, as ironic as it may be, in acting as protectors of Indian land and populations as well. This is largely explained by the physical and ecological differences found in the two regions and the type of economic structure favored in each case. Perija, where the Bari live, is a rugged and highly inaccessible frontier, which has, until very recently, slowed down the colonization process. The Apure savannas on the other hand, contained ideal conditions for the development of extensive cattle-raising operations. Already by the 17th century, the llanos had become an important center of livestock production in the country. About the same time, meat and cattle sub-products such as leather had joined cacao and tobacco as important products for export (Brito Figueroa, 1975). Needless to say, the colonial, and later independent, Venezuelan state were particularly interested in supporting this important economy.

The economic power of invading landowners in the region was reinforced by several other factors. The long stretches of scarcely populated areas, combined with difficulties in reaching

them due to lack of any viable road system and the flooding of major portions of the state during half of the year, have contributed to the extreme power these landowners enjoy with regards to all economic and political aspects of life.¹³

Today, the Yaruro live in a number of fixed or "corporate" communities, (Wolf, 1961) made up of individual family units grouped in a common area. With rare exceptions, they do not possess any kind of title to the land they occupy and cultivate. The majority of such land falls under the legal category of "baldias" or "un-occupied" lands. The population of these towns ranges from 274 to a handful of inhabitants. None of these villages seem to be vestiges of missionary towns. Instead they appear to be spontaneous and growing settlements formed by independent Indian families in the areas not yet taken by whites. Similarly, coming together in this new fixed-village pattern seems to be an "ethnic-based" adaptive strategy of mutual protection against the ever-constant threats of losing their land and even their lives, rather than a mere continuation of their traditional residential pattern.¹⁴

Aside from changes in the settlement pattern, whose impact on the traditional mode of production and social organization I will explore in more detail later, the Yaruros borrowed little from the white culture. As with the Bari, they borrowed some iron tools (the machete) and the use of western dress. Unfortunately, they borrowed the consumption of alcohol, which is easily available.¹⁵

B. Economic and Social Organization of the Yaruro or Pume

Before examining the type of economic organization of the Yaruros it is necessary to have a more detailed picture of the ecological and geographical conditions that influenced the form of economic organization.

As already mentioned, the Yaruro live in the savannas of the Apure state. These savannas are characterized by a conglomerate of micro-habitats that are ultimately mirrored by the micro-socio-cultural forms of Yaruro society (Leeds, 1961). These micro-habitats are defined by differences in slope and climate variations that run from east to west of the state. The land rises to the west as it meets the Andean cordillera; the average rainfall also increases with the slope of the land and these two conditions parallel the types of soil found in the region: from clay/loam in the east to more sandy and arable in the west. The region of Guachara where the empresa is located, is classified as one of muddy and sandy loams.

One of the important environmental features of the savannas is that of a very sharp seasonal variation in rainfall. Up to 90% of the total rainfall occurs from May to November, and the savannas are almost constantly flooded, while the rest of the year they are transformed into a virtual desert. (My field work took place during the rainy season.)

Although the matter of Yaruro subsistence has not been totally resolved, I believe Leeds (1961 and 1969) and Mitriani (1975) are closer to the truth than previous authors. I will follow their

work for this aspect of Yaruro society. Subsistence activities of the Yaruros vary according to the location of their settlement and the two seasons. However, except for very reduced areas in the Capanaparo region, where Petrullo did his field work and where flooding is excessive, all Yaruros practice horticulture as their main means of subsistence. The areas in which horticulture was possible were restricted by a number of factors characteristic of savanna areas, such as poor and sandy soil, the presence of tough, long-rooted grasses, and the occurrence of excessive flooding. It is only in the median stretches of streams, where rich soil from the savannas accumulated, that gallery forests emerge. This provided humus to the better soils and thus made the area more suitable for horticulture (Leeds, 1961). The "montes" (depressions in the savanna that remain above-enough water), are the only other areas believed to be adequate for cultivation, though only during the wet season.

Land cultivation followed the usual pattern of slash-and-burn horticulture, with an average of three years of planting and a 10- to 15-year fallow period. Today, this is heavily restricted due to the small areas they occupy. The main crop cultivated by the Yaruros, as with the Bari, was and still is manioc. The Yaruros, however, also cultivated the bitter variety. Corn also is found, and, as with the Bari, its origin has not been satisfactorily established. Plaintain, sugar cane, yams, squashes and chili pepper form the rest of the inventory of foods produced.¹⁶

Horticultural activities take place mainly during the rainy season. Traditionally the Yaruro remained in their more permanent villages during this period. And even today they emulate this pattern of semi-nomadism with slight variations. On the other hand, hunting, fishing and gathering were the principal activities of the dry season and required the Yaruros to set up temporary housing in the areas where these resources were found, thus increasing their nomadism. All activities can take place during both seasons, only the intensity level varies, and so does the location in which they are conducted. For example, animals traditionally hunted by the yaruro included deer, paca, armadillo, and iguana, which are distributed according to their own ecological niches. In addition, the seasons also mark clear limits for hunting and fishing, making necessary changes in location, and use of different techniques. Certain animals could not be hunted during the rainy season.

Contemporary Yaruros have also adopted animal husbandry, but for the most part raise pigs, not cattle, like the majority of the non-Indian inhabitants of the llano ("Llanero").

The establishment of these ecological limitations to Yaruro subsistence becomes highly relevant when understanding other features of Yaruro society as Leeds has already demonstrated in his various works and as I will explore. But I should mention at this point that these ecological limitations are also significant when considering the organization of the empresa in an area that exhibits ecological features that may or may not be conducive to the continuous equilibrium of Yaruro subsistence.

Not all of these subsistence activities continue unchanged. Garden cultivation is still a major source of food, but as noted earlier, productivity has been greatly compromised by the small size of Yaruro plots and the length of the fallow period. A measure of the declining importance of garden plots is the fact that most Yaruro men must at some point participate in the wage labor force as workers in the large hatos.

Similarly, deer hunting, a major source of protein for the Yaruros in the past, has been practically abandoned because of the persecution of white cattle ranchers who accuse Indian hunters of trespassing on their land. Several species of animals the Yaruro have traditionally depended upon, like turtles, for example, have become almost extinct because of the over-hunting by white ranchers. Fishing still provides a significant amount of protein, but it is also limited to areas not controlled by white ranchers.

1. Labor Relations

Kinship relations were fundamental in the organization of horticultural groups such as the Bari and the Yaruro. For those who study the Yaruro, all the questions regarding the specific type of kinship and residence patterns continue to produce some contradictory answers. Again, Leeds (1961), and Mitriani (1975) provide the latest interpretations of the historical and ethnographic evidence. I will follow them most closely, though offering my own interpretation.

Petrullo (1969) described several aspects of Yaruro kinship

and marriage system that Leeds (1969) and Mitriani, (1973) among others, have now disputed. According to Petrullo, the Yaruro were divided into two different matrilineal clans or moieties. Marriage was governed by rules of exogamy between these two clans, and it took place among matrilineal cross-cousins. Other authors find no evidence to confirm such divisions and the unilineality implied by them. Leeds, (1969) on the other hand, believed that kinship is traced through bilineal lines and marriage takes place among bilateral cross-cousins, though matrifocality is often found. Mitriani (1973) agreed with Leeds and confirmed much of his findings through his own field work. With regards to exogamy however, Mitriani once again qualified the existence or lack of existence of this rule in terms of the changing conditions of Yaruro society. Pragmatic considerations, such as the availability of marriageable men or women within villages that may have been dismembered or regrouped, become important factors in determining whether marriage would be exogamous or endogamous.

Although, information on Yaruro kinship often seems contradictory, it is still possible to draw some conclusions. What is apparent from a review of the ethnographic record of the Yaruro, including the aspect of kinship, is that it was a tribe in transition at the moment of contact, although the explanations for its stagnation and even regression vary according to different authors.

Traditionally, Yaruro from the different regions of Apure were grouped in villages of one or more longhouses whose number of

inhabitants varied from 20 to 100 individuals--with fewer and fewer numbers found as a result of contact. The local group often consisted of an extended family and even independent individuals organized as independent hearth groups. According to Mitriani (1973), the size of these villages was much greater before the intrusion of cattle ranches, and were often transformed into single residential groups. Most of these have by now regrouped into western-style villages situated in the Riecito area where a Centro Indigenista was established and in the north, around the Guachara-Cunaviche area. This is the case of the villages of Fruta de Burro, Palmarito, and Las Matas, from where the members of the Empresa come.

During the dry season, these communities and independent households divided and set up temporary and very squalid dwellings in the riverine areas. The permanent villages were set up farther from the river on higher land.

The social organizational unit of the Yaruro was the entire village--not the entire Pume society, while the main economic unit of production was the hearth group.¹⁷ All economic activities, including fishing and hunting, were performed at this level.

A point emphasized by Leeds is that labor arrangements among the Yaruro tended toward the "re-distributive" as opposed to the "cooperative" pattern. This meant basically that labor tasks were often "redistributed" to one or two members rather than performed by large groups and according to individual choice. None of the

Yaruro economic activities actually required the participation of more than one individual at a time--though it was not uncommon to find fishing and hunting teams of two or three individuals who simply elected to work together. The technology--adapted to the specific habitat and employed for these activities--also precluded the organization of wider work teams, unlike the case of the Bari, who for example needed the larger group to construct fishing weirs. It is hard to determine to what extent there may have been earlier forms of cooperation that have disappeared as a result of tribal dismemberment after-contact with white settlers. For one thing, there are some references made by several of the ethnographers that suggest communal clearing of the gardens and community-wide work teams for the construction of the dwellings. Mitriani (1975) also believed that Leeds had overestimated the level of individualism that exists within Yaruro society. What is probably fair to say is that the Pume organization of production corresponded to a narrower hearth unit than that of the Bari. In addition, such hearth groups were more likely to break up into yet smaller units of individual families during the dry season. It is only in this instance that one can accurately speak of "household" level production. On the other hand, there is evidence that community-wide distribution networks were highly valued, and each household (or hearth) distributed goods and foodstuffs to other households in the village along kinship and co-residence lines (Leeds, 1961). Inter-communal networks were also important, although it is not clear whether their main contribution was of subsistence per se, or to maintain a

tribal cohesiveness that might be important for defense purposes. There is no evidence of war within this tribe although they were often exposed to raiding by neighboring tribes such as the Guahibo. Inter-communal alliances could have been an important source of insurance against starvation when these raids occurred. Trading, on the other hand, was important but seemed to take place mainly with extra-llano groups, for items not produced in the area. This combination of household production with community-wide distribution networks would resemble the organization of foraging tribes whose environment precludes the organization of production at any other level, yet its harshness demands the guarantee of alliances at distant places.

Another, and perhaps the most important element regarding labor relations among the Yaruros, is the sharp gender division of labor and property found in this group. Men did and still do all the hunting and fishing and the clearing of the fields. Women do the gathering, which is very significant during the dry season, and harvest the fields. Men make hammocks and haul lumber while women make pottery, baskets and manioc squeezers and process the food.

Traditionally, objects that were made by women were inherited by women and those made by men were inherited by men. Male animals were owned by men and female animals were owned by women. Today many of these divisions seem to have disappeared.¹⁸

As is usually the case with horticultural societies, the lines separating the division of labor between the sexes are not

absolutely rigid and when necessary there is cooperation between the sexes in activities that theoretically may fall in the purview of either one. There is a gender division of labor among the Yaruro, yet, to date, male-female activity is highly complementary and the work of both is equally valued.¹⁹

Another point of contention between Leeds and Mitriani has to do with the limits the environment places on the accumulation of any type of surplus. Mitriani (1975) believed that Leeds (1969) had also exaggerated some of these restrictions and fall victim to a sort of ecological determinism regarding Yaruro socio-economic organization. For Mitriani, many of the limits on Yaruro economic production and productivity were the result of recent encroachments of whites into Yaruro lands. In fact, making use of comparisons of types and levels of productivity of yields. Mitriani showed that tropical forest peoples like the Llano Otomacos and Guamo were able to produce higher yields of corn than their counterparts in the andean and litoral areas. Under these conditions, Mitriani contended, surpluses were a must, although they were not limited to corn but included other food items such as turtle eggs.

Mitriani also disagreed with Leeds in his interpretation of the level of fissioning that went on and that still goes on in these communities. Here too, Leeds believed that ecological limitations and related problems of scarcity of resources were the major determinants of village or household fissioning. For Mitriani, it was the absence of any centralized, coercive authority in charge of decisions related to migration and house construction

(as with the Bari) which accounted for an apparently high rate of fissioning. But following Mitriani's own warnings to Leed, it is necessary once again to consider encroachment by whites into Yaruro territory as a factor involved in these decisions.

Mitriani consistently separates his analysis of the less acculturated and more isolated Yaruros of the Capanaparo and south of the Cinaruco in the southern part of the state from those of the Arauca-Cunaviche area where I did my field work. This distinction is important because it provides one with an opportunity to know what changes have taken place when comparing the least with the more acculturated group. The groups of the Arauca-Cunaviche area are much less likely to preserve the migration patterns found among the groups to the south.

2. Leadership and Political Relations

Power among the Yaruro seems even more diffused than with the Bari. In the contemporary history of the Yaruro, the "capitan" constitutes the central authority of the villages, and may or may not be the shaman or religious leader as well. It is not known the extent to which the double function of "chief-shaman" existed in the past and how the transfer of office occurred (Mitriani, 1973). "Capitan" is the term the Spaniards gave to the civil authorities of local districts, and the term later was imposed on or adopted by the Indian groups that settled in permanent villages.

The moral authority of the village, had in the past rested with the male elder, who according to Mitriani, also was the figure

of "political representation." "Ote-Pume" was the term used to refer to this religious-moral figure. Women did not occupy a formal position within this diffused leadership structure but were consulted and "never commanded" (Leeds, 1969).

The figure or figures of authority commanded no real power and there were no rules of obedience. Even the coordinating functions of the Bari "natobay" seemed to be absent within the Yaruro structure, except for a modified function of "consultative funnel through which community decision poured back and forth." (Leeds, 1969; 1974). These figures then were not expected to make any outright decisions governing the day-to-day life of the Yaruro.²⁰ However, a special status or respect was assigned to those who excelled as intermediaries between the Yaruro and other groups. This status the Spaniards seemed to have understood well when they assigned these figures a special title, "capitan," and empowered them with authority they never had before. Today the capitans are chosen from those individuals who know Spanish and are more acculturated--and know how to deal with the criollo world.

Both Mitriani and Leeds agreed on this absence of coercive power and supreme authority among the Yaruros. Mitriani believed social control rested primarily on ethical and religious norms. Leeds does not really address this directly but he was concerned to show how ecological constraints inhibited the formation of formal authority and reinforced the individualistic and independent nature of the Yaruro. His argument is quite rigorous in this instance and draws on the respected thesis that connects, in a non-mechanistic

way, the development of factors of production to socio-cultural patterns. For example, he linked the absence of any meaningful surpluses in Yaruro economy and the simplicity of their technology (adapted for use of single individuals), to the lack of need for any sort of managerial functions or specialization. All individuals had equal access to the knowledge and experience necessary to survive in the savannas and coordinated work was virtually unnecessary. Mitriani's ultimate argument with Leeds is that there is an underlying evolutionism in Leeds' argument that the Yaruro is a tribe whose evolution is frozen by the area's ecological limitations. Should those limitations not exist, they would have followed the path of more advanced tropical forest groups like the Kuikuru of Brazil who, in many respects, were a very similar group. But in my view, Leeds' evolutionism does not affect the validity of some of his arguments regarding the effect of the unique ecological conditions of the savanna on the socio-structural organization of the Yaruro.

3. Recent Changes among the Yaruros: Comparisons and Contrasts with the Bari

The historical and ethnographic review of the Bari and Yaruro tribes constitute the backdrop against which it is possible to reconstruct the essential features of these societies' modes of production and socio-political organization. Most importantly, it reveals those changes in production and social organization that have taken place in recent years and that have not yet been totally integrated into existing analyses. For example, most discussions

regarding the development and impact of development programs on these communities began with an incomplete understanding of where these societies are today; what has changed and what hasn't changed; and what options they realistically have to adopt one or another strategy to preserve their unity as a distinct social group.

No changes are more important than those that result from the mode and intensity of contact with the white society. In spite of their bloody encounters with Spanish society, it is clear that the Bari have fared better than the Yaruro. The land of the Yaruro was more accessible to criollo individuals and was incorporated very early into the main dynamic of the Venezuelan cattle economy and the international market. Although both tribes have experienced the fractioning of their communities and the disruption of kinship relations, these effects have been more devastating in the Yaruro communities. Even today, the Bari preserve many collective features and continue to rely on cooperation and reciprocal exchanges for much of their integral reproduction.

The Bari, and particularly those of Saimadoyi, are faced with the daily and permanent presence of the priest and the nuns who have become an institutionalized source of control—particularly social and ideological. The missionary presence has, on the other hand, prevented the total elimination of land rights as happened with the Yaruro. The Yaruro, like the Bari, live in a cattle breeding area. But it is only recently that a small minority of

Yaruro have had access to cattle-raising to complement their subsistence economy. Even when they worked in the criollo cattle ranches, they were assigned to cultivation tasks and never really learned the skills required to handle a cattle economy. The Bari on the other hand, were hired in the local ranches to work with the cattle--although their participation in the wage economy seems to have been less intense. The Bari was a warring tribe that avenged every act committed against its people and continues to have a very zealous attitude toward outsiders. The Yaruro were a peaceful society and now seem more like a downtrodden people who exhibit little self-esteem and have been forced to recognize the criollo as the master.

ENDNOTES

1. I made a field visit to a couple of Yucpa communities that were in the process of organizing an empresa Indigena. At this time, I had a chance to observe and hear about some of the serious health and social problems that confront these communities and are largely caused or aggravated by high levels of alcohol consumption.
2. During my interviews with Lizarralde and Bari, it became clear that the battle for establishing "imminent domain" over Bari territory is all but over--at least as far as the Catholic church is concerned. In terms of state functions, this competition between various political and 'surrogate state' "apparatuses" to control territorial rights is easily understood. As I have pointed out in previous chapters, already in the late 1950s, Venezuela had begun an incipient industrialization process financed with a growing influx of oil revenues. This created possibilities for new investments and interest in new agricultural frontiers and a Venezuelan state that controlled a large share of the oil revenues and was in the position to become directly involved in capitalist development in these areas.
3. During my fieldwork, the head of the area National Guard, an influential general in Venezuela visited the community of Saimadoyi and in the course of the conversations with them and the Bari, I learned of instances where the Bari had reported seeing groups of Colombian homesteaders who were subsequently expelled by the National Guard.
4. As I was leaving the community after my first visit, we encountered whole families of Colombians who had obviously just descended the Sierra and were probably headed to local haciendas in search of work. It is somewhat ironic that the new threat to Bari territory comes from a very poor working group of Colombian nationals who most likely are campesinos that like the Bari have been pushed out off their land by rich landowners. The authors also mention the presence of Colombian guerrillas in the area as an indirect source of Bari territorial loss. The Colombian government has begun to build access roads on the eastern part of the Colombian reserve facilitating the access of new homesteaders; and on the Venezuelan side there is evidence guerrilla movement toward the Bari area as they flee Colombian troops--though this penetration has been way to the South of the Venezuelan reserve.
5. A few longhouses of this sort still exist in Colombia, but as mentioned earlier, none remain in Venezuela and most Bari live in single-family, multi-house, communities.

6. Lizarralde and Beckerman (1982)--these translations may be technically more precise but convey the same notion as Pinton's definition, i.e., sagdojiras of the opposite sex are not allowed to marry, while okjibaras are not.
7. Field work interviews did point to the reduction of distribution networks to the, also reduced composition of hearth groups, to extended or nuclear families.
8. Beckerman (1975); Lizarralde and Beckerman (1980); field observations (1985).
9. Besides manioc and plaintains, the main staple, crops such as sugar cane, yams, avocados, etc. are found. See Beckerman (1983) for an entire list. The smaller fields usually have manioc and plaintain or just sugar cane.
10. It is possible they were both referring to the same process whereby, the second chief, who is in fact named by the first, assumes the leadership.
11. As Brito Figueroa (1975) points out, slave labor was never effectively incorporated into the non-labor intensive cattle raising economy. Slave labor was non-cost efficient, and the open savannas were inviting for slaves to escape. Interestingly enough, Brito Figueroa refers to the alternative adaptability of "foraging Indians" to the new tasks of extensive cattle raising.
12. Cuivear is most often used on the Colombian side, while Guahibear is used more often on the Venezuelan side. "Indear" is another verb still heard at times and it refers to the search for Indians to work in the cattle ranches (hatos) as peons who are to be treated by the most unscrupulous landowners as their personal property.
13. The continuous pressure for land on the part of the cattle ranchers makes the possibility of creating an Indian reserve almost nil. In fact, such a reserve was decreed by a governor of the state in 1975. The reserve covered the southern part and most traditional Yaruro and Cuiva territory. However, the decree (#41,1975) was never ratified at the national level and its boundaries have never been respected.
14. For a discussion on ethnic-based strategies see Arizpe (1980).
15. In this last sense they are very different from the Bari, and more resemble the situation of many North American Indian groups.

16. For a more complete account of Yaruro horticulture, see Leeds (1961).
17. Extended family and fictive kin "household." As we can see, "household" must be contextually defined because in cases such as these, and as with the Bari, they were often equivalent to what we could call a "village".
18. Interviews with Pume (1985).
19. However, as the usual ethnographic literature on the subject suggests, it is possible that women's contribution to subsistence production is somewhat greater given their important role in caring for and harvesting the gardens. See Sandai (1981) for an excellent analysis of gender roles in horticultural and hunting and gathering societies.
20. In this sense, they again resemble the hunters and gatherers more closely than they do horticultural groups.